

## QC, Manila to give students, teachers free gadgets for online classes

Philippine Daily Inquirer · 9 Jun 2020 · A8 · JAKE J. MADERAZO

The recommendation of the Department of Education for “blended learning” to be practiced this school year has led to a quick response from Manila Mayor Francisco “Isko Moreno” Domagoso and Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte. All 430,000 enrollees in Quezon City will be given learning materials, including gadgets, printed modules and an “internet allowance,” says Belmonte who adds that a supplementary budget of P2.9 billion has been approved for this purpose.

Kindergarten and grade school students will also receive modules with flash drives and additional printed materials while all 155,921 junior high school and 19,810 senior high school students will be issued tablets. Teachers and students will be provided an internet allowance and connectivity.

Domagoso, for his part, has appropriated P994 million for 110,000 tablets with SIM cards for students and 11,000 laptops with pocket devices for teachers to help prepare them for online classes.

The SIM cards come with a 10 gigabyte monthly load with free 2 GB data for Youtube.

Their actions are giant steps toward enriching “computer knowledge” in every household in their cities. The first day Metro Manila was placed under general community quarantine (GCQ) initially led to confusion among commuters reporting for work. But today, we see a holistic approach that allows passengers both inside and outside the National Capital Region to use the Metro Rail Transit (MRT) 3, Light Rail Transit Lines 1 and 2, the Philippine National Railways and integrated terminals in Parañaque and Valenzuela cities.

Passengers of rationalized bus routes from Angat-bulacan, Dasmariñas-cavite, Antipolo and Taytay, Rizal and far-flung provinces are now dropped either at the Parañaque or Valenzuela gateways, or at train stations to help them reach their destinations.

On Edsa, the new busway system returned the “decades-old” and “failed” yellow lanes to motorists while transferring all buses to the inner lanes. The reopening of former bus lanes to other vehicles has solved the perennial problem of clogged intersections on Edsa. The new system is proving to be a better and faster route for point-to-point, augmentation and possibly regular buses when they resume operations next week. The over all passenger loop system, which includes the trains and the northern and southern terminal exchanges is, in my opinion, the correct approach to ward ensuring seamless mobility among commuters. reacted to our column last week about some mayors being insensitive to the plight of their constituents. She cited her agreement with Quezon City based bus companies to provide free rides along two routes even before the start of GCQ.

One of the routes to be serviced by 20 buses was SM Fairview to Quezon Avenue MRT station with seven pick-up points and the other was Novaliches Bayan to North AVE-MRT. This was on top of the “Libreng Sakay” for health workers. I agree with the mayor. She is not one of the insensitive Metro mayors I was referring to in an earlier column. Being a resident of Quezon City, I know how proactive and thorough she is.