

PRESS RELEASE

Preserve the integrity of the elections, DepEd appeals to teachers

Education Secretary Armin Luistro reminded all its officials, public school teachers, and employees not to engage themselves in any partisan political activity or take part in the election except to execute their electoral duties and to vote for the Synchronized Barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) Elections on Monday.

“Although the Department of Education does not control the electoral process, the Filipino have always looked up to our public school teachers as the vanguard of the elections. Hence, teachers should not fail the people. They should perform their duties with utmost honesty and integrity,” said Luistro.

Aside from performing the noble task of teaching the young citizens of the country, teachers are also called to man the polling precincts every election day. Part of their tasks is to ensure free, honest, and clean elections. Specifically, they should prevent any attempt to manipulate the results to benefit any particular candidate or party.

As chairmen and members of the Board of Election Tellers, teachers’ electoral duties are no easy task since they are exposed to various forms of harassments. “These electoral duties are not easy to perform, require so much time and energy, and demand only the best from men and women of impeccable integrity, which the teachers are among those few who can provide,” Luistro noted.

Luistro also said that, “as the department responsible for providing the frontline service to the people and for molding the minds of the youth” he wants all DepEd employees to be role models among all government employees. And as such, “should maintain utmost impartiality and neutrality in exercising their official functions during the conduct of the elections.”

He reiterated that DepEd will exert all its efforts to minimize and prevent any situations concerning conflicts of interest, electioneering and politicking from arising that could compromise the teachers’ and these Barangay and SK Elections’ integrity.

“Since we are working towards the achievement of not only an ‘actually’ clean election but a ‘perceptively’ clean election as well, teachers are prohibited to accept donations in cash or in kind. We should maintain our practice of ‘Clean Schools, Clean Elections.’ We should ensure that our schools and teachers will not tolerate and will be protected from overt politicking,” stressed Luistro.

To avoid past experiences and incidents that create anxiety among our teachers, DepEd has established a legal assistance network for teachers who may get caught in election-related cases through its Election Task Force Operations Center. It will be set up at the Bulwagan ng Karunungan, DepEd Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City.

The National Election Operations Center headed by Undersecretaries Alberto Muyot and Rizalino Rivera will be open round the clock from October 24, 1pm until 12nn of October 26 to respond to queries from BET members and to receive

reports of fraud which will be immediately reported to the COMELEC and to the proper authorities.

The Regional Directors have also been instructed to create and establish in their respective regions a Regional Election Task Force to be headed by the Regional Directors concerned. Likewise, the Schools Division/City Superintendents will also establish in their respective divisions a Division Election Task Force (DETF) which shall be headed by the Assistant Schools Division/City Superintendents concerned.

DepEd assures its continued support to the teachers in these elections. "We are confident that, despite past experiences, our commitment to our responsibility as guardians of the ballot remains undiminished. It is our duty to God and country to safeguard the integrity of the elections. It is our hope that we will all work together to ensure clean, honest, and peaceful elections," said Luistro.

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