

# DEPED CARAGA News

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September 11-19, 2025



DepEd Caraga Regional Director Maria Ines C. Asuncion (Center), with the officials from CESB, DENR-ACE, and ACE ComPaSS after the signing of the MOU

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Facebook Page

## Champions of compassion

QUEZON CITY- In celebration of the 125th Philippine Civil Service Month and the National Lung Month, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) through the Association of Career Executives, and the Association of Career Executives for Compassion, Paglaum, Servanthood, and Stewardship (ACE ComPaSS) sealed their commitment to "Compassion Project" through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed on September 11, 2025 at the DENR Central Office, Visayas Avenue, Quezon City.

The partnership underscores the call for governance that is not only competent but also compassionate, grounded in care for communities most vulnerable

to human and natural calamities. Messages of inspiration were delivered by CESB Chairperson Dr. Urdujah Gaerlan Alvarado, DENR ACE President Atty. Analiza Rebuelta-Teh, ACE ComPaSS President Dr. Hiro Masuda, and CESB Executive Director Marcy Ballesteros, all stressing that leadership finds its highest meaning when paired with empathy, hope, and integrity.

ACE ComPaSS officers likewise joined in the solidarity event, including CHED Region VIII Director Dr. Maximo Aljibe (Executive Vice President), DSWD CALABARZON Director Mylah So Gatchalian (Program Director for Luzon), DENR Assistant Secretary Atty. Norlito Eneran (Legal Counsel), and

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OPLAN KALUSUGAN (OK) SA DEPED



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Nuceso In President Dhim Radja. The partnership was quickly translated into concrete action. In collaboration with the Lung Center of the Philippines, the DENR launched a Blood Letting Program and Early Detection of Lung Cancer campaign, supported by the Inner Wheel Club of Chinatown under the leadership of President Dra. Amy Bautista and Charter President Lily Chua. The day also featured the Kadiwa ng Pangulo program, which extended P20-per-kilo rice and affordable fresh vegetables to senior citizens and vulnerable groups.

ACE ComPaSS played a vital role in the event, with Regional Director Dr. Maria Ines C. Asuncion, ACE ComPaSS Treasurer Maria Teresa Real, Bayugan City Schools Division Superintendent, and Butuan City Chief Education Supervisor Kevin Hope Salvaña representing the region. Their participation highlighted DepEd Caraga's ongoing compassionate initiatives for the less fortunate, including disaster-affected learners and families, as well as those displaced by social crises. Under Dr. Asuncion's leadership, the region has been recognized for providing psychosocial support, relief assistance, and continuity of education measures for learners and teachers.

Their presence further underscored the region's commitment to servant leadership and responsive governance. By engaging in such inter-agency efforts, DepEd Caraga once again affirmed its mission to extend compassion where it matters most: supporting learners, educators, and communities whose resilience is continually tested by calamities and hardship.



 Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Facebook Page)



*School Heads from the 20 participating schools during the turnover ceremony with Usec Malcolm S. Garma (Center), Regional Director Maria Ines C. Asuncion, CESO IV, and Schools Division Superintendents Minerva T. Albis and Teresa M. Real*

## ACE ComPaSS and BSP Plant P200K Seed Fund to Cultivate Nutrition and Entrepreneurship in Caraga Schools

Jairha Anne T. Sususco  
COS-ESSD

BUTUAN CITY—A partnership between the Association of Career Executives for Compassion, Paglaum, Servanthood, and Stewardship (ACE ComPaSS) and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) is sowing the seeds of change in Caraga schools. The two organizations have officially partnered with the Department of Education (DepEd) Caraga to infuse P200,000 in funding to strengthen the Garden-to-Table School Business Model (GTSBM) across the Schools Divisions of Butuan City and Bayugan City.

The collaboration was formalized with the ceremonial turnover of the seed fund and the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) on September 18, 2025, in Butuan City.

The event was led by RD Asuncion and attended by key figures, including DepEd Undersecretary for Operations, Dr. Malcolm S. Garma. USec. Garma's attendance came during his visit for the upcoming Palarong Pambansa 2026 and the 9th Regional Management Committee (ManCom) meeting, underscoring the national importance of the program.

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(continued from page 3: ACE ComPaSS seals ...)

DepEd Caraga Regional Director Maria Ines C. Asuncion championed the initiative and pitched the project to the association. Its goal is to seamlessly integrate nutrition, sustainability, and entrepreneurship into the basic education curriculum for over 20 schools.

BSP and ACE ComPaSS allocated P10,000 to each of the 20 participating schools—10 in Bayugan City and 10 in Butuan City. This seed funding is designed to empower school heads and DepEd Caraga to sustain the Garden-to-Table initiatives by enabling them to: cultivate fresh, organic produce in school gardens, transform the harvest into nutritious meals for learners, develop student-led entrepreneurial projects that nurture life skills, and promote sustainable agricultural practices within the school and the wider community.

Under this partnership, DepEd Caraga commits to providing the necessary technical guidance, monitoring, and evaluation to ensure the transparent and effective implementation of the model.

In turn, the recipient schools have committed to key actions that ensure the program's long-term success: responsibly utilizing the seed fund, cultivating high-value crops for maximum impact, reinvesting profits back into school development projects, and actively engaging parents and other stakeholders in garden maintenance and operations.

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## Seed Fund Distribution to 20 Recipient Schools Bayugan City



Bayugan National Comprehensive High School with the School Head Minda I. Teposo.



Calaitan Elementary School with the School Head Rene P. Moral.



Mt. Olive Elementary School with the School Head Jeffrey H. Gulay.



Magkiangkang National High School with the School Head Myrna M. Legaspi



Berseba National High School with the School Head Ariel B. Carmelotes.



Fili Elementary School with the School Head Dina M. Gallenero.



(continued from page 4: ACE ComPaSS seals ...)

"This initiative strengthens our schools' capacity to provide both quality education and livelihood opportunities for our learners," emphasized Regional Director Asuncion. "We are immensely grateful to BSP and ACE ComPaSS for making this vision a reality and for their dedication to nation-building."

The GTSBM was initially launched by then-DepEd Secretary Sara Z. Duterte in Bayugan City on June 26, 2024. This new partnership with ACE ComPaSS and BSP is a vital step in scaling that vision, reaffirming their collective dedication to advancing sustainability, community engagement, and innovation in education.



Bayugan Central Elementary School SpEd Center with the School Head Fidel L. Verceles.



Saguma Elementary School with the School Head Lorna M. Dapetilla.



Salvacion National High School with the School Head Efren B. Martel.



Maygatasan Elementary School with the School Head Gerardo A. Badato.



## Butuan City



Sta. Cruz Elementary School with the School Head Ramon P. Arguelles.



Sumilihon Central Elementary School with the School Head Joseph G. Ampong, Jr.



West Tungao Elementary School with the School Head James Ryan Y. Sarucam.



Imelda Mar Elementary School with the School Head Rhoje R. Lustiva.



Basag National High School with the School Head Valentin S. Catuburan.



Libertad Central Elementary School with the School Head Carlito P. Nietes.



Calaitan Elementary School with the School Head Marilyn S. Amba.



Pinamanculan Elementary School with the School Head Edito L. Bruzon.



JT Domingo Sr. Central Elementary School with the School Head Rosemarie B. Bahan.



Taligaman Central Elementary School with the School Head Merlyn D. Sanchez.

# *From Duty to Legacy:*

# **PASS** PHILIPPINE ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS SUPERINTENDENTS

## **SALUTES**

# *Retirees*

Jairha Anne T. Sususco  
COS-ESSD

On the afternoon of September 18, 2025, the NEAP-Caraga Gold Hall transformed into a hall of gratitude and remembrance as the Philippine Association of Schools Superintendents (PASS) honored its retir members. The gathering, aptly called “PASS Tribute to Retirees,” was more than a ceremony. It was a heartfelt celebration of lives spent in service to education.

For years, these leaders carried the weight of responsibility by guiding schools, shaping policies, and nurturing communities. That afternoon, however, the spotlight turned to them, not for their duties, but for their legacy.

Undersecretary for Operations Malcolm S. Garma, who joined the

celebration, reminded everyone of the value of such dedication. “We have to celebrate the victories during our time in DepEd,” he said, his words ringing like both counsel and consolation. To the honorees,



(Ret) SDS Gregoria T. Su

(Ret) SDS Nelia S. Lomocso

*Feature  
Story*



he offered reassurance: "You owe it to yourself. You deserve a break. There's a silver lining ahead of us. Let us not end our service with bitterness, but with a spirit of gratitude and positivity."

DepEd Caraga Regional Director Maria Ines C. Asuncion, herself a longtime educator, captured the essence of the moment with a poignant reflection: "Retirement is a blessing. Not all teachers reached this far." She emphasized that the retirees' years of service had left a lasting imprint on learners and communities. They left a —a legacy etched not in awards or titles, but in the lives they transformed.

The program unfolded with warmth expressed in words of tributes and special performances, and the awarding of Recognition to the honorees. Among them were Dr. Gregoria T. Su of Bislig City and Dr. Nelia S. Lomocso, CESO V of Surigao del Sur, both pillars of leadership whose contributions inspired admiration and respect.

As the formalities drew to a close, the mood softened into camaraderie. Over dinner and laughter, colleagues and friends shared stories, weaving memories that bridged years of service with hopes for the future.

The PASS Tribute to Retirees was not a farewell, but a celebration of journeys well-traveled. It honored not just careers, but lives devoted to a cause greater than oneself—the education of the Filipino child. In the smiles and applause that filled the Gold Hall, one truth lingered: though their chapter in active service ends, the legacy of these superintendents will continue to guide and inspire.





*DepEd Caraga Regional Director Maria Ines C. Asuncion delivers her closing response during the COA-DepEd Entrance Conference at the Grand Palace Hotel, Butuan City, September 16, 2025.*

## DepEd Caraga, COA at 2025 Entrance Conference

**BUTUAN CITY—**The Commission on Audit (COA), in joint effort with the Department of Education (DepEd) Caraga Region, convened the 2025 Entrance Conference for the region's 12 Schools Division Offices, with the Schools Division Office (SDO) of Agusan del Norte serving as host of the event on September 16, 2025, at the Grand Palace Hotel and Restaurant, Butuan City.

The conference aimed to reinforce transparency, accountability, and sound financial stewardship in the education sector. It served as a venue to align audit expectations, clarify agency responsibilities, and strengthen the partnership between DepEd and COA in ensuring the prudent use of public funds.

The conference also sought to foster a culture of good governance by encouraging open dialogue on relevant issues and concerns, strengthening inter-agency collaboration, and promoting collective accountability. It sought to build mutual understanding between the two agencies, ensuring that audit processes not only safeguard public resources but also contribute to the continuous improvement of education service delivery. Above all, it underscored a shared commitment to safeguarding public trust. *(To page 10)*

*(continued from page 9: DepEd Caraga, COA ...)*

## Strengthening Audit Collaboration

The COA audit teams, led by Regional Supervising Auditor (RSA) Jesus Misael D. Almendralejo, presented the Audit Framework and Financial Oversight. Audit Team Leader (R13-15) Ms. Aubrey Esparrago outlined the purpose of the audit, COA's authority and jurisdiction, and audit objectives. This was followed by Audit Team Leader (R13-12) Ms. Cherry B. Jagonia's presentation of the auditor's responsibilities, audit limitations, the concept of materiality and audit sampling. She further explained the audit outputs such as Audit Observation Memoranda (AOM), Notices of Suspension, Disallowance, and Charge, and Consolidated Management Letters (CML and RCML).

Regarding DepEd's responsibilities, Audit Team Member Marc Kevin Chang stressed that the agency is mandated to make all financial records and reports, and related information available to COA and for adjusting the financial statements to correct material misstatements, and other information as required under ISSAI 1720.

The audit thrusts, as expounded by Audit Team Member Atty. Jay Anthony M. Bantugan, will focus on high-impact programs such as the DepEd Computerization Program, Basic Education Facilities, School-Based Feeding Program, and Last Mile Schools Program. Special attention will be given to funds under NTF-ELCAC, DRRMF, and projects with low utilization or delayed implementation.

DepEd Caraga Finance Chief Elaine Navarro presented the Budget Utilization Report as of September 11, 2025, detailing P26.75 billion in adjusted allotments, 65% obligation rate, and 89% disbursement rate. Personnel Services (PS) had a 93% disbursement rate, while Capital Outlay (CO) was at 41%, highlighting efforts for improved project execution. *(To page 11)*



(continued from page 10: DepEd Caraga, COA ...)

## A Symbolic Turnover and Shared History

A highlight of the program was the donation by RSA Almendralejo of a 1963 edition of Butuan Chronicle newspaper headlining a story on the Agusan National High School building project in Butuan City. The historic piece was formally turned over to the Butuan City Division, represented by Assistant Schools Division Superintendent Leonevee Silvoza, on behalf of Schools Division Superintendent Minerva T. Albis. The symbolic gesture underscored the long-standing partnership between DepEd and COA in safeguarding public resources for the advancement of education.



*COA Regional Supervising Auditor Jesus Misael D. Almendralejo (L) and Butuan City Assistant Schools Division Superintendent Leonevee Silvoza (R) during the formal turnover of the 1963 edition of Butuan Chronicle Newspaper.*

## Leadership Message and Strategic Focus

DepEd Caraga Regional Director Maria Ines C. Asuncion expressed gratitude to COA, calling auditors the “guardian angels” of public service. She emphasized the importance of timely procurement and full budget utilization by December, the preparations for Caraga’s hosting of the 2026 Palarong Pambansa, and the strengthening of inter-division coordination and LGU partnerships for SEF reviews. RD Asuncion also highlighted regional initiatives such as the distribution of 3,000 tablets, expansion of blended learning programs, and continuation of the “garden-to-table” school business model to support feeding programs and livelihood education.

## A Unified Commitment to Good Governance

As the conference concluded, participants reaffirmed their commitment to uphold integrity, ensure the efficient and responsible use of public funds, and deliver accessible and quality education services across Caraga Region. The Entrance Conference not only set the tone for the 2025 audit cycle but also reinforced the importance of accountability, transparency, and collaboration in every level of the organization. It further deepened the shared resolve to be true guardians of good governance by working hand in hand to safeguard resources, support effective service delivery, and build greater public trust in the education sector ●



*(continued from page 11: DepEd Caraga and COA ...)*



Over 100 participants attended the conference, including key personnel from the COA, DepEd Regional Office, and the 12 Schools Division Offices. The DepEd Agusan del Norte Division, led by Schools Division Superintendent Jeannie M. Mativo, hosted the event.



# 6th RMANCOM advances hiring, procurement, and learning innovations

BUTUAN CITY – The Department of Education (DepEd) Caraga convened its 6th Regional Management Committee (ManCom) Meeting on September 18, 2025, at the NEAP-Caraga Gold Hall, Teacher Development Center, Butuan City, bringing together Schools Division Superintendents (SDSs), Assistant SDSs, Regional Functional Division Chiefs, and Unit Heads.

Presided over by Regional Director Dr. Maria Ines C. Asuncion, the meeting tackled pressing governance and operational issues to improve education service delivery across the region. In her opening message, RD Asuncion emphasized the importance of strengthening teacher-learner interactions and institutionalizing regular parent-teacher conferences as vital components of effective learning outcomes.



*Members of the DepEd Caraga Regional Management Committee taking notes during the Regional Director's Time, where RD Maria Ines C. Asuncion provided updates and action points.*

## Key Agreements

The committee agreed on several major points, including:

- Fast-tracking the hiring of lawyers in each Schools Division Office (SDO) by intensifying dissemination of vacancy notices through online platforms and interagency coordination.
- Implementing RA 12009, the new procurement law, by modifying the Project Procurement Management Plan (PPMP) and aligning procurement processes.
- Activating dedicated procurement units in every SDO, ensuring integrity by providing separate offices and monitoring the use of continuing funds.
- Monitoring Provident Fund and Payroll Unit.

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(continued from page 13: 6th RMANCOM ...)

## DepEd Computerization

Regional Information Technology Officer Marcelino M. Ahon Jr. reported that the items under the DepEd Computerization Project (DCP) have already been procured, delivered, and fully paid. Meanwhile, the Administrative Services Division (ASD) was tasked to validate the status of Alternative Delivery Mode (ADM) tablets procurement.



## Payroll Devolution

RD Asuncion congratulated all SDOs for the efficient management of payroll devolution, citing the role of the ASD in facilitating the transition. Monitoring of the Provident Fund and Payroll Unit was also adopted as part of the agreements.



## Financial Updates

The Finance Division presented the Budget Utilization Report (BUR) as of September 11, 2025, showing a grand total adjusted allotment of ₱26.75 billion, with ₱17.48 billion obligated and ₱15.63 billion disbursed, reflecting an obligation rate of 65% and a disbursement rate of 89%. These figures underscored the region's push for efficient fund utilization, timely disbursement, and improved liquidation to sustain ongoing programs.

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## Human Resource Updates

The Administrative Services Division (ASD) reported on the ongoing PMIS encoding of newly created teaching and non-teaching positions, with updates on filled and unfilled posts as of September 17, 2025. It also reminded field offices of the CESPES deadline on September 30, 2025, and announced the creation of new legal and procurement positions for SDOs, alongside updates on procurement timelines to ensure compliance and efficiency.

## FlexPath

The Curriculum and Learning Management Division (CLMD) Chief Bernabe L. Linog reported on the FlexPath Learning Solutions, with the Regional Office recommending the procurement of 3,000 tablet sets valued at P59,397,420.00 (P19,799.14 per set). Designed to sustain learning continuity in the post-pandemic period, each package includes a tablet, 128 GB OTG flash drive, and a 10,000 mAh power bank. The terms of reference outline the technical specifications, pre-delivery inspection, deployment, warranty, and after-sales support.

The initiative also introduced learner-level datasheets to capture students' home and school learning contexts, thereby helping identify appropriate learning pathways. Recommendations from the Strategic Management Strand highlighted blended learning models that optimize classroom use and improve learning outcomes compared to purely low- or high-tech solutions.



CLMD Chief Bernabe L. Linog presents the FlexPath concept as Regional Director Maria Ines C. Asuncion showcases the components of the FlexPath kit.

## Closing Guidance

In her concluding message, RD Asuncion reaffirmed DepEd Caraga's commitment to responsive governance, fiscal responsibility, and innovations in teaching and learning delivery. She urged the body to ensure that agreements are translated into concrete actions that directly benefit learners and teachers.

The 6th ManCom meeting underscored DepEd Caraga's drive to reinforce systems in human resource management, fiscal accountability, and innovative education programs, setting the direction for more resilient and learner-centered schools across the region ●



# Road to Palaro 2026: Usec Garma leads National Screening Conference, visits playing venues in Agusan Sur

Jairha Anne T. Sususco  
COS-ESSD

**PATIN-AY, AGUSAN DEL SUR**—In preparation for the Palarong Pambansa 2026, the Office of the Undersecretary for Operations under Usec Malcolm S. Garma, spearheaded the Conference of National, Regional, and Division Screening and Accreditation Committee Members, with DepEd Caraga and the Agusan del Sur Provincial Government serving as hosts from September 15-18, 2025 at the Provincial Learning Center, Patin-ay, Agusan del Sur.

The four-day event gathered representatives from the National, Regional, and Division Screening and Accreditation Committees (NSAC, RSAC, DSAC), along with Regional Sports Officers, IT personnel, the National Academy of Sports (NAS), the Palarong Pambansa Secretariat, and other concerned offices.

The conference aimed to capacitate members on updated screening guidelines, ensure the digitization of documents via the PassSport platform, and finalize the master list of athletes and coaches. These efforts also reinforced DepEd's commitment to uphold both excellence and child protection, consistent with DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012 (Child Protection Policy) and RA 10676 (Student-Athletes Protection Act).

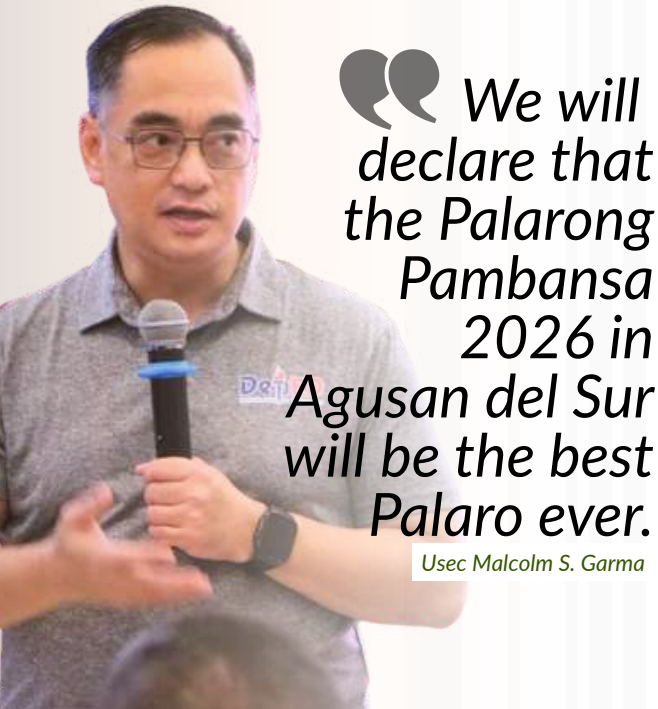
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*Usec Malcolm S. Garma, Undersecretary for Operations, delivers his keynote message*



*(continued from page 16: Road to Palaro 2026)*



**“We will declare that the Palarong Pambansa 2026 in Agusan del Sur will be the best Palaro ever.”**

*Usec Malcolm S. Garma*

In his keynote message, Usec Garma lauded the region’s readiness and expressed full confidence in the hosting of the event: “We will declare that the Palarong Pambansa 2026 in Agusan del Sur will be the best Palaro ever.” He explained that while logistics and facilities are vital, he asserted that “the heart of the Palaro may not be the host region or the billeting quarters, but the heart of the Palarong Pambansa are the athletes.”

Usec Garma also urged participants to contribute meaningfully through continuous learning and collaboration, affirming, “Let’s learn and let’s contribute.” His message encapsulated the conference’s aim of uniting stakeholders under a shared vision of excellence, inclusivity, and athlete-centered planning for the upcoming national sporting event.

The activity served as a pivotal step in aligning national and regional efforts toward delivering an athlete-centered, inclusive, and well-coordinated Palarong Pambansa 2026. *(To page 18)*



*(continued from page 17: Road to Palaro 2026 ...)*

On the second day of the conference, Usec. Garma conducted an on-site inspection of the playing venues and the billeting quarters at the Government Center in Patin-ay, Agusan del Sur. The activity was facilitated by the Provincial Government of Agusan del Sur (PGAS), led by Governor Santiago B. Cane Jr., represented by Architect III Edison P. Daigdigan and Acting Sports Development Officer IV Rill L. Lagulao, along with DepEd Caraga Regional Director Maria Ines C. Asuncion, Agusan del Sur Schools Division Superintendent Josita B. Carmen, and Regional Sports Coordinator Jumer C. Carlon, MD.

Among the inspected sports venues were areas designated for volleyball, 3x3 basketball, rhythmic gymnastics, tennis, and swimming, among others. According to PGAS, the ongoing construction of these playing venues is on schedule and expected to be completed by March 2026, well ahead of major sporting events.

The team also visited designated billeting quarters, including Agusan del Sur National Science High School, Agusan del Sur National High School, and San Francisco Pilot Central Elementary School with SPED Learning Center, to ensure their readiness in accommodating student-athletes and delegation members.

This joint inspection highlighted the shared commitment of DepEd Caraga and PGAS to deliver safe, organized, and athlete-friendly facilities in support of the Department's thrust for quality sports development. ●



# DepEd Undersecretary Ronald Mendoza leads ARAL Program launch in Caraga



*DepEd Undersecretary for Strategic Management Dr. Ronald U. Mendoza delivers his Keynote Message at Libertad National High School, Butuan City*

BUTUAN CITY—Department of Education (DepEd) Undersecretary for Strategic Management Dr. Ronald U. Mendoza underscored the government's commitment to education as led the launching of the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program at Libertad National High School, Butuan City.

In his keynote message, Usec. Mendoza described the ARAL Program as a testament to President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s strong support for education, especially as the sector continues to address the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"ARAL is the administration's decisive response to ensure that no learner is left behind," Usec. Mendoza said. He noted that the program complements earlier initiatives such as the Bawat Bata Makababasa Program (BBMP) and the Literacy Remediation Program (LRP), which were rolled out last summer and produced encouraging results.

Despite these gains, Usec. Mendoza stressed the urgent need to strengthen remediation programs, particularly for transitioning learners. Citing recent studies, he revealed that 2.3 million learners, or 52.26 percent, are not yet grade-level ready, which prompted the inception and eventual implementation of the ARAL Program, so that every learner is given the opportunity to catch up and thrive.

Quoting a teacher, Usec. Mendoza said, "There is no greater joy than seeing my learners thrive." He added: "Ayaw po nating may maiiwan. At iyon din ang hangarin ng ARAL Program: maging susi para ang ating mga mag-aaral ay makabangon muli."

As a concrete step, Usec. Mendoza explained the rationale of the "Edukahon," a standardized, ready-to-deploy school recovery kit that will be distributed immediately during calamities. Edukahon packages include laptops, tablets, and essential learning tools to ensure continuity of education. *(To page 20)*



(continued from page 19: DepEd Undersecretary ....)



*Learners proudly raise their EduKahon packages, a standardized, ready-to-deploy school recovery kit equipped with laptops, tablets, and essential learning tools to ensure that education continues even in times of calamities.*

Usec. Mendoza also expressed gratitude to key education leaders and partners for their contributions to the success of the initiative. He acknowledged President Marcos for his strong support, DepEd Secretary Juan Edgardo “Sonny” Angara for his dedication to education reforms, and Senator Sherwin Gatchalian and Congressman Roman Romulo for championing legislation that

advances the sector.

He likewise thanked Regional Director Maria Ines C. Asuncion, Assistant Regional Director Pedro T. Escobarte Jr., and local education officials in Caraga for their leadership and steadfast commitment to learners. Addressing teachers and education leaders, Usec. Mendoza appealed: “Gawing makabuluhan ang

pagpapatupad ng ARAL Program para sa kinabukasan ng ating kabataan. Kailangan namin kayo. Hindi magiging matagumpay ang ARAL nang wala kayo, ang tunay na frontliners ng edukasyon. Sama-sama tayong magbigay ng bagong pagkakataon sa ating mga mag-aaral. In the words of Secretary Sonny, let us make learning fun again.” ●



# National Assessment for School Head (NASH) 2025 in Butuan City

Marlyne M. Villareal  
Chief, QAD

**BUTUAN CITY**—The Department of Education successfully administered the Fiscal Year 2025 National Assessment for School Head at the Butuan City School of Arts and Trade (BCSAT), ensuring a smooth, secure, and efficient conduct of the nationwide evaluation.

A total of 393 test takers were accommodated across 27 assessment rooms, each supervised by a designated facilitator. The assessment was further reinforced by the presence of four Central Office (CO) monitors to ensure adherence to national testing protocols. To uphold inclusivity, a special room was designated for test takers with disabilities and those with health-related concerns.



*NASH facilitators during the pre-assessment briefing with DepEd Central Office personnel*

Technical support was robust, with nine Information Technology Officers (ITOs), one technical supervisor, and a lead ITO manager overseeing digital operations. The assessment benefited from a fast and stable internet connection of 210 Mbps, contributing to the seamless implementation of the online systems.

To guarantee safety and readiness, support personnel were on standby throughout the activity, including three ANECO staff, two PNP officers, and two LTTMO personnel.

The examination concluded exactly at 12:00 noon, with 100% completion rate recorded and no issues encountered, reflecting the collaborative efforts of facilitators, monitors, and support teams in ensuring the success of the activity.

The FY 2025 National Assessment for School Head serves as a vital mechanism in gauging the readiness and competency of school leaders in driving quality education and effective school management across the country. ●



# Oplan Kalusugan sa DepEd Program Implementation Review 2024-25

Leah Ellen V. Yaoyao  
Technical Assistant I, ESSD

BUTUAN CITY, Agusan del Norte—The Department of Education (DepEd) Caraga, under the leadership of Regional Director Maria Ines C. Asuncion, through the Education Support Services Division (ESSD) headed by Dr. Edmund D. Mendoza, ESSD Chief, successfully conducted the Oplan Kalusugan sa DepEd (OK sa DepEd) Program Implementation Review (PIR) for School Year 2024–2025 on September 10–12, 2025, at the Butuan Southville Hotel and Convention Center, Villa Kananga, Butuan City.



Facilitated by the Health and Nutrition Unit under Dr. Jumer C. Carlon, Medical Officer IV, the three-day activity gathered division health personnel composed of medical officers, dentists, and nurses who are coordinators of OK sa DepEd the six flagship programs.

The first day highlights include the inspiring message from ESSD Chief Edmund D. Mendoza, the audiovisual presentations by the participants, the accomplishment reports and budget utilization presentations from the 12 Schools Division Offices (SDOs), and an Open Forum in which issues and concerns were clarified and addressed. (To page 23)



(continued from page 22: Oplan Kalusugan ...)



The second and third days continued with the remaining SDO reports. Afterward, participants were grouped according to the flagship programs they coordinated to develop action plans addressing identified gaps and challenges. Using a provided template, they consolidated their inputs and were encouraged to submit their outputs online for further integration and follow-through.

The activity concluded with a closing program facilitated by the Division of Bayugan City, with the Division of Surigao del Sur leading the closing prayer.

Dr. Mendoza once again delivered a message, highlighting the importance of collaboration and collective

commitment in strengthening the delivery of health and nutrition services in schools. The Oplan Kalusugan sa DepEd Program Implementation Review provided a meaningful platform for reflection, collaboration, and planning. It enabled division health personnel to assess accomplishments, confront challenges, and craft concrete action steps to improve the implementation of health programs.

With the unified efforts of medical officers, dentists, nurses, and regional leaders, DepEd Caraga reaffirmed its dedication to promoting and safeguarding the health and well-being of every learner and personnel across the region. ●



# From risk to resilience: Caraga's push for Occupational Safety and Health

Charlestone A. Otaza  
Technical Assistant II-ESSD

**BUTUAN CITY**—The Department of Education (DepEd) Caraga region, through the Education Support Services Division (ESSD), conducted the regional training on basic occupational safety and health (BOSH) on September 7-12, 2025, at the Southville Hotel and Convention Center, Butuan City.

This initiative is part of the Department's continuous efforts to institutionalize a culture of safety and health in the workplace, in line with Republic Act No. 11058 or the "Occupational Safety and Health Standards Law," and Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) Department Order No. 198-18.

The activity was carried out with the full support of Regional Director Dr. Maria Ines C. Asuncion and in partnership with 1PHILSAFE Training and Development Services, a DOLE-accredited safety training organization.

The five-day training provided personnel from regional and division offices with the competencies necessary to effectively implement and manage occupational safety and health (OSH) programs in their respective work environments. The program opened on September 8, 2025, with Ms. Megnon P. Beldad, Regional DRRM Coordinator, emphasizing in her message the

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*(continued from page 24: From risk to resilience ...)*

importance of safety and health standards in fostering a resilient and responsive education sector.

Training sessions were divided into thematic modules covering both fundamental and advanced OSH topics. Engr. Jomar Rey T. Balite led the first two days, focusing on the BOSH framework, OSH situationer, roles of safety officers, hazard identification, and workplace risk assessment, with workshops allowing participants to apply their learning in actual practice. Engr. Alex P. Donaldo and Ms. Jocelyn Donaldo facilitated the succeeding modules, tackling control measures, accident investigation, emergency preparedness, and DOLE-compliant OSH program development.

Participants actively engaged in workshops such as Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment, and Control (HIRAC), accident case simulations, and program development exercises.

The training concluded with a commitment-setting session, where participants outlined re-entry implementation plans, including OSH Committee formation, DOLE registration, and mandatory OSH orientations in their respective offices.



During the closing program, Dr. Edmund D. Mendoza, ESSD Chief, commended the participants' dedication and reiterated the region's commitment to advancing workplace safety and health. He stressed the importance of transforming training insights into actionable programs at the school and division levels.

Through the strong leadership of RD Asuncion and the concerted efforts of facilitators, organizers, and participants, this regional training marked a significant step toward strengthening DepEd Caraga's OSH systems. ●





## Charting the Future of Caraga School Sports

*Al Jhon Fritz M. Otadoy  
Technical Assistant I, ESSD*

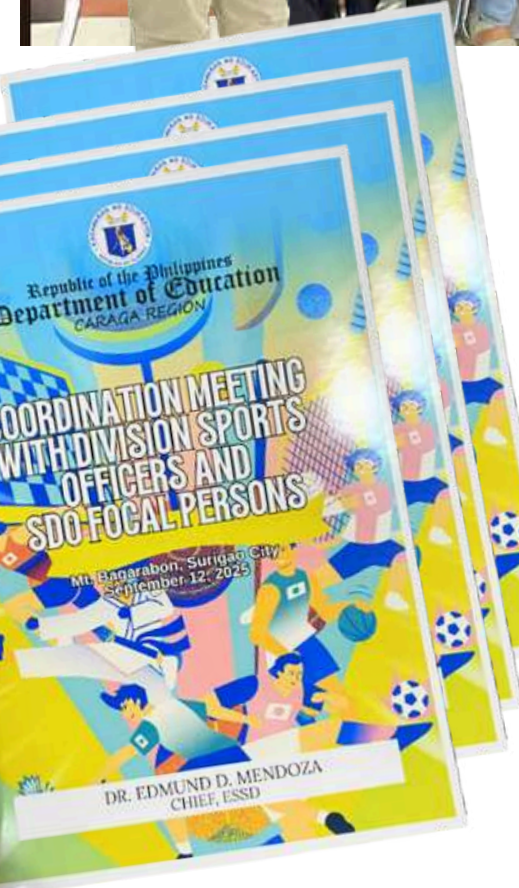
**SURIGAO CITY**–To align plans, review accomplishments, discuss policy directions, and prepare for upcoming regional sporting events, DepEd Caraga Regional Director Maria Ines C. Asuncion convened the regional and division sports leaders across 12 Schools Division Offices (SDOs) on September 12, 2025, at Mt. Bagarabon, Mabua, Surigao City.

Facilitated by Edmund D. Mendoza, PhD, Chief of the Education Support Services Division (ESSD), along with Regional Sports Officer (RSO) Jumer C. Carlon, MD, the activity brought together Division Sports Officers and SDO Technical Assistants to discuss strategies and address key issues in school sports development.

The activity formally opened with an inspiring message from Dr. Marilou B. Dedumo, CESO V, Schools Division Superintendent of Surigao City, who underscored the importance of unity, collaboration, and commitment among education leaders in advancing learners' holistic development through sports.

The first session featured the presentation of accomplishment reports and budget utilization updates under the Sports Supplies and Equipment Enhancement Distribution (SSEED) Program from all 12 SDOs, providing insights on the progress, best practices, and areas for improvement in sports service delivery.

A key highlight was the discussion of DepEd Order No. 022, s. 2025, or the Policy Guidelines on the Institutionalization of School Sports Clubs (SSC) in Public Schools. The open forum allowed the participants to raise concerns, clarify provisions, and exchange ideas and solutions, reflecting the group's shared determination to strengthen school-based sports initiatives. *(To page 27)*



(continued from page 26: Charting the future ...)



Attention also centered on the upcoming 2026 Caraga Regional Athletic Games, to be jointly hosted by the Divisions of Surigao City, Surigao del Norte, and Siargao Islands. Division Sports Officer Dr. Tessie C. Dolores presented plans and preparations for the event.

In addition, RSO Carlon outlined two upcoming activities: the Regional Orientation-Workshop for School Heads and Division Focal Persons on the Institutionalization of School Sports Clubs, and the Regional Training of Sports Club Facilitators on the Teaching of Sports-Specific Skills.

These discussions paved the way for action planning to address identified gaps and challenges, ensuring more effective and inclusive sports program delivery.

The meeting concluded with a short program facilitated by the Division of Surigao City. Dr. Vilma O. Juanite, Division Sports Officer of Surigao del Norte, led the closing prayer, followed by a message from Dr. Carlon, who once again underscored the importance of collaboration, shared responsibility, and collective commitment in strengthening the delivery of sports programs across the region.

The Coordination Meeting provided a platform for collaboration and planning, allowing sports officials to review initiatives, identify improvements, and strengthen joint efforts. With the active participation of Division and regional leaders, DepEd Caraga reaffirms its commitment to nurturing learners' talents and well-being through sports, fostering holistic education and lifelong values. ●



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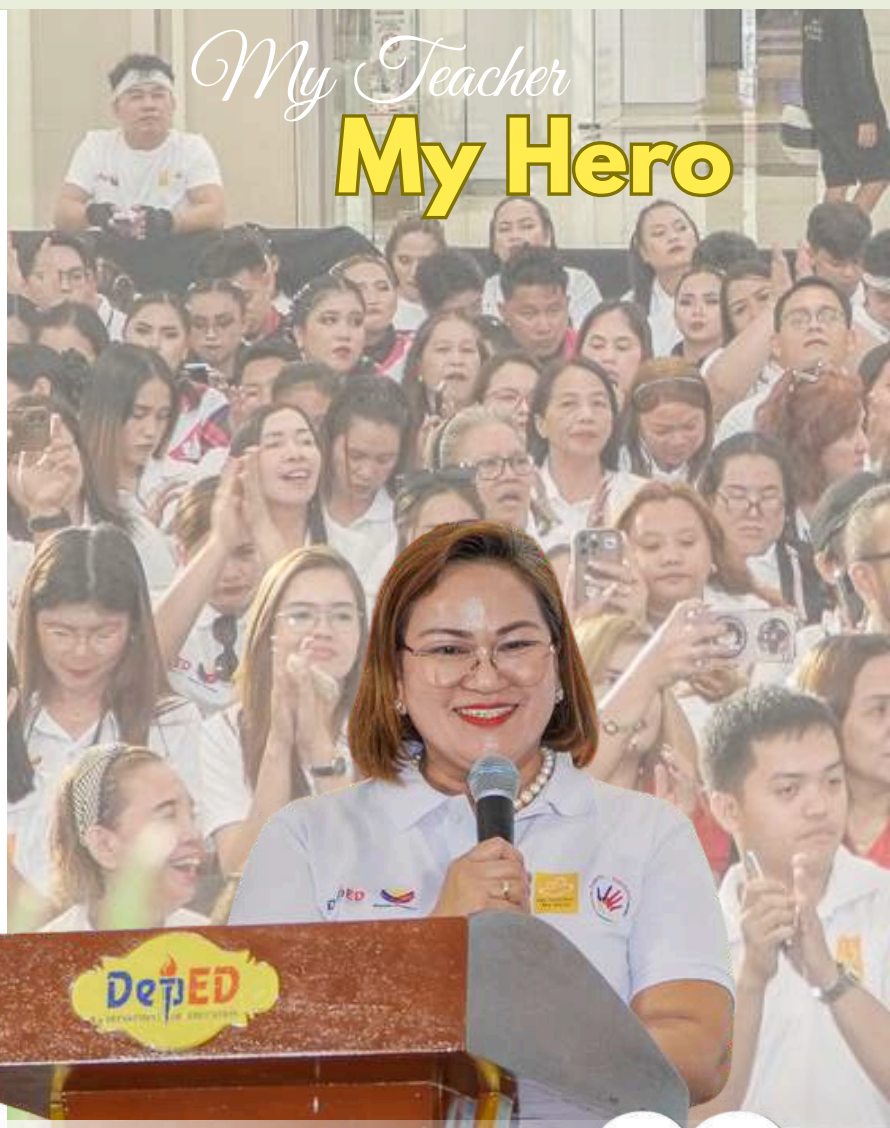
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**National Teachers'  
Month 2025**  
September 5 - October 5

*We see you,  
we value you,  
we thank you.*

RD Asuncion's message to teachers during the regional kickoff ceremony for the National Teachers' Month, September 9, 2025, at Robinsons Place, Butuan City