

Inspirational Message of Minister Mohagher Iqbal

Ministry of Basic, Higher, Technical Education

Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao

Brigada Eskwela 2019 Kick-off Event:

“Matatag na Bayan para sa Maunlad na Paaralan”

“Bangsamorong Nagkakaisa para sa Maunlad na Paaralan”

Asalaamu alaikum warakmatulahi taala wa barakatuh.

May Peace and Mercy and Blessings of Allah be Upon You.

The Honorable Ahod Balawag Ebrahim, Interim Chief Minister of the BARMM;

The Honorable Mayor Shameem Mastura;

Esteemed Education Ministry officials, and school administrators:

- Assistant Secretary Alfhadar Pajiji
- Bai Meriam A. Kawit, Schools Division Superintendent

<insert other VIPs here>

Fellow educators, civil society groups, parents, guests, and our dear students – Magandang hapon sa ating lahat.

On behalf of the Ministry of Basic, Higher and Technical Education, it is my privilege to lead this year’s Brigada Eskwela, with the national theme “Matatag na Bayan para sa Maunlad ng Paaralan.” At the regional level, the theme is “Bangsamoro Nagkakaisa para sa Maunlad na Paaralan.” 2019 marks the 16th year of Brigada Eskwela, which started as a voluntary endeavor back in 2003. In 2008, the national government, through the Department of Education, determined that Brigada Eskwela become an integral part of the public schools’ calendar, conducted every second week of May.

Whether it is voluntary or mandatory, the main goal of the program is essentially the same: “to bring together all education stakeholders to participate and contribute their time, effort, and resources to prepare public school facilities for the opening of the school year in June.”

I should emphasize that this program is more than just cleaning up schools, repairing an old part of a building, or applying a fresh coat of paint. Brigada Eskwela is about coming together as a community and ensuring our children and young people are learning and thriving in a secure, inspiring, and healthy environment. Hence, for this year, we are also encouraged to conduct activities supporting the advocacy against

illegal drugs, orientation on health and sanitation, and training on disaster response and resiliency.

Somehow connected to the principles behind Brigada Eskwela is the familiar African proverb: "It takes a village to raise a child." It means a community has a role in building a strong foundation for a young person to succeed throughout his or her life. If a community is indifferent, unsympathetic or conflict-ridden, then it could hurt its residents, including children. Similarly, if a school, which has become a learner's second home, is ineffective or does not have the support of a community, then it would be unable to accomplish its mission – to provide for the fullest possible intellectual and moral development of each student.

As our theme emphasizes, we need a strong, inclusive Bangsamoro community to push for quality and progressive education for our young people and learners in general. As I said earlier, this is the very heart of the Brigada Eskwela program: for the community to come together and work towards better education for all.

The Bangsamoro Autonomous Government in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), including the Ministry of Education, is also part of the community. Guided by the principle of "moral governance" as espoused by the honorable Interim Chief Minister Ebrahim, we in the Ministry of Basic, Higher and Technical Education would strive to improve the Bangsamoro's educational system as asserted in the Bangsamoro Organic Law. Moreover, the ministry will be at the forefront of strengthening partnerships with relevant stakeholders to address the resource gaps faced by the education sector. We shall also continue introducing necessary reforms within the Ministry to aid and motivate our teachers and school administrators.

I want to thank all officials, parents, nongovernment organizations, teachers, students and individuals who are with us today and would later on volunteer to do repair and maintenance work of our public elementary and high schools. Your efforts would significantly contribute to the creation of a better learning environment for our students.

Sukran and a pleasant afternoon to all.
