

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

*To sharpen kids' thinking skills*

## DepEd pushes chess in public schools

The Department of Education (DepEd) and the National Chess Federation of the Philippines (NCFP) have made a strategic move that will lead to the emergence of more Filipino grandmasters and make the Philippines a powerhouse in world chess.

The partnership calls for the training of DepEd officials by chess grandmasters belonging to NCFP in institutionalizing chess in public elementary and high school

Education Secretary Jesli Lopus and NCFP President Prospero Pichay signed an agreement yesterday where the chess organization will help DepEd achieve a 90 percent chess literacy and regain Philippine chess supremacy in Asia.

Lopus said that global studies have shown that chess is a game that improves individual organization and analytical skills. Children when exposed to this game at an early age achieve academically better or even faster than those who have not been engaged in the same game.

"It is because chess is considered a game that encourages a higher level of thinking that DepEd this year will start teaching it in elementary and high school," he explained.

Lopus and Pichay presented their signed agreement to President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, who is an avid chess player herself. The event also established the National Chess Academy (NCA) which will serve as the training venue for chess teachers, coaches and arbiters.

The National Chess Academy will see to the training of students, teachers, coaches and arbiters throughout the country. It will also organize age-group tournaments in all regions.

Lopus added that chess is one sporting event where Filipinos have a greater chance of producing super grandmasters. "Just like Wesley So, our youngest and highest rated Filipino grandmaster who is just a few notches away from the elite club of world chess," he noted.

NCA will hold office at De La Salle University under the supervision of NCFP Vice-President and Former CHED Chairman Rolando Dizon, FSC. The Executive Director is Bong Belen, whose school in Tanauan, Batangas, the First Asian Institute of Technology and Humanities (FAITH) will be the main training center.

PRESS RELEASE

Starting May 2009, Grandmaster Bong Villamayor will head a team of trainers who will provide training for 195 DepEd Chess Coordinators and School Coordinators who will be sent by their respective schools.

A three-day seminar workshop will be given, after which a Certificate of Chess Competence will be awarded to those who successfully pass a Competency Test to be administered by the NCFP through the NCA.

The May to October schedule and venue of the seminar-workshop can be found in the website of DepEd and/or NCFP.

Chess is among the activities that help build memory skills, concentration, self-confidence, self-esteem and in making discipline decisions. Playing chess provides opportunities to practice such values as perseverance, honesty, and sportsmanship.

Chess will be implemented effective October of SY 2009-2010 in grades 3-6 (Edukasyon sa Pagpapalakas ng Katawan) and at high school 1-4 (Physical Education).

It is one of the games played in the Palarong Pambansa. The annual national meet is hosted this year by Tacloban City, Leyte.

**END**

**PRESS RELEASE**