

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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DepEd cites gains in English teaching and learning

The Department of Education (DepEd) has noted gains in English proficiency of students in public schools even as the department continues to invest in teacher training to further improve student performance in English.

DepEd notes the continuous improvement in performance of students in the National Achievement Test (NAT) within the five-year analysis particularly in English subject. "We recognize English proficiency is critical in learning as other key subjects such as Science and Mathematics use English in textbooks and other reference materials," said Education Secretary Jesli Lapus.

He added, "Filipinos' edge in the English language is also vital as more work opportunities here and abroad place premium on language skills."

Many of intervention programs were specifically focused on low performing schools including DepEd's Project TURN (Turning Around Low Performance in English), which seeks to reverse the low performance in English of elementary and high schools in the 2007 NAT.

Project TURN enhanced teachers' oral and written communication skills. They were further trained in teaching students who are beginning, developmental and remedial readers.

"English proficiency starts with teachers who are proficient on this subject matter. This is what they will impart to the students," Lapus said.

Students were likewise given supplementary reading materials and continued to receive medical, dental and food assistance to improve their nutrition status and academic performance.

As a result, significant improvements were seen in English among identified low performing schools in Grade 6 and Second Year in 2007-2008.

Some 79 percent (1,453) of the identified 1,898 low performing elementary schools increased achievement level in English (from low mastery to average mastery). Some 82 percent (215) of the identified 265 low performing high schools also registered improvement in achievement level in English (from low mastery to average mastery).

As this developed, teachers' training for those teaching English continue since Project TURN's launch in 2008. More than 200,000 teachers have been trained in the project by December, 2008.

To further improve proficiency, DepEd implements the 1:1 pupil-English textbook ratio in all public elementary and secondary schools.

Meanwhile, DepEd's National English Proficiency Program (NEPP) continues to strengthen its Teachers Mentoring Teachers program. A total of 10,500 teachers and school administrators have trained on English proficiency during the year.

DepEd has also adopted successful reading models as components of Every Child A Reader Program (ECARP) which aims to make children from Grade 1 to 6 able to read as expected at their own level.

The Department noted that when children can read and comprehend what they are reading, it is easier for them to understand the lessons.

Lapus added: "Even as we see improving NAT results in English among our students, we believe that we need an extra push to sustain their improving performance." NAT measures what the students understand and can do at their level. It covers Mathematics, English, Science, Filipino and Hekasi.

In a related development, DepEd's Bureau of Elementary Education will recognize this year's outstanding reading teachers and the Read-A-Thon student awardees on November 13. The annual Search for Outstanding Reading Teachers (SORT) honors the country's best performing reading teachers and their important contribution to the field of literacy.

The DepEd chief stressed, "The immediate task at hand is to develop among the young the habit of reading and to make readily available to our young books, magazines, literature and other reading materials that can help enrich the mind."

DepEd has likewise directed schools to beef up school libraries and implement different reading strategies to instil among school children the love for reading at an early age.

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