

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Top implementing schools of Brigada Eskwela honored

Brigada Eskwela, the yearly national schools maintenance week of the Department of Education (DepEd), took center stage recently with the giving of awards to outstanding participants in last year's pre-opening of schools activity.

Education Secretary Jesli Lapus said the Brigada Eskwela Awards is also a means to generate more public and private sector participation to the annual school event.

"It takes a community to educate a child and this is precisely the point of Brigada Eskwela, the voluntary participation of the community stakeholders for a better learning environment for our students," Lapus said.

DepEd's Adopt a School Program is spearheading Brigada Eskwela which engages the private sector in helping public schools physically prepare for the opening of classes.

The awarding ceremony was held at the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Complex.

Three elementary schools and three secondary schools each per region were honored as Brigada Eskwela Best Implementer awardees. There were a total of 96 winners from 16 regions. The school-awardees were categorized as Small, Big or Exceptional school based on their enrollment size. Awardees received plaque of recognition.

Region VIII and CARAGA received special awards for 100% participation of schools. Region VIII also bagged award for most number of volunteers.

Brigada Eskwela regional committees selected the top schools based on their monitoring and evaluation of the participating schools and using the criteria of teamwork (40%), repair and maintenance work (40%), resources generated (15%), and other factors (5%).

Teamwork was validated by the number and kinds of volunteers during the Brigada Eskwela. The repair and maintenance work included the scope of work, repairs, constructions, renovations, and beautification done in the school. The additional points went for the innovativeness and creativity of the school during the Brigada Eskwela.

PRESS RELEASE

This year's Brigada Eskwela is set on June 2-7 in time for the nationwide opening of classes on June 10 for both elementary and high schools.

Adopt a School Director Mari Paul Soriano reported an increasing trend in terms of school participation and savings generated since it was launched in 2003. Only 10% of all public schools did not participate in 2007.

In 2003, P153.16 M was generated through donations, services and volunteer hours. In 2007, some P2.3B worth of support from the community was documented.

Through DepEd Order no. 24 issued in March 2008, Brigada Eskwela is now a permanent part of the school calendar.

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.

The event also marked the turnover of the Brigada Eskwela Manual, which will aid school heads on how to engage more stakeholders and organize efforts for a more successful BE. Soriano noted that focus will be given on first time implementers and schools that had weak implementation of BE. Brigada Eskwela Manual will be disseminated initially to regional and division offices.

Soriano challenged school heads to expand Brigada Eskwela beyond a week. He encouraged them to continue school improvement efforts and sustain partnerships with stakeholders in the community. "Let's go beyond physical repairs and school facilities. Let's focus on increasing participation rates, reducing drop-out rates, and improving achievement and health and nutrition status of children," he said.

The event also launched Brigada Eskwela music video of DepEd endorser Yeng Constantino. The video will be disseminated to all the regions and screened in major cinemas in the Metro Manila. It will serve as TV commercial in donated ad spaces in key media outfits. Yeng Constantino is a composer, singer and youth role model.

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