



## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION | OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

### PRESS RELEASE

### **On home quarantine, Briones still leads DepEd's response to COVID-19**

*PASIG CITY, March 14, 2020* – Secretary Leonor Magtolis Briones is continuing to discharge her functions as the Department of Education chief even on a voluntary self-quarantine.

Receiving messages of concern from friends, relatives and the DepEd community, Secretary Briones reiterated that she is currently on a home quarantine only for extra precautionary measure until the DepEd officials who may have been exposed are cleared.

“Wala naman akong symptoms at all. It [home quarantine] is more of precautionary dahil ako I deal with them [officials who may be exposed] every day,” Briones said in a media interview on Friday.

Briones also said she had no direct exposure from COVID-19-affected person. None of the DepEd officials present in either of the two meetings (February 28 and March 5) where one participant tested positive have shown any known symptoms. The officials during the February 28 meeting in the Central Office have shown no symptoms past the recommended 14-day quarantine period.

Since the start of her voluntary self-quarantine, Sec. Briones remains on top of the Department's management as she gives instructions to Execom, gets situation reports and DepEd Task Force COVID-19 updates via telecommuting tools, takes media interviews, and signs urgent documents needed by DepEd.

On Wednesday, March 11, she approved DepEd Order No. 2-2020 establishing the guidelines on graduation rites in light of the public health situation; and DepEd Memo No. 39, authorizing the prudent use of regular MOOE and local funds to implement measures in preparing and responding to the COVID-19 threats, particularly for DepEd offices and schools.

The DepEd chief also gave the go-signal of the proposals of the Finance strand to fast track the processing of salaries of teaching and non-teaching personnel; to request the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) for early cash release for 2nd quarter to finance critical activities, including the appeal for reconsideration of PBB 2018; and to provide additional provident funds to be made readily available for affected COVID-19 personnel.



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Briones also reiterated her reminder for affected learners to not go to crowded places despite the suspension of classes.

“Tinuturuan naman natin sila na sundin ang batas, sundin ang authority, sundin ang teacher, and ngayon, dapat sundin pa rin ang payo ng mga official kasi its for their own and the community's good,” Briones said on the same interview.

DepEd officials and personnel who may be exhibiting symptoms of respiratory illness have standing instructions to coordinate with the DepEd Task Force COVID-19 for proper assessment of risk, and for guidance, through the following contact numbers: 0928-871-8053 (Smart) o 0915-205-3244 (Globe).

For other concerns, the public can also contact DepEd Public Assistance and Action Center (PAAC) through these lines: (02) 8636-1663 or 8633-1942.

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