

PRESS RELEASE**DepEd lauds educators, leaders for exemplary efforts in education delivery**

PASIG CITY, December 14, 2018 – The Department of Education (DepEd) presented the six awardees of the 2018 Civil Service Commission (CSC) Honor Awards Program and the 2017 *Gawad* Career Executive Service (CES) – composed of teachers and education leaders – for going above and beyond their call of duty on December 10 at the *Bulwagan ng Karunungan*, DepEd Central Office in Pasig City.

Four teachers received the CSC *Dangal ng Bayan* award for their performance of an extraordinary act and consistent demonstration of exemplary ethical behavior. These were Roderick Labay, Head Teacher I of Apnagan Elementary School in Calapan City, Oriental Mindoro; Annie Lee Masongsong, Teacher I of Labo Elementary School in Calapan City, Oriental Mindoro; Windel Alvarez, Master Teacher I and Alternative Learning System (ALS) instructor of Tagbon Elementary School in Caramoan, Camarines Sur; and Lowel Andrian Solayao, Teacher III of Pilar National Comprehensive High School in Pilar, Sorsogon.

Annabell Alipo-on, Principal II of Payao Elementary School in Binalbagan, Negros Occidental received the CSC *Pagasa* award for her outstanding contributions resulting from an idea or performance that directly benefited more than one department of the government.

Meanwhile, a DepEd official received the *Gawad* CES, a presidential award that recognizes members in the CES for their significant contributions in the areas of innovation, information and communications technology, social services, administrative reforms, and public policy. This was Cristito Eco, OIC-Assistant Regional Director of DepEd-Region V, who was then the Schools Division Superintendent of Catbalogan City in Samar.

Education Secretary Leonor Magtolis Briones conveyed her appreciation for all the awardees, and thanked them for bringing honor to the whole Education department and for serving as inspiration to other officials, teachers, and personnel in the education sector.

“What makes these awardees special and stand out to others is their passion to go above and beyond the call of what a teacher should be. These awardees show us that teaching is a very special profession,” Briones stated, recognizing all teachers who silently devote their lives to their profession.

“They are only six out of the 800,000 teachers nationwide, but there are many more who are faceless and unrecognized,” she added.

She further highlighted that teaching is not just imparting knowledge, but also “guiding learners, shaping lives, and going beyond and above, sometimes, what is physically required of us.”

Last mile learners

Moreover, the Secretary emphasized in her speech that the Department continuously conducts efforts to trace and reach all last mile learners, or those learners who are in far-flung areas where the reach of education seems impossible.

“We are tracing our last mile learners in places where there are still no school buildings, just make-shift structures, and where there is no chalk, paper, and occasionally, the teachers cannot make it for various reasons,” Briones said.

“We are going to these last mile learners so that we can face you, and look at you straight in the eye when we say we are building school buildings, giving computers, and conducting efforts and programs that include those who are suffering from poverty and those in the far islands, mountains, hills, and in places where there are many threats — both psychological and physical threats,” the Education chief concluded.

Also present at the event were Undersecretaries Annalyn Sevilla and Nepomuceno Malaluan, and Assistant Secretary G.H. Ambat.

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