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## Teachers hit delay in performance bonus

By JANVIC MATEO

Public school teachers called on the Department of Education (DepEd) and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) to explain the months-long delay in the release of their performance-based bonus.

Benjo Basas, chairman of the Teachers' Dignity Coalition (TDC), said this is the first time that the delay in the release

of the performance bonus of teachers reached the next fiscal year.

Basas said they are still waiting for the release of the bonus for school year 2016-2017 that should have been released in the third quarter of last year.

"Teachers are still waiting for this incentive which is mandated by law. And since this is funded for fiscal year 2016, we believe there is no

reason for the government to further delay its release," he said.

"We believe that we deserve an explanation why all these happen. We call on both the secretaries of the DBM and DepEd to comment on this in public to end all the speculations circulating in the field," he added.

Sought for an explanation, Education Undersecretary Jesus Mateo said there had been delays in the processing

of clearances that would pave way for the release of the performance-based bonus.

Among those he cited as reason was the failed bidding that resulted in the suspension of the National Achievement Test.

Mateo said they expect the bonus for some of the regions to be released by February as the required documents were already submitted to the DBM.

He said their target is to

complete the release of the bonuses of all DepEd employees by the end of the current school year in April.

According to Basas, the delayed release in the bonus further reinforces their belief that teachers are not the priority of the government.

"We have mastered the art of waiting," he said. "(This delay) only reinforced our belief that indeed, we are not priority, because even this 'little'

incentive due for us was not prioritized."

Under the performance bonus system, government employees will receive bonuses based on the assessment of their respective performances.

From 2012 to 2015, the incentive amounted to as much as P35,000. Since 2016, it was changed to reflect a certain percentage of the employees' salary.

\* TEACHERS

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