

## PRESS RELEASE

DepEd launches *EskweLA BAN sa Sigarilyo*

PASIG CITY, August 1, 2017— Further intensifying its fight against tobacco, the Department of Education (DepEd) today launched *EskweLA BAN sa Sigarilyo*, a project implemented in partnership with the Tobacco-Free Kids Action Fund, aimed at strengthening the implementation of the Department's comprehensive tobacco control policy.

The project brand *EskweLA BAN sa Sigarilyo* is a play on the Filipino words *eskwela*, *laban*, and *eskwela ban* to communicate that schools (*eskwela*), through the school's bans (*eskwela ban*), are on a collective fight (*laban*) against tobacco (*sigarilyo*).

Intended to carry two meanings—either the school's bans on cigarettes or the school's fight against tobacco— *EskweLA BAN sa Sigarilyo* aims to increase public awareness of the bans stipulated in DepEd Order (DO) No. 48, s. 2016, or the Policy and Guidelines on Comprehensive Tobacco Control, and to build the capacity of schools to effectively take a stand against tobacco by implementing the strategies enumerated in DO 48.

DO 48 mandates the Child Protection Committee (CPC), chaired by the principal, to monitor compliance with and report violations of various tobacco control policies, such as: 1) bans on smoking in schools; 2) bans on the sale and advertisement of tobacco products within the 100-meter perimeter of schools; and 3) bans on receiving sponsorships from the tobacco industry and other unnecessary interactions with the tobacco industry.

Meanwhile, the strategies that the DepEd Order identifies for the effective implementation of the policy are: 1) information, education, and communication; 2) cessation interventions; 3) collaborations, partnerships and linkages; 4) capacity building; and 5) reporting and monitoring.

"We see this project aligned with the government's intensified campaign against smoking, as demonstrated in the recent issuance of the Executive Order (EO) No. 26," Undersecretary for Legal Affairs Alberto Muyot said.

EO 26, which provides for the establishment of smoke-free environments in public and enclosed places, designates school principals as the persons-in-charge who shall ensure that schools are 100% smoke-free, and that any tobacco product selling, advertising, and/or promotion located within 100 meters from the school's perimeter, is reported to the nearest Smoke-Free Task Force.

*EskweLA BAN sa Sigarilyo* project includes the development and pilot-testing of monitoring and reporting tools, training manuals, and school-based campaign materials, in selected schools in the cities of Pasig and Makati, and the provinces of Batangas, Bulacan, Bataan, and Pampanga. The pilot-testing will be completed by December this year and the final outputs shall be rolled out to the rest of the country to support CPCs nationwide in their implementation of the comprehensive tobacco control policy.

Like and follow the Facebook page of *EskweLA BAN sa Sigarilyo* (@tobaccofreedeped) or log on to its website (<http://tobaccofreedeped.org/>) to learn more about the project and the comprehensive tobacco control policy.

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