



PRESS RELEASE

Marawi learners' safety remains DepEd's topmost priority

CAGAYAN DE ORO, May 31, 2017 – “We believe that opening classes as scheduled will contribute in the normalization activities . . . education will not be compromised by this crisis. However, whatever, wherever they are, we will reach out to the children,” Department of Education (DepEd) Secretary Leonor Magtolis Briones firmly stated on May 30.

But this is not without placing the necessary measures in ensuring a safe learning environment for learners affected by the situation in Marawi City, Lanao del Sur.

Instead of waiting for reports from the field, Briones promptly convened an emergency meeting with Mindanao DepEd officials in Cagayan de Oro City to assess the current situation in Marawi. Following consultations with Regional Directors, Schools Division Superintendents, and DepEd Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) officials, classes in Marawi City is postponed—for two weeks at the most. Briones pressed that the delay in class opening is to ensure the safety of learners and not because the schools will be used as evacuation centers.

Moreover, the opening of classes in eight districts from Lanao del Sur 1, those nearest to the armed conflict, will also be postponed to further ensure the safety of learners and DepEd employees.

“We reviewed our decision after seeking the advice of the Chair of the National Security Council (NSC), and after receiving and studying the reports from our Disaster Risk Reduction Management Service (DRRMS) team and DepEd officials in Mindanao,” Briones pointed out.

Schools with postponed class opening will still observe the same last school date since these schools may have classes on weekends to keep up with the national school calendar.

Briones further said that the neighboring cities of Marawi already conducted student mapping on those who fled to these cities after the armed conflict situation arose, “Our regional directors already have their inventory of additional learners evacuated to Iligan and Cagayan de Oro because they know, come June 5, there will be more learners under their jurisdiction than the originally projected.”

Noting that these learners don't have the necessary school records needed when transferring to another school because of their sudden relocation, Briones explained that displaced learners may enroll to another school even with just their Learner Reference Number (LRN).

This transferring and enrollment setup for learners from Marawi will be in effect nationwide and not just in schools in Mindanao.

Another issue addressed at the meeting was the communication barrier that might occur once the learners from Marawi transfer to another school. DepEd, in cooperation with the DepEd ARMM, will mobilize teachers who are familiar with the language or dialect in Marawi, and will deploy them to teach in areas with transferees from Marawi.

"Ang DepEd ARMM ang magpo-provide ng teachers habang ang DepEd Central Office (CO) naman ang magpo-provide ng funding for the teachers," Briones explained.

The meeting was also attended by Undersecretaries Alberto Muyot and Alain Del Pascua, Assistant Secretaries Nepomuceno Malaluan and Revsee Escobedo, and other DepEd officials and representatives.

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