

## DEPED PROGRESSIVE EXPANSION PHASE OF LIMITED FACE-TO-FACE CLASSES

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Nobody can dispute the significance of education in the modern world. It plays a crucial role in every aspect of our lives. People should keep learning despite their circumstances. The type of schooling that parents will select for their children today is confusing. Given that the COVID-19 epidemic is currently underway, teachers believe that face-to-face teaching is still the best method of instruction because most of the knowledge can only be acquired through face-to-face interaction.

After 20 months of blended learning, students in regions of the country determined to be at low risk for the coronavirus began to attend a small number of face-to-face sessions in November 2020. With the obstacles of the pandemic, the Department of Education has made progress in restoring face-to-face classes alongside other governmental organizations and partners. This school year is unlike any other. Students can once again embrace the pleasures of attending school after losing out on in-person lessons and making new acquaintances for more than a year owing to the pandemic.

The Department of Education (DepEd) has suggested the "progressive extension" of restricted in-person instruction in areas with Alert Levels 1 and 2, but it has also stated that it will first seek feedback from other agencies and parents of children. Education Secretary Leonor Briones suggested that the extension of in-person programs begin no sooner than the first week of February 2022 during a pre-recorded meeting with President Rodrigo Duterte.

In managing the process of reopening schools, emerging insights from country experiences were jointly published by UNICEF, the World Bank, the World Food Programme, and the UN Refugee Agency. It is best for us to learn from other nations' experiences as we move toward the gradual expansion of face-to-face education because they have already dealt with the difficulties of doing so. When reopening public schools, adequate funds should be distributed among them for the execution of health and safety standards. Additionally, precautions should be taken to lessen physical touch and restrict transmission.

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