

DepEd welcomes legislators' support for policy review, reforms in education

PASIG CITY, August 20, 2019 – Department of Education Secretary Leonor Magtolis Briones on Tuesday welcomed the support of several legislators who have expressed their intent to help address gaps and push for reforms in the education sector amid the challenges faced by the agency.

During the Department's organizational meeting with the House of Representatives' Committee on Basic Education and Culture, led by Pasig City Rep. Roman Romulo, the Secretary apprised members with the Commission on Audit's observations and the Department's responses and actions, and called for a review of laws that impact DepEd's delivery of quality basic education.

"We committed that we will submit a report, and today we are submitting a full report on each of the 23 findings of COA. At the same time, Mr. Chair, since the legislature looks at the policies of government, perhaps it is time to ask several policy questions that you may want to consider not only for education but for governance as well," the Education chief stated.

Aside from the Department's earlier push for the review of the procurement law and the book development law, DepEd also secured the support of several legislators in addressing perennial concerns on the special hardship allowance, teachers' compensation, special education fund, and the strengthening of complementarity between the private and public sectors in education.

The Secretary reiterated her support for an equitable and sustainable salary increase for government employees, which include public school teachers. In the Lower House, 36 bills have been filed in support of the call for additional compensation and benefits for public school teachers.

She further reported that the Department is looking into how to increase benefits of teachers without creating disparities across the civil service and is proposing the creation of positions for Teachers IV, V, VI, and VII to enable teachers to move to higher positions. She also gave her support for bills that will pave the way for higher teaching supplies allowance and asked the committee to consider the holistic approach on this.

The Education chief likewise acknowledged and conveyed the Department's appreciation and support for the nine new bills that will improve DepEd's current Special Education (SPED) Program through the institutionalization of inclusive education for children and youth with special needs.

The DepEd similarly welcomed Camarines Sur Rep. Luis Raymund Villafuerte's motion to list and revisit "unfunded and underfunded" education-related laws that effectively leave the Department unable to fully implement these measures.

“Over the years, DepEd and the Congress have been working on measures to augment the income of teachers. DepEd is also working with the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas and the Government Service Insurance System to capacitate teachers on personal financial management,” Briones emphasized.

Finally, when asked about the bills on the Reserved Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC), the Secretary emphasized the inclusion of the following priority concerns in implementation: inclusion of patriotism, nationalism, and values; Filipino citizenship, civic duty, and discipline; respect for human and civil rights, rule of law, and law enforcement; critical thinking and leadership; disaster preparedness and response, rescue, and first aid; anti-drug abuse; and strict adherence to the Child Protection Policy, Anti-Hazing Law, and Anti-Bullying Policy.

The Education chief signified her commitment to work with the Congress in promoting the social and economic welfare of teachers and in improving the Filipinos’ access to quality basic education.

END