

The Ministry of Education is Sending Love to Relief Workers at the Affected Schools in the "0206 Hualien Earthquake"

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The "0206 Hualien Earthquake" caused damage to many school buildings in Hualien. On February 8, 2018, Wen Chung Pang, Minister of Education, paid a visit to the affected schools in the disaster area in Hualien County to learn more about the damage being created and sent his condolence to the people involved in the hope that this disaster would not impact daily classes.

Mr. Pang, and Chien Kuo Chiu, General-Director of the K-12 Administration Education, visited the most affected schools, such as the Chunghua Primary School, Huagang Junior High School, and Mingyi Primary School, to learn more about how their schools were affected and how ready they were to return to normal operation. Mr. Pan also conveyed Premier Lai Qingde's condolence to the teaching staff in the disaster-stricken areas for their hardships during this period. He also took the initiative to inquire if there were any students or their families suffered losses in this disaster and provided assistance accordingly.

Since the public was concerned about the fact that the structure of the school buildings might be damaged due to the earthquake, a team was set up to carry out on-

site investigations to confirm the safety of the buildings, as such, the schools could start on February 21, 2018, as scheduled. It was hoped that the affected schools could return to normal operation as soon as possible to allow students to go to school and return home safely while parents would feel relieved.

In addition to reviewing each school's damages, Mr. Pan also expressed his gratitude towards the Hualien County Government and the Hualien County Liaison Office for their immediate responses to the impacted schools. Besides, he also instructed relevant divisions to assist the schools with insufficient funding for the repair and restoration of the damaged school buildings and schoolyards.

The Ministry of Education stated that in the event of this disaster, several elementary and junior high schools were damaged, and the Ministry of Education not only instructed the Hualien County government to offer proper placement to students, but also urgently allocated NTD\$30 million to the damaged schools for their relief efforts. The Ministry of Education would spare no effort to offer financial support to the schools for the subsequent cost for restoration, if the funding is insufficient, by instructing the K-12 Education Administration to apply for particular project grants at the Executive Yuan to bring teaching activities back to normal operations as soon as possible.

In the face of this earthquake disaster in Hualien, Mr. Pan particularly noted that, to educate students to develop self-protection and evacuation abilities, each school should, in accordance with the "Directions on Disaster Prevention and Rescue for Schools and Institutions at All Levels Governed by the Ministry of Education," get well prepared in disaster reduction and prevention, have a well-planned response and relief plan, and get familiarized with emergency procedures so as to minimize the impact of disaster damage on lessons, effectively reducing damage caused to the schoolyard, and maintain school safety.