

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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DepEd sets record straight on COA report

The Department of Education said in a statement that while the data from its Basic Education Information System is used to identify priority areas with shortages for school building construction, there are other factors being considered in finalizing the priority areas where the classrooms constructed.

“The results of actual field validation by both central and division offices determine the final location and the extent of construction work required,” the DepEd statement said.

The Roxas Law also prescribes a formula for the allocation of classrooms which is largely school-age population based. In addition congressional initiatives and LGU Special Education Funds contribute to classroom construction.

DepEd issued the statement in reaction to a Manila Times story which said that DepEd prioritized constructing buildings in areas where the need was less acute based on 2005-2006 Commission on Audit report. The post-audit reports are currently being addressed by the present dispensation. Most of the COA findings have already been satisfactorily addressed by the department in its letter to COA dated September 17, 2007.

Meanwhile, DepEd said today that P16 million worth of rice that the same COA report said were distributed in areas not in the allocation list came from the initial record before the Food for School Program was expanded.

“COA based its report on the initial phase of the program when the recipients were only 25 selected schools in the National Capital Region,” said Education Undersecretary Vilma Labrador for Programs and Projects.

Labrador said that the 833,400 kilos of rice worth P16.6 million distributed to schools not in the first allocation list were actually additional recipients when the program was expanded by Malacanang in March 2006 to include the whole of the National Capital Region and all schools in Sulu and Tawi-tawi.

On distributing well-milled rice instead of iron-fortified rice, DepEd clarified that there is actually a memorandum of agreement between DepEd and the National Food Authority which specified that in case there is no available fortified rice, a well milled rice will be provided so as

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not to interrupt the program. Iron-fortified rice is usually imported and not readily available in the local market.

Regular annual COA reports of all government agencies usually contain observations and findings. These must be satisfactorily addressed by agency management before COA issues its formal Audit Opinion Certificate of the financial statements.

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