



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Education

19 MAR 2020

OFFICE MEMORANDUM
OO-O S E C-2 0 2 0-001

AUTHORIZATION OF OFFICE AND FIELD WORK FOR IDENTIFIED CRITICAL TASKS IN AREAS COVERED BY THE ENHANCED COMMUNITY QUARANTINE

To: Undersecretaries
Assistant Secretaries
Bureau and Service Directors
Regional Directors, Regional Offices in Luzon
All Others Concerned

1. As we continue to closely monitor the COVID-19 situation with the rest of the Executive, we in the Department of Education (DepEd) are ever ready to make informed, coordinated, and proportionate response, and continue to issue crucial policies in light of the enhanced community quarantine. As a DepEd family we will push through in supporting the overall effort of the Philippine government to combat this public health situation, while ensuring that we keep government running in this time of emergency.

2. In a Memorandum for the President, I raised for clarification the proper interpretation of Paragraph 4 of the Memorandum issued by Executive Secretary Salvador C. Medialdea dated March 16, 2020 titled *Community Quarantine Over the Entire Luzon and Further Guidelines for the Management of the Coronavirus Disease 20-19 (COVID-19) Situation*, which states:

A work from home arrangement shall be implemented in the Executive branch, except the PNP, AFP, PCG, and health and emergency frontline services, border control and other critical services, which shall ensure a critical workforce.

A strict interpretation of this provision would limit office and field-based work arrangements to the enumerated agencies and services, and the catch-all phrase "other critical services" would be limited by the context of the Memorandum to such services directly related to the enforcement and management of the Enhanced Community Quarantine and the health emergency.

3. In DepEd, we have identified critical services and functions that will be impossible to do from a completely home-based work arrangement and will require physical presence outside the home including in office premises. These include, among others: staff assistance to enable decision making; certain aspects of financial transactions such as payment of salaries; bank transactions; procurement; security of premises; and our internal COVID-19 monitoring and emergency response. I raised in our Memorandum that by providing for the appropriate transportation and workplace arrangement, consistent with stringent social distancing measures, we can still perform such critical tasks and still comply with the instructions in the Memorandum.

4. The matter was raised at the meeting of the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF) on March 17, 2020. On the part of the IATF, the response to our query is embodied paragraph A (1) of Resolution No. 13, s. 2020 of the IATF, as follows:

1. All government agencies in the executive branch are hereby directed to issue accreditation orders to identify their respective skeletal workforces for critical services operating during the duration of the Enhanced Community Quarantine in Luzon. Bona fide IDs issued by the respective agencies shall be sufficient for movement around the contained area until such time that such accreditation orders have been issued by the agency concerned. Skeletal workforces may use official agency vehicles;

5. We also received a response via electronic communications from the Office of the Executive Secretary, as follows:

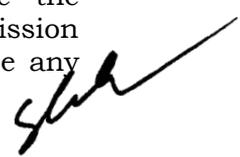
DepEd needs to issue a certificate that these employees are rendering critical services, forming part of skeletal work force. Movements should be limited to home and workplace, or bank if doing payroll. Further, a list of the skeletal workforce shall be submitted to IATF.

6. Guided by the foregoing operational guidelines and interpretation, the following instructions to facilitate the work and safety of our personnel, are hereby issued:

- a. All Undersecretaries and Assistant Secretaries, and Regional Directors in Luzon regions, shall continue the operationalization of DepEd Memorandum No. 43, s. 2020 titled **Guidelines on the Alternative Work Arrangements in the Department of Education in Light of the COVID-19 Stringent Social Distancing Measures** by:
 - i. Determining their essential and priority programs and critical tasks in the period March 16 to April 14, 2020;
 - ii. Determining the work arrangements consistent with the Enhanced Community Quarantine Guidelines that will still enable the delivery of the identified essential and priority programs and critical tasks; and,
 - iii. Adopt a monitoring and reporting mechanism to validate performance of assigned tasks.
- b. Determine the critical tasks that can absolutely be performed only in the office or by going to the field, identify the officers and personnel that will be deployed, and set the schedule of deployment.

For the Undersecretaries and Assistant Secretaries, the list of critical tasks and the proposed officers/personnel deployment shall be submitted to the Office of the Secretary at sec@deped.gov.ph, for review and issuance of authorization/certification for the approved officers and personnel for deployment.

Regional Directors are hereby authorized to review and approve the authorization/certification in their respective regions, subject to submission of the same to the Office of the Secretary. The Secretary may reverse any authorization issued by the Regional Director as may be necessary.



- c. The approval of deployment shall be conditioned on the following:
 - i. Clear showing of a critical task in the performance of the identified priority program or deliverable, and that its performance can only be done at the office premises or by going to the field; and,
 - ii. Clear and strict protocols on health precautions and social distancing measures not only at workplace, but also during travel/transportation, and at the home and private space and time, to ensure consistency of health precautions and social distancing at all times.
 - iii. Prior orientation of the deployed personnel on the protocols and mechanism to monitor and ensure their observance at all times.
 - d. The certification/authorization for the approved officers and personnel for deployment in office or field work shall be non-transferrable and shall bear features for validation of authenticity.
 - e. A consolidated list of the approved officers and personnel for deployment in office or field work at the Central and Regional Offices shall be submitted by the Office of the Secretary to the IATF, and updated from time to time.
 - f. DepEd vehicles and driving services shall be provided for the transportation of the deployed personnel. Deployed personnel may elect to use their own vehicles, if available.
 - g. The DepEd Task Force COVID-19 is hereby instructed to prepare for the baseline protocols to be observed in the workplace, travel, and home and private space and time of the deployed personnel, and the coordination mechanism for the effective implementation of these. All Undersecretaries, Assistant Secretaries and concerned Regional Directors may adopt additional reasonable precautions enhancing the baseline protocols for their respective jurisdictions.
 - h. The appropriate Executive Committee (ExeCom) members, in consultation with the Secretary or the ExeCom collectively, shall propose and adopt financial and logistical measures in support of the operationalization of these instructions.
 - i. I reiterate that all members of the ExeCom, Bureau and Service Directors, and Regional Directors must ensure your availability for decision-making and effective supervision of all work arrangements at all times, and may be called in for physical presence subject to observance of the health and social distancing protocols and compliance with existing directives of the President.
 - j. The Undersecretary and Chief of Staff is hereby authorized to coordinate with all Execom members and concerned Regional Directors for other needed operational details for the effective and orderly implementation of these instructions.
7. For immediate compliance.


LEONOR MAGTOLIS BRIONES
Secretary