

Joy: QC teachers not targeted by mandatory tests

By Rio N. Araja

QUEZON City Vice Mayor Joy Belmonte on Tuesday assured teachers that the mandatory drug test program for teachers in public schools is part of the government's campaign to ensure all government employees are not engaging in illegal drug use or trade.

"This is mandatory for all government employees. Even [Education] Secretary Leonor Briones went through a drug test as well as all the undersecretaries. I, too, took the drug test and even Mayor Herbert Bautista," she said.

Belmonte clarified that teachers are not being singled out in the national campaign against illegal drugs.

On July 6, the city's public school teachers staged a protest in front of Quezon City hall to demand the release of their delayed allowances.

They also expressed objection to a mandatory drug test, saying such was an "insult to their profession."

"We just want to comply with the requirement that all government employees are drug-free. We assure you that if you are found positive, all information is strictly confidential and private," Belmonte said.

She said the city government is working with the Department of Education to arrange a date for an orientation to answer all the queries of teachers.