

THE LEARNING CONTINUITY PLAN for BASIC EDUCATION



In Time of COVID-19



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May 11, 2020: IATF Approves the BE-LCP, School Opening on August 24, 2020

Secretary Leonor Magtolis Briones

At the IATF Meeting held last May 8, 2020, I presented the highlights of the draft Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP), and the DepEd's decision on the date of the school opening for SY 2020-2021.

The IATF resolved:

"The Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan of the Department of Education (DepEd) as presented is hereby adopted the essential points which are as follows:

1. Opening of classes for the basic education shall be on 24 August 2020 and ending on 30 April 2021;
2. Opening of private schools will be allowed within the period provided by law. Provided that school learning continuity plan shall be submitted; no face-to-face classes will be allowed earlier than August 24, 2020; and from August 24, face-to-face learning shall only be allowed when the local risk severity grading permits, and subject to compliance with minimum health standards;
3. Adoption of various learning delivery options such as but not limited to face-to-face, blended learnings, distance learnings, and homeschooling and other modes of delivery shall be implemented depending on the local COVID Risk Severity Classification and compliance with minimum health standards; and
4. Conduct of curricular and co-curricular activities involving gatherings such as science fairs, showcase of portfolios, trade fairs, school sports, campus journalism, festival of talents, job fairs, and other similar activities is cancelled, except those conducted online.

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The IATF received the pre-final draft BE-LCP for dissemination to member agencies for comments and/or feedback. In the course of the discussion, Secretary Martin Andanar offered the use of the government's television and radio stations for the implementation of the BE-LCP, especially for distance learning programs. We will work on the details of this partnership between DepEd and PCOO in the coming days. Organizations from the private sector and civil society are also offering facilities.

With the IATF affirming our recommendations, I am issuing today the School Calendar and Activities for School Year 2020-2021.

I acknowledge the fears and apprehensions of our learners, parents and teachers, that attending schools in August might still not be safe in light of COVID-19. I would like to assure everyone, as I have presented to the IATF, that we will observe all the guidelines of the DOH and the IATF, on whether the risks classification in a locality will allow face-to-face attendance in schools, or not. I also acknowledge those who have expressed full faith and support for DepEd. We will implement a "safe back to schools program", consisting of health standards that will ensure everyone's safety in areas that will already allow physical attendance in schools.

Given the anticipated disruptions in face-to-face holding of classes, and the need for social distancing, distance learning will be a major component of learning delivery for the incoming school year. I similarly acknowledge the fears and apprehensions of our learners, parents and teachers, that we might not be ready for distance learning, with issues about access to online platforms and availability of gadgets. I assure everyone that we are working double time to ready our system, at the central and field units, to deliver accessible and quality distance education. I seek the cooperation of all to have an open mind, and to allow us the opportunity over the next three months, to fully orient and inform everyone how this will be done. At the end of the day, after we have given our explanations, the parents will have the final decision whether to allow their children to proceed.

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The highlights of this year's school calendar and activities are as follows:

1. After consultations and internal discussions, **DepEd has reached a decision to set the opening of School Year (SY) 2020-2021 on August 24, 2020.** However, the days in August prior to the formal school opening will be used to provide learners with assignments to explore foundational topics for deepening during the year, orientation on the utilization of alternative learning delivery modalities and corresponding learners' materials, and mental health and psychosocial support activities. These pre-opening activities devoted to the attainment of the learning objectives for the school year, as indicated in # 1, shall be counted as class days.
2. The school year will end on **April 30, 2021.**
3. **Because of the compressed school year, I am exercising the prerogative to authorize the conduct of distance learning activities on Saturdays.** Should religious considerations prohibit these Saturday activities, they shall be undertaken on Sundays. In all, the total class days in the 2020-2021 school calendar will be 203 days.
4. **School opening will not necessarily mean traditional face-to-face learning in classroom.** The physical opening of schools will depend on the risk severity grading or classification of a locality, pursuant to guidelines of the DOH, IATF or the OP. Even in areas where schools are allowed to open, physical distancing will still be required, which will necessitate schools to combine face-to-face learning with distance learning.
5. Schools and CLCs, under the supervision of the Regional and Division Offices, are authorized to decide on the specific learning delivery modalities (such as blended and online learning delivery modes through the Learning Resources

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portal and DepEd Commons; use of TV and radio; and learning modules and packets both in print and digital format); which may be deemed appropriate in their context. **Where face-to-face modality is allowed, there shall only be a maximum of 15 to 20 learners in each class in compliance with the social distancing measures set by the DOH.**

6. **Private schools and state/local universities and colleges (SUCs/LUCs) offering basic education will be allowed to open classes** within the period authorized by Republic Act No. 7797, which is on the first Monday of June but not later than the last day of August, Provided:
 - a. **No face-to-face classes will be allowed earlier than August 24, 2020**, and from then on, face-to-face classes may be conducted only in areas allowed to open physically.
 - b. **Private schools, SUCs and LUCs offering basic education are enjoined to submit their plan for compliance with minimum health standards that will be issued by DepEd**, consistent with guidelines by the Department of Health (DOH), the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF), and the OP.
 - c. They are also enjoined to submit their **Learning Continuity Plan showing alternative delivery modes of learning** when face-to-face learning is not allowed, in accordance with the guidelines to be issued by DepEd.
 - d. Said schools should notify in advance their respective regional offices (ROs) regarding any deviation from the school calendar.

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All efforts and initiatives to implement the LCP will greatly depend on family and community support. We need to prepare not only the schools, learners, administrators, and teaching and non-teaching personnel, but also the parents or guardians of the learners. **There will be orientations and capacity building for parents and guardians to prepare them for the new role/responsibilities that they will do.** DepEd needs the support and partnership of the LGUs to maximize and align their Special Education Fund in providing resources and assistance for the LCP. We shall endeavor to have strong engagement by national government agencies, private organizations, and other stakeholders in contributing to educational needs, especially at this critical time

The implementation of the BE-LCP will be difficult. It is not a perfect plan. It is not possible to have a perfect plan with so many unknowns & imponderables. Operational complications can be expected along the way.

Thus, we seek the understanding, support and solidarity of our DepEd family and all our stakeholders, in true spirit of unity and bayanihan or mutual help.