

PRESS RELEASE**DepEd: DoH's proposed condom distribution in schools still in talks, not a 'mass event'**

PASIG CITY, *December 17, 2016* – The Department of Education (DepEd) has not given the Department of Health (DoH) the “green light” to distribute condoms in schools.

Education Secretary Leonor Magtolis Briones on Wednesday disclosed to members of the media that there has been an informal discussion, but DepEd has not given its consent to finally implement the health agency’s plan. Top-level formal talks is being initiated by DepEd.

“That is a very sensitive issue. . . *Hindi sila tatayo diyan sa pinto at bawat pumasok ay bibigyan kagaya ng mga nagbibigay ng mga leaflets sa shopping center, hindi ganun. . . At hindi ka magdi-distribute kung walang counselling, kailangan may magpapaliwanag.* It’s not going to be a mass event,” Briones told reporters during a recent media luncheon in Mandaluyong City.

The Education chief further clarified that in the event of implementation, it will be at the level wherein students are capable of understanding and discerning through the continuing age-appropriate reproductive health education in schools.

“Most likely, it will be at the level of junior high and senior high school *na makakadiscern at makakaintindi na yung mga bata. . . Siguro I was 11 or 12, our teacher at that time was already teaching us about reproductive health,*” Briones pointed out.

As part of ensuring that the proposed distribution, in case of implementation, will not become an instrument for inapt promotion of promiscuity and debasement of moral values, teachers will have to be further trained on how to properly explain to learners the rationale of disseminating contraceptives and the many repercussions of pre-marital sex.

“*Ang gusto talaga nila ay ma-increase yung awareness sa AIDS, kasi tumataas ang level ng teenage pregnancy at HIV/AIDS.* Our next generation is really at risk,” Briones maintained.

Likewise, DepEd will protect the rights of learners and families with strong convictions against the distribution by ensuring that the DoH initiative will be complied with voluntarily.

DepEd is confident that through responsible education and accountable information dissemination, every stakeholder is a partner in safeguarding the rights and welfare of the Filipino learners.

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