

PRESS RELEASE**Briones lauds Brigada Eskwela 2018 nat'l awardees**

DIPOLOG CITY, December 15, 2018 – Department of Education (DepEd) Secretary Leonor Magtolis Briones commended 131 public elementary and secondary schools recognized as the best implementers of *Brigada Eskwela* from 16 regions of the country.

“If you are a multi-awarded school in *Brigada Eskwela*, therefore, it says something about your school. I commend you for accumulating such award, for being self-reliant, and for working with the LGUs, churches and other civil society groups,” Briones stated during the National *Brigada Eskwela* Awards held at Zamboanga del Norte Provincial Convention and Sports Center on November 24.

The Education chief further underscored the importance of *Brigada Eskwela* in uniting DepEd’s partners and stakeholders in the pursuit of quality, accessible, relevant, and liberating basic education for the Filipino learners: “It’s a statement that whatever our differences are, we are here in this hall, we come from different political persuasions from the different regions, from different religious beliefs, but we are one with the belief that education is the most important legacy that we can give to our children.”

Meanwhile, Undersecretary for Legislative Affairs, External Partnerships, and School Sports Tonisito M. C. Umali, Esq., highlighted the 22 million volunteers mobilized in this year’s national schools’ maintenance week, which is almost twice as last year’s 12 million.

“Compared to 2016, we see a steady and impressive growth in the total resources generated,” the Undersecretary added, emphasizing the almost P4.7 billion worth of resources generated by the program in 2018 alone.

Seventeen schools, which have sustained their achievements for three consecutive years, received distinction as Hall of Famers, while 29 were awarded as *Brigada Eskwela* Plus Most Sustained Schools during the ceremonies led by Briones and Umali.

Special awards were also granted to CARAGA region for the highest percentage of increase in volunteer turn-out, as well as to Region IV-A (CALABARZON) for obtaining the highest percentage of increase in resources generated. Three regional and 18 division *Brigada Eskwela* coordinators/partnership focal persons were further bestowed with leadership awards.

Seventeen local government officials from all over the county also received the *Gawad Ka-Brigada*.

With this year’s theme, “*Pagkakaisa Para sa Handa, Ligtas at Matatag na Paaralan Tungo sa Magandang Kinabukasan*,” *Brigada Eskwela* continues to mobilize the community and generate stakeholder support to make classrooms and facilities ready for school opening, towards the betterment of the learning conditions of the Filipino learners.

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