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DepEd sees 4 million out-of-school youth in new academic year

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3 minutes

Posted at Aug 12 2020 02:31 PM | Updated as of Aug 12 2020 06:48 PM

MANILA — The Department of Education said Wednesday it expects 4 million out-of-school youth in the coming academic year, which will see schools shift from the traditional classroom instruction to distance learning because of the continuing COVID-19 threat.

"Mayroon tayong extraordinary non-participation on account of COVID as of today, that is about 4 million learners," Education Undersecretary Nepomuceno Malaluan said in a Senate hearing.

"More or less, 4 million out-of-school youth for next school year?" Sen. Nancy Binay asked for clarification. To this, Malaluan answered with "yes."

Some 23 million learners have registered for the new academic year set to begin in August, Malaluan told senators. But this is roughly 4 million less than the total enrollment in the last school year at 27.7 million.

Malaluan said the department is set to discuss the interventions that could be done for the "non-enrollees to still be able to

access learning opportunities."

"Our main focus for now is really those that have enrolled for the opening," he said.

Of the 23 million enrolled learners, 21 million are in public schools or 95 percent of last year's public school students, according to DepEd data presented to the Senate.

The enrollment figure remained dismal in private schools with only 1.5 million enrolled learners, or 36.1 percent from last year's 4.3 million.

Coordinating Council of Private Educational Associations Managing Director Joseph Noel Estrada said he doubts whether the enrollment figure in private institutions would still go out.

"Malabo pa namin maabot iyong 50 percent," he said.

Education officials earlier said the low enrollment rate in private schools may be due to the effects of the coronavirus pandemic on the income of parents.

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The school year is scheduled to start on August 24.

Under DepEd's distance learning plan, lessons will be delivered the students through modules, online classes, television and radio.

- [How some schools plan to implement distance learning amid pandemic](#)