



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Education
REGION IV-A CALABARZON



ESSD-RM-2026-149

2 March 2026

Regional Memorandum

No. 149 s. 2026

**DISSEMINATION OF MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (DEPED)
AND THE INTEGRATED PHILIPPINE ASSOCIATION
OF THE OPTOMETRISTS (IPAO) INC.**

To: **Schools Division Superintendents
All Other Concerned**

1. Relative to OM-OUGOPS-2026-08-08392¹, this office, through the Education Support Services Division-School Health Section, hereby disseminates the Memorandum from the DepEd Central Office regarding the Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Education (DepEd) and the Integrated Philippine Association of the Optometrist (IPAO) INC.
2. In line with Republic Act No. 11358² and OM-OUGOPS-2026-08-08392, and as part of the National Vision Screening Program in partnership with the PhilHealth Yaman ng Kalusugan Program, all Schools Division Offices (SDOs) are directed to undertake the following actions:
 - a. refer learners who fail the vision screening to IPAO for a complete eye check-up;
 - b. for learners to receive free prescription eyeglasses, the referred learners must be registered members or dependents of PhilHealth.
3. Please see the attached documents for more information.
4. Kindly contact Eduarda M. Zapanta, ESSD Chief Education Supervisor, or Dr. Pearl Oliveth S. Intia, Medical Officer IV of ESSD-SHN, at email addresses essd.calabarzon@deped.gov.ph or pearl.intia@deped.gov.ph.
5. Immediate dissemination and strict compliance of this Memorandum is desired.

ATTY. ALBERTO T. ESCOBARTE, CESO II
Regional Director

¹Endorsement of the Memorandum of Understanding Between the Department of Education (DepEd) and the Integrated Philippines Association of Optometrist (IPAO), INC to DepEd Regional and Division Offices.

² Republic Act No. 11358, or the National Vision Screening Act, signed on July 31, 2019, establishes a mandatory vision screening program for all kindergarten pupils in the Philippines. Managed by the DepEd, DOH, and PERI. 03/ROE3/DCP



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Certificate No. PHP QMS
22 93 0085



[ENDORSEMENT] DepEd - IPAO Memorandum of Understanding for National Vision Screening Program

School Health Division <blss.shd@deped.gov.ph>

Mon, Feb 9, 2026 at 11:37 AM

To: DepEd RO I <region1@deped.gov.ph>, DepEd II Cagayan Valley <region2@deped.gov.ph>, Department of Education Regional Office III <region3@deped.gov.ph>, DepEd RO IV-A <region4a@deped.gov.ph>, mimaropa region <mimaropa.region@deped.gov.ph>, DepEd RO V <region5@deped.gov.ph>, DepEd VI Western Visayas <region6@deped.gov.ph>, DepEd Region VII Central Visayas <region7@deped.gov.ph>, Region VIII Eastern Visayas <region8@deped.gov.ph>, DepEd RO-IX ZamPen <region9@deped.gov.ph>, Department of Education Region 10 <region10@deped.gov.ph>, DepEd XI Davao Region <region11@deped.gov.ph>, DepEd RO XII <region12@deped.gov.ph>, DepEd Region XIII CARAGA <caraga@deped.gov.ph>, DepEd RO CAR <car@deped.gov.ph>, DepEd RO NCR <ncr@deped.gov.ph>, nir@deped.gov.ph

Cc: Bureau of Learner Support Services Office of the Director <blss.od@deped.gov.ph>, "Lilibeth P. Mirando-Gonzales" <lilibeth.gonzales006@deped.gov.ph>, "Cynthia D. Coronado" <cynthia.coronado@deped.gov.ph>, "Girlie G. Azurin" <girlie.azurin@deped.gov.ph>, kaekryzsl.paragas@deped.gov.ph, jose.rostrata@deped.gov.ph, PEARL OLIVETH INTIA <pearl.intia@deped.gov.ph>, Maria Anna Irene San <mariaannairene.san@deped.gov.ph>, ISRAEL PARRA <israel.parra@deped.gov.ph>, MELCHOR KIM KWAN <melchorkim.kwan@deped.gov.ph>, rogelio.villamor@deped.gov.ph, angelica.rodriguez001@deped.gov.ph, ahmadameenkariiii.wata@deped.gov.ph, Myra Yee <myra.yee@deped.gov.ph>, STEPHEN MARK CASTRES <stephenmark.castres@deped.gov.ph>, Edelyn Grace Jamila <edelyngrace.jamila@deped.gov.ph>, Jumer Carlon <jumer.carlon@deped.gov.ph>, Raymond Damoslog <raymond.damoslog@deped.gov.ph>, CONNIE GEPANAYAO <connie.gepanayao@deped.gov.ph>, markjason.mendoza05@deped.gov.ph, maelavern.sibayan@deped.gov.ph

Dear School Health Colleagues:

Good day!

In line with the successful launch of the National Vision Screening Program, the Department of Education (DepEd) Office of the Undersecretary for Governance and Operation formally endorses the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between DepEd and the Integrated Philippine Association of Optometrists (IPAO), Inc. to all DepEd Regional and Schools Division Offices. The MOU aims to ensure the provision of accessible, age-appropriate, and quality optometric services to learners through school-based interventions, pursuant to Republic Act No. 11358, otherwise known as the National Vision Screening Act. Attached is a copy of the signed endorsement for your reference.

All concerned DepEd offices are encouraged to review the provisions of the endorsement and extend the necessary support and coordination with IPAO to ensure the effective and timely implementation of the MOU. Please be advised that PhilHealth registration is a prerequisite for learners to avail themselves of free prescription eyeglasses.

Thank you for your continued cooperation and commitment to promoting the health and well-being of our learners.

Para sa bata,

Department of Education
Bureau of Learner Support Services
School Health Division
Rm. 302, 3rd Floor, Mabini Bldg.
DepED Complex, Meralco Avenue
Pasig City 1600
(02) 6329935

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Republika ng Pilipinas

Department of Education

OFFICE OF THE UNDERSECRETARY FOR GOVERNANCE AND OPERATION

MEMORANDUM

OM-OUGOPS-2026-08392

FOR : **REGIONAL DIRECTORS
SCHOOLS DIVISION SUPERINTENDENTS
PRINCIPALS/SCHOOL HEADS/TEACHERS-IN-CHARGE
SCHOOL HEALTH PERSONNEL
ALL OTHERS CONCERNED**

FROM : **MALCOLM S. GARMA**
Undersecretary

SUBJECT : **ENDORSEMENT OF THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (DEPED) AND
THE INTEGRATED PHILIPPINE ASSOCIATION OF
OPTOMETRISTS (IPAO), INC. TO DEPED REGIONAL AND
DIVISION OFFICES**

DATE : January 20, 2026



In line with the successful launch of the National Vision Screening Program (NVSP) in partnership with PhilHealth's Yaman ng Kalusugan Program (YAKAP) last December 17, 2025, the Department of Education (DepEd) hereby formally endorses the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between DepEd and the Integrated Philippine Association of Optometrists (IPAO), Inc. to all Regional and Schools Division Offices. The MOU aims to ensure the provision of accessible, age-appropriate, and quality optometric services to learners through school-based interventions, pursuant to Republic Act No. 11358, otherwise known as the *National Vision Screening Act*.

Learners who fail the vision screening shall be referred by the DepEd Regional and Schools Division Offices to IPAO for comprehensive optometric services, including assessment and management of errors of refraction (EOR), binocular vision (BV) anomalies, and eye diseases. To avail of free prescription eyeglasses, referred learners are required to be registered members of PhilHealth.

In accordance with the MOU, IPAO may also provide assistance during school-based vision screening activities. Such participation shall not, in any way, hinder or affect the existing partnership between DepEd and the Philippine Eye Research Institute (PERI), which covers the training of Vision Screening Trainers and the recommendation of appropriate vision screening tools and materials.

D4546



16th floor, Techzone Building, 213 Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., San Antonio Village, Makati, Metro Manila, 1203

Telephone Nos.: (02) 8633-5313; (02) 8631-8492

Email Address: ouops@deped.gov.ph | Website: www.deped.gov.ph





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Department of Education

OFFICE OF THE UNDERSECRETARY FOR GOVERNANCE AND OPERATION

All activities undertaken pursuant to the MOU shall support the objectives of the National Vision Screening Program and shall be implemented in close coordination with the concerned DepEd offices, subject to existing DepEd policies, guidelines, and regulations.

All concerned DepEd offices are hereby directed to take note of this endorsement and to extend the necessary support and coordination with IPAO to ensure the effective and timely implementation of the activities stipulated in the Memorandum of Understanding.

For questions or clarifications, you may contact Dr. Lilibeth P. Miranda-Gonzales, Supervising Health Program Officer, OIC-School Health Division of BLSS - SHD through email blss.shd@deped.gov.ph, or landline 02 8632-9935.

For information, guidance, and appropriate action.



Integrated Philippine Association of Optometrists (IPAO), Inc.

(Formerly Samahan ng mga Optometrists sa Pilipinas)

The integrated national organization accredited by the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) – IAPO-No 019

12 January 2026

HON. JUAN EDGARDO "SONNY" M. ANGARA

Secretary

Department of Education

DepEd Complex, Meralco Avenue

Pasig City

ATTN: HON. MIGUEL ANGELO S. MANTARING

Director IV

Bureau of Learner Support Services (BLSS)

RE: NATIONAL VISION SCREENING PROGRAM

Dear Secretary Angara:

Greetings from the Integrated Philippine Association of Optometrists (IPAO), Inc.!

In view of the successful national launching of DepEd's National Vision Screening Program in partnership with the Philhealth YAKAP and the IPAO last December 17, 2025 at Rosario Elementary School in Pasig, we would like to inform your good office that IPAO is preparing to mobilize its network of members to coordinate and assist the various DepEd Schools Division Offices (SDO) in conducting the vision screening of learners to identify and address Error of Refraction (EOR), binocular vision (BV) anomalies and eye diseases.

The IPAO is communicating with the regional, provincial and city SDOs of DepEd to obtain the list of schools in their respective area of jurisdiction as well as coordinate the vision screening activities that we may be able to participate or assist pursuant to our Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

We have established communication with the SDOs of the following regions: Regions I, CAR, II, III, National Capital Region, IV-A, IV-B, V, VI, VII, XIII, IX, X and XI and hope to commence activities in these areas within the month.

The learners who fail the vision screening shall be referred for full optometric services and will be required by Philhealth to register as a member in order to avail of the FREE prescription eyeglasses.

In this respect, we would like to seek your endorsement of this joint activity between the DepEd SDOs and IPAO in order to establish a formal working partnership at the regional and local level.

Should you require any further information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me at 0917-839-1230 or E-mail: atty.charlieho@gmail.com or ipao_od@yahoo.com

Thank you very much for your kind assistance and continued support of initiatives that promote children's health and well-being.

Yours,


DR. CHARLIE L. HO
National President

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS:

This Memorandum of Understanding hereinafter referred to as the "Understanding" is entered into this 08 OCT 2025, 2025 at PASIG CITY, Philippines, by and between:

The DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, a government entity mandated by law to ensure the delivery of quality basic education, particularly Batas Pambansa Blg. 232, otherwise known as the "Education Act of 1982," as amended by Republic Act (RA) No. 9155, otherwise known as the "Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001," with principal address at DepEd Complex, Meralco Ave., Pasig City, Philippines represented by its Secretary, **JUAN EDGARDO M. ANGARA**; and hereinafter referred to as the "DepEd."

-and-

The INTEGRATED PHILIPPINE ASSOCIATION OF OPTOMETRISTS, INC., a non-stock non-profit corporation duly organized and existing under Philippine laws, with business office at Unit 102, G/F Hollywood Square Bldg., No. 33 West Avenue, Quezon City, represented herein by its National President, **CHARLIE L. HO**, duly authorized for this purpose, hereinafter referred to as the "IPAO,"

Collectively being referred to as "Parties" and individually as "Party"

WITNESSETH THAT:

WHEREAS, Article XIV, Section 1 of the 1987 Constitution provides that "(t)he State shall protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels, and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all";

WHEREAS, DepEd is a government agency mandated to:

- a. formulate, implement, and coordinate policies, plans, programs and projects in the areas of formal and non-formal basic education;
- b. supervise all elementary and secondary education institutions, including alternative learning systems, both public and private; and
- c. provide for the establishment and maintenance of a complete, adequate, and integrated system of basic education relevant to the goals of national development, while ensuring the well-being of its personnel and learners;

WHEREAS, DepEd believes that partnership is an important paradigm in delivering and achieving DepEd's education development goals and services, and to fulfill the mandate of the Constitution of making quality education accessible to all;

WHEREAS, the IPAO, as the Accredited Integrated Professional Organization (AIPO) of Optometrists, duly recognized by the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC), has around seventy (70) chapters nationwide;

WHEREAS, the Philippine National Survey of Blindness and Eye Disease Study of 2018 results show that 9% of kindergarten kids are affected with visual impairments, 16% of high school learners are found to have a visual impairment, and 90% of these are myopia;

WHEREAS, the Department of Health (DOH) – Philippine Eye Research Institute (PERI) Data in 2015 revealed that 10% of school-aged children have eye problems, 25% have amblyopia, and the rest have refractive errors;

WHEREAS, Republic Act (RA) No. 11358, otherwise known as the National Vision Screening Act of 2019, establishes the National Vision Screening Program (NVSP) under the Department of Education to screen the eyes and vision of kindergarten learners. This act aims to ensure that children have access to proper eye care, promoting their overall well-being and educational success;

WHEREAS, Section 6 of RA No. 11358 provides that the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) shall develop a benefit package for the consultation and treatment of eye diseases of children;

WHEREAS, the PhilHealth Optometric Benefit Package, covering vision assessment, prescription eyeglasses, and follow-up consultations for children aged 0-15, was implemented on January 18, 2025, as stated in PhilHealth Circular No. 2025-0002;

WHEREAS, the optometrists are the PhilHealth-designated service providers of the optometric benefit package for school children until fifteen (15) years old, covering optometric services and prescription eyeglasses, relieving the families of financial burden related to the cost of services and eyeglasses;

WHEREAS, RA No. 12028, otherwise known as the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program, supports learners by establishing a free and effective national learning intervention program to ensure that all learners who are struggling in their lessons, especially in reading, mathematics, and science, will be able to attain the competencies set by the DepEd in their respective levels;

WHEREAS, learners with vision impairment or refractive errors need eye and vision examination and assessment, including management of refractive errors through prescription eyeglasses to see better, read, and perform better academically;

WHEREAS, both Parties acknowledge the importance of early detection, prevention, and treatment of vision problems, especially among school children, to support learning and overall development;

WHEREAS, DepEd acknowledges the need for licensed optometrists to deliver optometric services and be part of the referral pathway after conducting vision screening of learners at the school level to address the impact of vision problems on literacy and academic performance;

WHEREAS, the IPAO, as a national organization of optometrists with chapters nationwide, has members distributed in all the geographical regions of the Philippines who are willing to provide school-based optometric services to learners in public and private schools;

WHEREAS, the IPAO members in the various geographical regions of the Philippines shall participate by providing school-based optometric services to learners referred by DepEd for examination or assessment at the locations agreed to by the Parties;

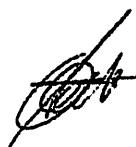
WHEREAS, the IPAO shall assist in working out a scheme with its public and private partners, including PhilHealth, to cover the financing of prescription eyeglasses for school children.

WHEREAS, both Parties agree to enter a partnership to ensure the effective implementation of the National Vision Screening Program, the ARAL Program, and other eye and vision care programs for kindergarten, elementary, and high school learners aimed at addressing the reading comprehension, and learning and development issues of school children;

NOW, THEREFORE, for and in consideration of the foregoing premises and the terms and conditions herein set forth, the Parties agree as follows:

Article I. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

1. This Understanding formalizes the partnership between the DepEd and IPAO to ensure systematic referral of pre-screened learners from the school and its catchment areas to IPAO and its Regional Optometric Centers for optometric services.
2. The partnership aims:
 - a. to provide accessible, age-appropriate, and quality optometric services to school children through school-based interventions;
 - b. to establish a referral mechanism from the schools to the network of optometrists provided by the IPAO;



- c. to promote early detection of eye and vision problems, and timely provision of prescription eyeglasses for school children; and
- d. to facilitate data sharing and monitoring of vision outcomes among referred children, in alignment with DepEd health and wellness programs, to ensure optimum academic performance and overall child development.

Article II. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Subject to a more definitive Memorandum of Agreement, which will clearly set forth the specific terms and conditions between the Parties:

1. **DepEd undertakes to:**
 - 1.1 Establish a national referral system with IPAO National and Regional Centers to ensure coordination, access, and delivery of comprehensive optometric services and intervention to school children with eye and vision problems;
 - 1.2 Include vision screening as part of the annual physical or medical examination through the Learner Health Assessment and Screening (LHAS) utilizing standardized screening protocols, ensuring proper documentation and parental consent;
 - 1.3 Identify and refer school children pre-screened by school health personnel or designated health workers with actual or potential vision problems to IPAO for comprehensive eye and vision assessment and intervention. The referral shall be properly documented using forms mutually agreed upon by the Parties;
 - 1.4 Provide education to parents on the importance of eye health and the optometric benefits and prescription eyeglasses covered under PhilHealth, with emphasis on the effect of vision on academic performance and overall child development;
 - 1.5 Monitor and record health outcomes and share non-identifiable data with IPAO for follow-up actions; and
 - 1.6 Perform other responsibilities necessary for the effective and efficient implementation of the Program.

2. **IPAO undertakes to:**
 - 2.1 Establish a national referral system with DepEd National, Regional, and Division offices to deploy optometrists to DepEd-identified schools to perform and deliver optometric services to pre-screened school children in line with the National Vision Screening Law, the ARAL Program, and other eye and vision health programs of DepEd;
 - 2.2 Accept and respond to referrals from the DepEd National, Regional, or Division offices and coordinate with authorized personnel in a timely manner, the delivery of optometric services to pre-screened school children with eye and vision problems;
 - 2.3 Mobilize PRC-licensed optometrists, preferably PhilHealth/IPAO-accredited members with training in pediatric vision care, in predetermined locations (such as DepEd offices, schools, or community centers) to ensure compliance with existing service and product standards;
 - 2.4 Conduct school-based or community-based optometric service provision for school children, with appropriate vision assessment, prescription, and provision of corrective lenses if needed;
 - 2.5 Conduct training of teachers or health workers in vision screening methods and protocol;
 - 2.6 Devise the process of PhilHealth Optometric Benefit Package availment to enable the learners to receive free prescription eyeglasses in accordance with PhilHealth regulations and guidelines;
 - 2.7 Promote DepEd's implementation of the National Vision Screening Program, the ARAL Program, and other eye health programs that will benefit learners and teachers; and
 - 2.8 Perform other responsibilities necessary for the effective and efficient implementation of the Program.

Article III. PROGRAM COST

DepEd shall not shoulder any costs or expenses in relation to this program.

Article IV. IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS

1. A Joint Referral Protocol shall be developed and adopted by both Parties within thirty (30) days from the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement, detailing specific procedures for patient referral, documentation requirements, and communication channels;






2. Both Parties shall collaborate in health promotion campaigns, school screenings, and parent-teacher orientation activities, with costs shared based on agreed terms, subject to the availability of funds and execution of a definitive Memorandum of Agreement. A Joint Monitoring Committee comprising equal representation from both Parties shall be established to oversee implementation, resolve operational issues, and ensure compliance with this Understanding; and
3. Periodic review meetings shall be conducted quarterly to evaluate effectiveness and update coordination strategies. Both Parties shall maintain comprehensive records of all transactions and activities under this Understanding for audit and monitoring purposes.

Article V. DATA PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Both Parties shall comply with the provisions of the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (RA 10173) in handling patient information and health records. Patient data shall be used solely for the purposes outlined in this Understanding and shall not be disclosed to third Parties without proper consent or legal basis.

Article VI. DURATION AND TERMINATION

This Understanding shall remain in effect for a period of **two (2) years** from the date of signing and may be renewed or revised upon mutual written consent of both Parties at least thirty (30) days before expiration.

Article VII. AMENDMENTS AND MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

1. Any amendments to this Understanding shall be made in writing and signed by duly authorized representatives of both Parties. This Understanding constitutes the entire agreement between the Parties and supersedes all prior negotiations, representations, or agreements relating to its subject matter;
2. If any provision of this Understanding is declared invalid or unenforceable, the remaining provisions shall continue in full force and effect. This Understanding shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the Republic of the Philippines;
3. This Understanding shall take effect upon signing by both Parties and notarization in accordance with Philippine law.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Parties have signed this Memorandum of Understanding as of the date first written above.

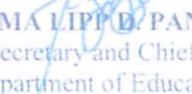
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
(DepEd)


JUAN EDGARDO M. ANGARA
Secretary

INTEGRATED PHILIPPINE ASSOCIATION
OF OPTOMETRISTS, INC.
(IPAO)


CHARMIE L. HO
National President

SIGNED IN THE PRESENCE OF:


ATTY. FATIMA LIPPIT PANONTONGAN
Undersecretary and Chief of Staff
Department of Education


JOHN U. NAKPIL
Chairman
Integrated Philippine Association of Optometrists, Inc.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
PASIG CITY) S.S.

BEFORE ME, a Notary Public for and in PASIG CITY personally appeared the following:


Name	Government Issued ID (Details)	Date and Place Issued
JUAN EDGARDO M. ANGARA		

Known to me and to me known to be the same persons who executed the foregoing Memorandum of Understanding, signed by the PARTIES and their instrumental witnesses, and they acknowledged to me that the same is their free voluntary act and deed and that of the corporations they represent respectively. This Memorandum of Understanding consists of six (6) pages including this page in which this acknowledgment is written, signed by the Parties and their instrumental witnesses every page thereof.

WITNESS MY HAND AND NOTARIAL SEAL, on the date at the place first written above.

NOTARY PUBLIC

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Book No. VIII
Series of 2025


ATTY. GERARDO P. RUBIO
Notary Public
Until December 31, 2026
Roll No. 84083
IBP OR No. 510087
PTR No. 3019936
Appointment No. 104 (2025-2026)
MCLE Compliance VIII-BEP002249
TIN No. 238-919-765

