

PRESS RELEASE**DepEd works with Legislative, DBM to restore cut in subsidies to private schools**

PASIG CITY, September 11, 2019 – The Department of Education (DepEd) on Tuesday reassured private educational organizations that it is working with the Legislative branch to restore the budget for Government Assistance and Subsidies (GAS) Program in Fiscal Year 2020 to the agency’s original proposed amount.

Undersecretary for Finance Service and Education Programs Delivery Unit Annalyn Sevilla emphasized that DepEd continues to seek the support of the Legislative branch and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) to restore the reduced 2020 fund level and ensure the continuity of the program, especially since complementarity with private educational institutions is mandated by law.

“We’re seeking the support of DBM, Congress, and Senate *na hindi pwedeng mahinto ang Voucher Program at this time kasi marami pa tayong kinukumpleto na facilities sa public schools at mayroon din tayong batas na kailangang sundin. Pero kung babawasan po tayo at mayroon pa tayong payables na parating, kailangan nating kontrolin ‘yung para sa mga bagong mag-a-avail ng program. Kung ano lang po ‘yung mapagkakasya namin sa ibibigay na budget for the Voucher Program for next year, iyon po ang ibibigay natin na control level, or slot na available,”* Sevilla stated.

The DepEd originally proposed P52 billion to fund GAS next year, but the DBM’s 2020 National Expenditure Program (NEP) allocated a budget of P31.18 billion – a 2.93% decrease from the 2019 General Appropriations Act (GAA) of P32.12 billion for the said program.

Whether or not the budget is restored, Sevilla pointed out: “We will have to continue funding for the incoming Grade 12 voucher recipients and ESC [Education Service Contracting] grantees, but we need to calibrate the number of new voucher beneficiaries depending on funding level we will get for 2020 GAA [General Appropriations Act]. We are still asking for additional P4 billion for Voucher Program for 2020 to continue acceptance of new voucher students for Grades 11.”

Formerly called Government Assistance for Students and Teachers in Private Education (GATSPE), GAS is the Department’s program that recognizes the complementarity between public and private educational institutions. GAS aims to make private education a viable option for learners, in fulfillment of DepEd’s mandate to promote and make basic education accessible to all.

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