

OPENING MESSAGE OF MINISTER MOHAGHER IQBAL

Minister of Basic, Higher, and Technical Education

OK sa DepEd 2019 Regional Kick-off for BARMM-MBHTE

Pedro C. Dolores Elementary School
Upi North District, Maguindanao II Division
25 July 2019

Asalaamu alaikum warakmatulahi taala wa barakatuh.

Esteemed BARMM Officials, faculty and students of the Pedro C. Dolores Elementary School, guests, ladies, and gentlemen: Good Morning; Magandang Umaga sa ating lahat!

It is my privilege for me, in my capacity as Education Minister, to lead this significant event, with an equally important message: ensuring the health and nutrition services for our school personnel and students.

As stipulated in the Bangsamoro Organic Law, the Ministry of Basic, Higher, and Technical Education's (MBHTE) overarching goal is to improve the Bangsamoro educational system. Meaning, we aim to provide quality, holistic, and relevant education to every learner and also ensure the quality of our teaching and learning infrastructures. I want to emphasize that we are not only referring to their intellectual, moral, and spiritual development, but also their physical and mental growth. No doubt, it would be difficult for our students to take on curricular and extra-curricular activities if they are not healthy or not consuming food with the proper nutritional value.

To contribute to their physical development, it is imperative the MBHTE promote healthy eating habits, uphold safety food standards, and invest in proper, effective, comprehensive

health program in our schools. It would be unacceptable if our students would miss school days, get behind in their lessons or drop-out due to health-related issues, such as malnourishment, unintended pregnancies, and drug addiction.

Due to the importance of Health and Nutrition to every learner's educational potential and productivity, we are adopting the provisions of Dep Ed Order No. 28 series of 2018 by launching "Oplan Kalusugan" in the Bangsamoro. We, therefore, intend to promote health and nutrition in six (6) major program areas:

1. School-Based Feeding Program;
2. National Drug Education Program;
3. Adolescent Reproductive Health;
4. Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) in Schools (Wins) Program;
5. Mental Health; and
6. Medical, Nursing and Dental Services

Unfortunately, the Bangsamoro is behind in terms of human development indices compared to the rest of the country. The Bangsamoro government needs to launch an intensified campaign on health and nutrition to keep our young people in school and to ensure a bright future ahead of them. The Ministry of Basic, Higher and Technical Education is committed to not only improving the teaching standards and facilities, but also the school performance and learning capacity of every student in the Bangsamoro through – but not limited to – comprehensive health and nutrition services.

Nelson Mandela, the anti-apartheid movement leader and former President of South Africa, said: "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." But if I may humbly add, you also need the energy to study and the strength to use that knowledge and skills to make a difference. Hence, we should prioritize the health and well-being of MBHTE personnel, school officials, teachers, and our students.

I want to thank all of you present today for joining us in this kick-off for Oplan Kalusugan. My thanks to the Department of Education Central for their support. My heartfelt gratitude to the Government of Maguindanao and the Pedro C. Dolores Elementary School for hosting this significant event.

We look forward to working with you in improving the education system in the Bangsamoro but pursuing areas of mutual importance.

Sukran and have a pleasant day to all.



MBHTE