



President Arroyo bats for 'lean, mean, but well-paid' gov't personnel

MANILA, Jan. 4 (PGON) -President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo said today that she would ask the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) to study the proposal to exempt non-teaching personnel of the Department of Education (DepEd) from the Rationalization Law.

But she said outright that she prefers a "lean but well-paid bureaucracy" to a bloated government bureaucracy.

The President was reacting to the statement of Manila Schools Superintendent Lourdes Quinones that public schools were suffering from a shortage of janitors and clerks.

The problems hounding the country's education system were brought up during the meeting the President held this morning with Manila city schools and other education officials at the cramped principal's office of the Maceda Integrated School along Buenos Aires St. in Sta. Mesa, Manila.

Also present during the consultations were Education Secretary Jesli Lopus and Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim.

Garbed in her favorite color – a blue pants and short-sleeved blouse ensemble—the President arrived a few minutes before the scheduled 10

a.m. visit. The Manila City School Band played the lively traditional welcome march for dignitaries as she shook the hands of parents who waited for her at the entrance of the school gymnasium, where she later distributed one-kilo packs of rice to elementary school students.

Only teachers, military men and policemen are exempted from the no-replacement rule of the Rationalization Law which calls for the trimming down of the government bureaucracy.

She said with the ongoing government computerization program, teachers and other school officials would have less need for clerks.

During the meeting, the President suggested that the city school officials assign redundant employees to positions vacated by retiring employees, and to areas needing more personnel.

The President explained to the teachers and other education personnel, who thanked her for granting them a performance bonus, that a bloated bureaucracy will only reduce the bonuses due them.

The teachers agreed that last year's "performance bonus" was the biggest-ever Christmas cash gift that they received from the government. #

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