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Principles and general objectives of education

In the Philippines the education system aims to:

- provide for a broad general education that will assist each individual in society to attain his/her potential as a human being, and enhance the range and quality of the individual and the group;
- help the individual participate in the basic functions of society and acquire the essential educational foundation for his/her development into a productive and versatile citizen;
- train the nation's manpower in the middle-level skills required for national development;
- develop the high-level professions that will provide leadership for the nation, advance knowledge through research, and apply new knowledge for improving the quality of human life;
- respond effectively to changing needs and conditions through a system of educational planning and evaluation. (Education Act of 1982, section 4).

Article 14 of the Constitution of 1987 stipulates that the school shall inculcate patriotism and nationalism, foster love of humanity, respect for human rights, appreciation of the role of national heroes in the historical development of the country, teach the rights and duties of citizenship, strengthen ethical and spiritual values, develop moral character and personal discipline, encourage critical and creative thinking, broaden scientific and technological knowledge, and promote vocational efficiency.

The central goal of the Philippine Education for All 2105 National Action Plan (prepared in 2006) is basic competencies for all that will bring about functional literacy for all. Ensuring that every Filipino has the basic competencies is equivalent to enabling all Filipinos to be functionally literate which means having the complete range of skills and competencies—cognitive, affective and behavioral—which enables individuals to: live and work as human persons; develop their potentials; make critical and informed decisions; and function effectively in society within the context of their environment and that of the wider community (local, regional, national and global) in order to improve the quality of their lives and that of the society.

The vision of every Filipino family is to ensure that each son or daughter has the opportunity to get a high quality education that will make him or her a whole person and lead him or her to a productive, well-paying job or become a successful entrepreneur. Hence, it is imperative for education to be shaped with accordance to the exact needs of the industry in order to compete in a knowledge-based economy. This vision has been expressed concretely by the Presidential Task Force for Education in terms of a successful completion of the Main Education Highway. (PTFE, 2008).

Laws and other basic regulations concerning education

In the Philippines, public elementary and secondary education is a public or state function supported by the national government. The **Constitution** (1987) stipulates that “the 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”. The **Republic Act No. 6655** (Free Secondary Education Act) stipulates that secondary education should be provided free in state schools. Specific provisions on education upon which all decrees, policies, regulations, and rules on education are based, are provided in the Constitution. These are expressly stated by way of the constitutional mandate, Presidential decree, and other legal provisions.

The objectives of formal education at the elementary, secondary, and tertiary levels as well as those of non-formal education are specified in the **Education Act** of 1982. The **Republic Act No. 6728** deals with private education, notably by setting common minimum physical facilities and curricular requirements for all schools and by liberalizing the subject content of values education.

The **Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Law**, enacted in 2000, recognizes the importance of early childhood and its special needs, affirms parents as primary caregivers and the child's first teachers, and establishes parent effectiveness, seminars and nutrition counseling for pregnant and lactating mothers. The Law requires the establishment of a National Coordinating Council for the Welfare of Children which: (a) establishes guidelines, standards, and culturally relevant practices for ECCD programs; (b) develops a national system for the recruitment, training, and accrediting of caregivers; (c) monitors the delivery of ECCD services and the impact on beneficiaries; (d) provides additional resources to poor and disadvantaged communities in order to increase the supply of ECCD programs; and (e) encourages the development of private sector initiatives. The **Republic Act 6972**, known as the “*Barangay* (village) Level Total Protection of Children Act”, has a provision that requires all local government units to establish a day-care centre in every village; the law institutionalized the features of the day-care programme that provide for young children's learning needs aside from their health and psychosocial needs.

The universalization of early childhood education and standardization of preschool and daycare centers was established through the **Executive Order No. 658** of 2008 (Expanding the Pre-School Coverage to Include Children Enrolled in Day Care Centers). (PTFE, 2008).

The creation of the Commission on Higher Education by **Republic Act No. 7722** and of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority separated these entities from the Department of Education where they originally belonged.

The Philippine Teachers Professionalization Act, **Republic Act No. 7836**, was issued in 1994. The Literacy Co-ordination Council, an interagency body administratively attached to DECS, was created by **Republic Act No. 7165** to carry out State policy to eradicate illiteracy.



The **Republic Act No. 7796**, otherwise known as the Technical Education and Skills Development Act of 1994, aims to encourage the full participation of and mobilize the industry, labour, local government units and technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions in the skills development of the country's human resources.

On 10 July 10 2007, the Office of the President issued the **Executive Order No. 632** which in effect abolished the National Coordinating Council for Education, and mandating the Office of the Presidential Assistant for Education to exercise its functions. On 21 August 2007, the **Executive Order No. 652** was issued creating the Presidential Task Force on Education (PTFE) to assess, plan, and monitor the entire education system.

In August 2001, **Republic Act No. 9155**, also called the **Governance of Basic Education Act**, was passed. On the basis of this Act, the name of the Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS) was changed into the Department of Education (DepEd) and the role of field offices (regional, division, and district offices and schools) was redefined. This Act provides the overall framework for: (i) school heads empowerment by strengthening their leadership roles; and (ii) school-based management within the context of transparency and local accountability. The Act specifically provides that the main function of the regional offices is quality assurance; they are mandated to monitor and evaluate the performance of all schools within their jurisdiction and provide technical support to divisions and selected schools which are lagging behind in key outcome indicators. According to the Act, basic education encompasses early childhood, elementary and secondary education as well as alternative learning systems for out-of-school youth and adult learners, and includes education for those with special needs.

According to national legislation, primary education is free and compulsory for all children aged 6-11. Secondary education is tuition free in public schools but not compulsory.

Administration and management of the education system

The **Department of Education** (DepEd) is the principal government agency responsible for education and manpower development. The mission of the Department is to provide quality basic education that is equitably accessible to all and lays the foundation for lifelong learning and service for the common good. The Department is primarily responsible for the formulation, planning, implementation and coordination of the policies, standards, regulations, plans, programmes and projects in areas of formal and non-formal education. It also supervises all basic education institutions, both public and private, and provides for the establishment and maintenance of a complete, adequate and integrated system of education relevant to the goals of national development.

The current Department structure consists of two parts: the **Central Office** and offices at the regional and sub-regional levels. The Department proper consists of: the Office of the Secretary; five Services (Planning Service, Financial and Management Service, Administrative Service, Human Resource Development Service, and



Technical Service); three Bureaus (Elementary Education, Secondary Education, and Alternative Learning System); and five Centres (including the School Health and Nutrition Center, and the National Education Testing and Research Center, the latter responsible for nationwide testing and assessment). In 2006 there were 17 **Regional Offices**, each headed by a Regional Director, 195 **Division Offices** each headed by Schools Division Superintendent and over 53,480 schools/learning centers across the country, with a principal, a school head or a teacher-in-charge for each in the case of small, rural schools. In terms of functions, the Central Office sets policies and standards, looks after the provision of basic learning resources and provides overall leadership for the entire basic education sector. Regional Offices are likewise involved with region-wide policy development, quality assurance for the entire region, regulation of private and non-government schools and providers, and the provision of administrative services like payroll servicing, in-service training, legal counseling, and serves as the validation point of the Basic Education Information System (BEIS). Division Offices perform functions related to instructional supervision leadership, quality assurance, resource generation support to schools, library hub services, and BEIS management. (DepEd, 2008).

The Bureau of Elementary Education (BEE) is responsible for providing access and quality elementary education for all. It also focuses on social services for the poor and directs public resources and efforts at socially disadvantaged regions and specific groups. The Bureau of Secondary Education (BSE) is responsible for providing access and quality secondary education. Its aim is to enable every elementary graduate to have access to secondary education. It improves access to secondary education by establishing schools in municipalities where there are none and reviews the overall structure of secondary education as regards curriculum, facilities, and teacher in-service training. The development of the basic education curriculum is the responsibility of the Central Office Bureau of Elementary and Secondary Education, **Curriculum Development Divisions**.

The Bureau of Non-formal Education (BNFE) was responsible for contributing to the improvement of the poor through literacy and continuing education programmes. Its aim is to provide focused basic services to the more disadvantaged sections of the population to improve their welfare and contribute to human resource development. On the basis of the Executive Order No. 356, in 2004 the BNFE was renamed as Bureau of Alternative Learning System (BALS). This was done to respond to the need of a more systematic and flexible approach in reaching all types of learners outside the formal school system.

The Alternative Learning System (ALS) is a parallel learning system to provide a viable alternative to existing formal education instruction. It encompasses both non-formal and informal sources of knowledge and skills. Certification of learning for out-of-school youth and adults, aged 15 years and over, who are unable to gain from the formal school system and who have dropped out of formal elementary and secondary education, is ensured through the Alternative Learning System Accreditation and the Equivalency (ALS A&E) System. The system of certification is done through successful completion of the ALS A&E test at two learning levels – elementary and secondary. Those who pass the test have to undergo counselling to explore their opportunities, be it a return to the formal school system, or the option to enter the world of work. (UNESCO Bangkok, 2009).



The Bureau of Physical Education and School Sports (BPSS) is responsible for physical fitness promotion, school sports development, cultural heritage revival (*Kundiman Fiesta*), natural heritage conservation, and values development. Its aim is to inculcate desirable values such as self-discipline, honesty, teamwork, sportsmanship, excellence and others and make the Filipino youth fit to respond adequately to the demands, requirements, challenges and opportunities that the next century may bring. The functions of the BPSS were absorbed by the Philippine Sports Commission in August 1999.

Attached to the Department there are also Councils and their Secretariats that provide specialized services, e.g. the **Instructional Materials Council** for all policies pertaining to textbooks and instructional materials to be used in the public schools; the **Literacy Coordinating Council** for all policies pertaining to the development and coordination of literacy initiatives; and the **Teacher Education Council** and its for all policies concerning pre-service and in-service teacher education. (DepEd, 2008).

The **Technical Education and Skills Development Authority** (TESDA) was established through the enactment of Republic Act No. 7796 otherwise known as the Technical Education and Skills Development Act of 1994. This Act aims to encourage the full participation of and mobilize the industry, labour, local government units and technical-vocational education and training (TVET) institutions in the skills development of the country's human resources. Overall, TESDA formulates manpower and skills plans, sets appropriate skills standards and tests, coordinates and monitors manpower policies and programs, and provides policy directions and guidelines for resource allocation for the TVET institutions in both the private and public sectors.

The **Commission on Higher Education** (CHED) is independent and separate from the DepEd. The Commission is responsible for formulating and implementing policies, plans and programmes for the development and efficient operation of the system of higher education in the country. Its coverage is both public and private higher education institutions as well as degree-granting programmes in all post-secondary educational institutions. The creation of CHED was part of a broad agenda for reforms in the country's education system, outlined by the Congressional Commission on Education in 1992. Part of the reforms is the tri-focalization of the education sector. The three governing bodies in the education sector are the CHED for tertiary and graduate education, the DepEd for basic education, and the TESDA for TVET and middle-level education. Academic programmes are accredited by the **Federation of Accrediting Agencies of the Philippines** and by the **Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines**.

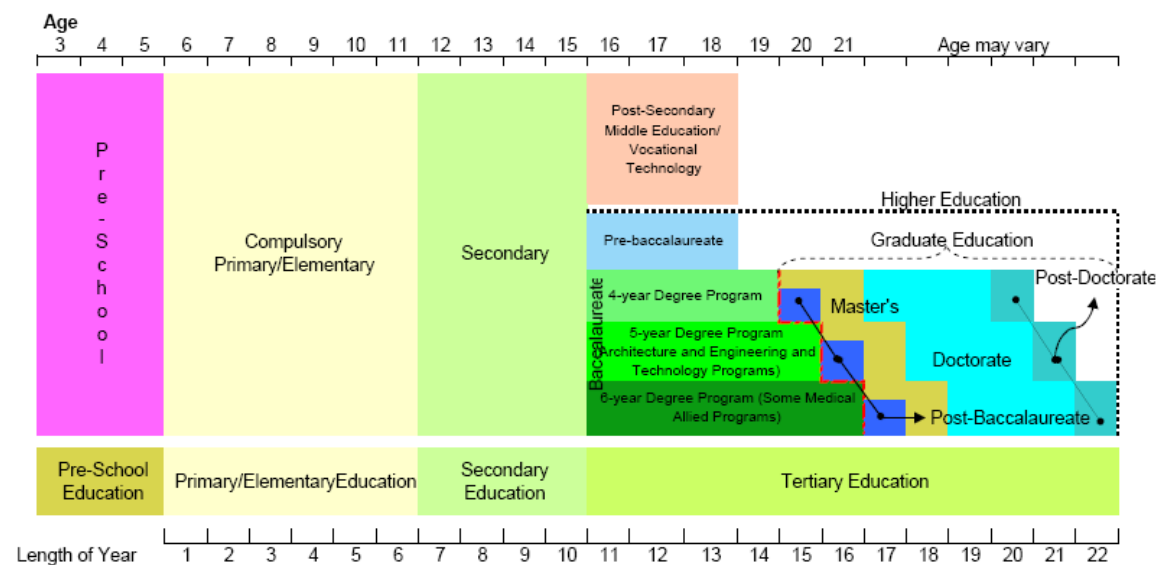
At the national level, the **Department of Social Welfare and Development** (DSWD) is the agency responsible for overall early childhood care and development (ECCD) policy and programmes, setting and promoting guidelines and standards, providing technical assistance to the local government units through the regional field offices, monitoring and evaluation. With the passage of the ECCD Act in 2000, the implementation of ECCD programme is cost-shared between the provincial or city government and the **Council for the Welfare of Children** which also functions as the national coordinating council in partnership with local governments and their respective **ECCD Coordinating Committees**. As of December 2006, the ECCD law

coverage had reached 77 provinces and 29 cities in varying stages. Overall, local governments have been very committed to the law's implementation under the cost-sharing scheme. (DepEd, 2008).

A recent policy thrust of the DepEd is the empowerment of **school principals**. The principal shall assume more administrative authority and the corresponding accountability for improving teaching competencies and pupils' achievement. The policy gives principals the authority to: manage the school's funds for maintenance and other operating expenses; raise additional funds for the school through Parent-Teachers and Community Associations; design and develop his/her own school improvement programme in collaboration with parents and community leaders; participate in the selection, recruitment and promotion of teachers; plan and develop an innovative curriculum, using the national curriculum as a framework. The Decentralization Programme is being implemented by transferring substantive decision-making powers to the school level.

Structure and organization of the education system

Philippines: structure of the education system



Source: Commission on Higher Education.

Pre-school education

The early childhood care and development (ECCD) system refers to the full range of health, nutrition, early education and social development programmes that provide for the basic holistic needs of children aged 0-6, and promote their optimum growth and development. Optional preschool education is for children aged 3-5; kindergarten education caters to 5-year-olds and is not compulsory. According to the Department of Education Order of May 2011, the implementation of Universal Kindergarten



Education to ensure access to and quality education for all 5-year-olds should start in the school year 2011/12.

Primary education

Elementary education is compulsory for pupils aged 6-11 and is part of basic education. Elementary education lasts six years except in a few schools—mainly private—offering a seven-year course. Elementary education is organized into two levels: primary, which covers grades 1-4; and intermediate, which covers grades 5 and 6 (or 7). After completing the six-year elementary programme, pupils receive a certificate of graduation.

Secondary education

Secondary education (high school) is also part of basic education. It is expanded to include learning (general education) and training in basic employable skills (vocational/technical education). Secondary education lasts four years and is tuition free in public schools. Students who successfully complete secondary education receive the high school diploma. The Department of Education plans to introduce an enhanced K+12 basic education programme that will consist of one year of kindergarten, six years of elementary education, four years of junior high school (grades 7 to 10, corresponding to the current four-year high school), and two years of senior high school (grades 11 and 12). The two years of senior high school intend to provide time for students to consolidate acquired academic skills and competencies. The curriculum will allow specializations in science and technology, music and arts, agriculture and fisheries, sports, business and entrepreneurship, etc., as well as subjects for advanced placement. By 2012/13, a new curriculum will be offered to grade 1 entrants as well as to junior high school entrants. The target of the Department is to put in place the infrastructure and other necessary arrangements needed to provide senior high school education by 2016/17. (DepEd, 2010).

Higher education

Tertiary-level and higher education institutions (colleges and universities) offer a variety of programmes in academic disciplines and professions. Post-secondary technical and vocational programmes leading to a national certificate (levels 1 to 3) last one to three years. An associate degree takes two to three years to complete. Programmes leading to the award of a bachelor's degree normally require four years of study (five years in the case of engineering and architecture; six years in the case of dentistry, veterinary and medicine). Programmes leading to a postgraduate diploma or certificate normally require one to two years of study beyond the bachelor's degree. Master's degree programmes are of two to three years' duration. Doctoral degree programmes last a minimum of two to three years of study beyond the master's degree.

According to the DECS (now DepEd) Order No. 16 of 2001, at the elementary and secondary levels the 2001/02 school year began on 4 June and ended on 27 March of the following year. It consisted of 203 days, or about 33 weeks of classes in public schools. On the basis of the DepEd Order No. 28 of 22 March 2011, the school year 2011/12 (compulsory for all public elementary and secondary schools) shall



commence on 6 June 2011 and end on 30 March 2012. There should be a total number of 202 school days while the total number of teaching-learning days shall be 180 days. The 180 days shall represent the actual teaching-learning days which all schools shall strictly adhere to. The remaining 22 days of the total school days shall be utilized for national and local events and celebrations; national, division and regional achievement tests (a total of 18 days); contests/activities authorized by the regional and central offices; and class suspensions due to natural calamities and disasters.

The educational process

Curriculum policies are set forth by the Department of Education through various orders, circulars, memoranda and bulletins. They are aligned with national priorities and contribute to the achievement of development goals. However, several laws passed by the national legislature specifically relate to the school curriculum. The new elementary school curriculum and the new secondary school curriculum were fully implemented in the 1990s.

In 1982, financed by the World Bank, a 10-year Programme for Decentralized Education (PRODED) was launched. The New Elementary School Curriculum (NESC) was the core of PRODED. The NESC had the following features: the following features: (a) it covered fewer learning areas putting greater emphasis on intellectual skills and basic knowledge, especially reading, writing and mathematics as well as attitude formation among pupils; (b) its content focused on the development of a shared values and belief system which fosters humanism and sense of nationhood among children; (c) it aimed at mastery learning among the pupils; (d) it also emphasized the development of work skills which are as important as intellectual skills; (e) it developed health values in the whole curriculum, not only in the period for character building activities and science and health; (f) it developed competencies and values for social living reflected in the new dimension in civics and culture expanded to include history, geography and work ethic for grade 3, and in-depth learning of geography, history and civics in grades 4-6. (Inciong, 2008).

In 1999, the policy direction was for decongesting the curriculum. That led to the formulation of the Basic Education Curriculum for the elementary level and the Restructured Basic Education Curriculum for the secondary level. The number of learning areas in both levels was reduced to five (Filipino, English, science, mathematics and *Makabayan*), focusing on those that facilitate lifelong learning skills. The implementation of the basic education curriculum started in 2002/03. (DepEd, 2008). The Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001 envisions a curriculum that shall promote the holistic growth of the Filipino learners and enable them to acquire the core competencies and develop the proper values. This curriculum shall be flexible to meet the learning needs of diverse students, and is relevant to their immediate environment and social and cultural realities. The 2002 Basic Education Curriculum is a restructuring and not a major change of the elementary and secondary curricula (e.g. the New Elementary School Curriculum and New Secondary Education Curriculum implemented in the 1990s). (Inciong, 2008).

Since integration works best when teachers of different disciplines plan and teach together thus collaborative teaching is strongly encouraged in the 2002 curriculum. The ideal teaching-learning process is interactive, and thus the curriculum



has been restructured to promote more reciprocal interaction between students and teachers, between themselves (collaborative learning), between students and instructional materials, between students and multimedia sources, and between teachers of different disciplines. Using the restructured curriculum, schools are allowed to design and contextualize the implementation of *Makabayan* while information communication technology shall be used in every learning area, whenever hardware and software are available. (Inciong, 2008). *Makabayan* is a learning area that serves as a practice environment for holistic learning to develop a healthy personal and national self-identity. At the elementary level, *Makabayan* includes civics and culture, social studies, home economics, music, arts, health and physical education, values education, good manners and right conduct. At the secondary level, it includes social studies, home economics, agriculture and fisheries, industrial arts, and entrepreneurship technology, music, arts, physical education and health, and values education.

The development of the basic education curriculum is under the responsibility of the Central Office Bureau of Elementary and Secondary Education, Curriculum Development Divisions. This bureau defines the learning competencies for the different subject areas; conceptualizes the structure of the curriculum; and formulates national curricular policies. These functions are exercised in consultation with other agencies and sectors of society (e.g. industry, social and civic groups, teacher training institutions, professional organizations, school administrators, parents, students, etc.). The subject offerings, credit points and time allotments for the different subject areas are also determined at the national level. In this sense, a national curriculum exists in the Philippines. However, while curriculum implementation *guidelines* are issued at the national level, the actual implementation is left to teachers. They determine the resources to be used; teaching and assessment strategies and other processes. Furthermore, schools have the option to modify the national curriculum (e.g. content, sequence and teaching strategies) in order to ensure that the curriculum responds to local concerns.

The approach to curriculum design in the country is based on content topic *and* competency. The Department of Education prescribes competencies for the subject areas in all the grade/year levels. The Bureau of Elementary and Secondary Education develops, publishes and disseminates these learning competencies to the field. Most of the subject/learning areas have a list of learning competencies expected to be mastered by the children at the end of each grade/year level and also at the end of elementary/secondary schooling. Some subject/learning areas have a combination of both (i.e. learning competencies under each content/topic). The curriculum is designed to be interpreted by teachers and implemented with variations. Schools are encouraged to innovate and enrich or adapt, as long as they have met the basic requirements of the curriculum. In this context, the regional science high schools offer an enriched science and mathematics programme whereby students take additional science and mathematics subjects. In some private schools, English, science and mathematics subjects are taken in lieu of values education; this is because subjects like religion, moral values and ethics already have been incorporated. In addition, students are required to participate in co-curricular activities. These are managed by students with the teacher as facilitator/moderator.



The curriculum plan (learning competencies) does not present teaching methods and learning activities that teachers must follow in implementing the curriculum. The guiding philosophy is that the creativity of teachers is stimulated by the option to plan and use the appropriate teaching/learning activities independently. However, teacher's manuals or guides do incorporate higher-level content areas and suggestions for teaching and assessing. (See: Mariñas & Ditapat, 2000).

The first monitoring and evaluation of the basic education curriculum implementation was conducted in September 2002, the second in October 2003, and the latest in September 2004. Effective 2006/07, the mandatory implementation of the 2002 basic education curriculum was expanded to the private secondary schools. (DepEd Order No. 35 of 1 July 2005 on policy guidelines in the implementation of the secondary education programme of the 2002 basic education curriculum).

The policy of indigenization of the curriculum led to development of localized curriculum materials that took into account local culture. In 2005/06, the Standard Curriculum for Elementary Public Schools and Private Madaris was implemented. The curriculum upholds the country's commitment to provide quality education opportunity to all children. The curriculum development process was aimed at: (a) establishing a smooth transfer of pupils/students from public to private Madrasah or vice versa; (b) unifying the long history of dichotomy among Muslims; and (c) promoting the Filipino national identity and at the same time preserving the Muslim's cultural heritage. A vital part of the restructured curriculum is the promotion of the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in every learning area. DepEd, through its Computerization Programme, provided computers and peripherals to recipient public high schools nationwide. The standard Madrasah curriculum in the public schools is now being observed by all madaris offering basic education. It generally reflects the basic education curriculum, plus two additional subjects included, e.g. Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education. The DepEd directive was followed by its conduct of training programs for potential Muslim teachers that they may acquire new pedagogical skills and English language proficiency. (DepEd, 2008).

The DepEd Order No. 76 of 4 June 2010 stipulates that after a four-year try out in a number of schools nationwide, the 2010 Secondary Education Curriculum (SEC) which focuses on teaching and learning for understanding and doing this by design, is ready for roll-out in the first year and shall be progressively mainstreamed from 2010/11 (first year of secondary education) to 2013/14 (fourth year).

As mentioned, the Department of Education plans to introduce an Enhanced K+12 Basic Education Programme (e.g. one year of kindergarten, six years of elementary education, four years of junior high school, and two years of senior high school). The two years of senior high school intend to provide time for students to consolidate acquired academic skills and competencies. The curriculum will allow specializations in science and technology, music and arts, agriculture and fisheries, sports, business and entrepreneurship, etc., as well as subjects for advanced placement. By 2012/13, a new curriculum will be offered to grade 1 entrants as well as to junior high school entrants. The curriculum enhancement will be designed in line with the desired competencies and skills of a K+12 graduate. The Department of Education will constitute a body to review the current basic education curriculum and

detail the implementation plan. The development of tracks based on different competencies and/or students' interest will be an integral component of the programme. This also intends to meet the country's varied human capital requirements, and to prepare students for productive endeavour. The senior high school curriculum will offer areas of specialization or electives. The intention of K+12 is not merely to add two years of schooling but more importantly, to enhance the basic education curriculum. DepEd is preparing a carefully sequenced implementation plan to ensure smooth transition with the least disruption. An open and consultative process will be adopted to ensure the successful development and implementation of the programme. Regional consultations leading to a National Summit on Enhanced Basic Education will be conducted to solicit inputs and feedback on the proposed model. Consultations will cover all stakeholders (PTAs, public and private elementary and high schools, legislators, government agencies, business sector, education experts, teacher associations, students and education associations) and all regions. (DepEd, 2010).

Pre-primary education

There are four modalities through which early childhood care and development (ECCD) services are delivered, i.e. through day care centres, homes, preschools and health centres or clinics:

A network of public, private and NGO-managed centres (e.g. centre-based ECCD) carries out the day-care programme. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) used to undertake the establishment of public day care centres, but this programme was devolved to the Local Government Units (LGUs) after the enactment of the 1991 Local Government Code. The local government units (LGUs) also implement another devolved programme of the DSWD, namely the Parent Effectiveness Service (PES) Programme that was initiated in 1978. This home-based intervention in ECCD aims to help parents, surrogate parents, guardians and other care givers to enhance their knowledge, skills and attitudes in parenting.

Most private preschools (school-based ECCD) are located in highly urbanized areas and cater mainly to the higher income groups. Consequently, there are many entrants to grade 1 who have no exposure to preschool education and therefore manifest significant adjustment and learning gaps. Clinic-based ECCD is an integral part of Maternal and Child Health (MCH) services, which are made available primarily through a network of public and private hospitals, private clinics, municipality-based main health centres (MHCs) and *barangay* Health Stations (BHSs). The MHCs and BHSs are government facilities that are primarily responsible for the delivery of basic health care services to communities especially in the rural areas. A doctor and a public health nurse man the MHCs. On the other hand, the BHSs are simple clinics staffed by a rural health midwife who is assisted by a *barangay* health worker.

The public day-care system is the largest provider of ECCD services for 3- to 4-year-olds. In terms of public ECCD services, the village health centres are the main service delivery points for decentralized maternal and child health services that complement the group experiences in day-care centres. These include immunization



and a programme for the integrated management of childhood illness, both designed to improve prevention and treatment of common childhood diseases.

The National Preschool Education Programme was conceived in 2005. This programme aims to ensure that all 5-year-old children have access to quality preschool education. Specifically, it aims to expand access and coverage to all children aged 5, initially focusing on the poorest and disadvantaged; and upgrading the quality of preschool education in order to ensure that children are school ready integrating health and nutrition components (weighing, de-worming and supplemental feeding). The program aims to reach all 5-year-olds by using existing day care centers and opening new preschool classes in areas where there are no existing day care centers and public preschool classes.

Preschool education at the kindergarten level for children aged 5 years aims to develop children in all aspects (physical, social, emotional, and cognitive) so that they will be better prepared to adjust and cope with life situations and the demands of formal schooling; and to maximize the children's potential through a variety of carefully selected and meaningful experiences considering their interests and capabilities. The kindergarten curriculum focuses on the following areas:

- Physical development: it includes gross and fine motor co-ordination through play and manipulative activities like games, simple works, etc.
- Personal-social development: it involves skills and social behaviours and it includes the development of health habits, independence, abilities to follow rules and routines. Learning about the family and other people is part of the concerns in this area.
- Affective development: it includes experiences that help children develop love for God, self, others and the community, and develop awareness of their feelings and sense of the right and wrong.
- Cognitive development: it includes the development of communication skills and sensory-perceptual and numeracy concepts and skills. Communication skills refer to competencies in expressing ideas and feelings both in English and Filipino (oral expression and basic readiness skills of listening, pre-reading and writing). Sensory-perceptual and numeracy skills refer to the ability to observe, discriminate, compare and classify, and to understand, count, read and write numbers.
- Creative-aesthetic development: it includes exploration of sounds, music and rhythms, and the development of children's creative expression through drawing, painting, manipulative activities, etc.

In order to attain and ensure the holistic development of children, a well-planned curriculum and a well-balanced programme of activities are necessary, although they may vary according to each preschool's approach. Indoor and outdoor plays are essential whatever approach the preschool follows. The language spoken by the child should be valued. It is necessary that such language be used initially and until the children have attained the facility and confidence in expressing themselves in English and Filipino. Most preschool programmes run Monday to Friday, and those with large enrolments generally operate two or three shifts of three- to four-hour sessions per age group. There are no full-day kindergarten or nursery classes.



Most ECCD programmes can be described as eclectic in their approach to philosophy, conceptual frameworks and curriculum design. However, while the theories that influence their development may be rather similar to one another, the specifics of the curricula are a more accurate indicator of these programmes' orientation. These curricula can be broadly classified under three categories, described here in terms of their focus and their methods.

The first type of curriculum is geared towards the traditional primary school, which is organized in terms of subject matter areas and focuses mainly on cognitive, literacy and numeracy skills. Children are mostly engaged in teacher-directed, structured, sedentary classroom tasks, and their experiences are limited to paper-pencil tasks with a sprinkling of arts and crafts, music and movement. The second type of curriculum is informal, play-based and activity-oriented that allows children to explore a variety of topics in a comparatively random fashion. The learning experiences are designed to support physical, social, emotional, language and cognitive development.

The third type of curriculum follows a similarly diverse and comprehensive pattern, to respond to all dimensions of child development. However, a more integrated and well-balanced curriculum that shows careful attention to content is achieved by organizing activities around well-selected themes or topics of study. These programmes are more learner-centred and emphasize children's active participation. There are also ECCD centres that implement or adapt specific programme models, such as those based on Maria Montessori's work, the developmental-interaction approach associated with Bank Street College, the Waldorf School, and the Kumon method from Japan. Their curricula can also be seen in terms of the three types mentioned above.

The curriculum of public kindergartens and day-care centres is designed to be more like the second type mentioned, with some features from the third type of curriculum. The day-care centre's activity plan is organized around topics or themes and is designed to provide a variety of activities: dramatic, manipulative and group play, arts and crafts, music, storytelling and other language experiences. The day-care workers' main references are: 1) the original Weekly Plan Activity Guide, with selected topics for a ten-month period; and 2) the Resource Book on ECCD which includes additional themes and recommended concepts and learning experiences. The daily routines and the physical space of the day-care centre are similar to the pre-schools that are compatible with an activity-centred curriculum. There are well-defined play or activity "corners" and the children's daily schedule is divided into blocks of time for specific activities and transitions between e.g. play, storytelling and meals.

The Department of Education's kindergarten curriculum is more explicitly focused on supporting school readiness and promotes the use of compiled worksheets, manipulative play materials, as well as teacher-made resources. Kindergarten teachers are provided with a 'Preschool Handbook' which describes the instructional objectives and concepts or content to be covered, recommended classroom activities and learning materials. The daily schedule and some guidelines for classroom management are also included. Another reference provided by the DepEd is the "Eight-week ECCD Curriculum in Grade One." This is based on the full-year



kindergarten curriculum and designed to be implemented during the first eight weeks of the school year for all grade 1 pupils. A workbook for the children and several story books suitable for 5- and 6-year-olds are also included in what is similar to the basic kindergarten classroom “package” recommended for use in the public schools.”

Most of the day-care centres operate half-day sessions comprised of supervised play and group activities (arts and crafts, music and movement, storytelling), childcare for personal hygiene, supplemental feeding, health and nutrition education, learning experiences for early literacy and mathematics, and socialization experiences to support social and emotional development. Growth monitoring and assessment of children’s developmental status using a Child Development Checklist are also included. Most public day-care centres provide only one meal, generally a snack each day. The ones that function also as child-minding centres serve lunch and possibly a second (morning or afternoon) snack. All day-care workers in the public system are guided by a national programme developed by the DSWD in collaboration with multidisciplinary partners in academe, civil society and international agencies like UNICEF. In the best situations, day-care centres provide children with developmentally-appropriate experiences that respond to their needs and capacities in a holistic manner.

Most *barangay* (village) day-care centres (also referred to as childcare centres, crèches and nurseries, but day-care centres it is the term most used) function as three-hour or half-day activity- and playgroups for three- to five-year-olds, five days a week. A day-care centre functioning at full capacity usually serves two different groups of children in two shifts: one in the morning and another in the afternoon. A few centres provide childcare services for those children whose parents seek them. In the late 1990s, a national policy was introduced to promote the establishment of day-care centres in the workplace. As a result, there are an increasing number of government offices, as well as private corporations, which provide full-day childcare programmes that match parents’ working hours, that is, from 8 or 9 a.m. to 4 or 5 p.m. Some of these are linked to the local government units of cities which are also the employers of public civil servants. There is now a public day-care centre in virtually every village of the country (in 1998, 26.7% of the villages did not have access to any such programmes).

The public day care system which is managed and supervised by the local governments is the largest provider of early childhood care and development services for 3-5-year-old children. Day care centers are designed to provide supplemental parenting care to children especially of working mothers during part of the day. A center can accommodate 30 children at a time with morning and afternoon sessions (doubling its capacity to 60). Day care activities include supervised play and group activities (arts and crafts, music and movement, storytelling), personal hygiene, supplemental feeding, health and nutrition education, experiences for socialization and early learning.

The total number of day care centers nationwide in 2005 was 45,433 with some *barangays* having more than one, while a few *barangays* remained unserved. In 2005, about 81% (or 32,112) of the country’s *barangays* had day care centers. In 2005, the gross enrolment ratio (GER) in ECCD programmes was estimated at 20.5%. While 60% of the 5 year-olds availed of ECCD centers services, only 19.6% percent



of the 3-4-year-olds did so. In the same year, the percentage of grade 1 entrants with early childhood education experience was estimated at 60.7% in 2005. Test results administered in 2006 revealed that only 36% of the grade 1 entrants were ready for school. (DepEd, 2008).

In 2008/09, the GER was estimated at 24.7%, and the percentage of grade 1 entrants with early childhood education experience was estimated at 64.6%. (Government of the Philippines, 2010).

In 2006/07, the total enrolment at the preschool level (age group 3-5) was 925,109 children, of whom 557,220 children in the preschool programme under DepEd. (PTFE, 2008).

According to DepEd basic education statistics, in 2009/10 the total preschool enrolment was 1,474,644 children, of whom 420,444 in the private sector. (DepEd-RSD, 2010).

Primary education

Elementary education is part of basic education. It comprises six years (in some cases, seven years), the first four years considered as ‘primary grades’ and the last two years as ‘intermediate grades’. In terms of the Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001, the goal of basic education (which covers kindergarten, elementary and secondary education) is to provide the school age population and young adults with skills and knowledge and values to become caring, self-reliant, productive and patriotic citizens; and develop among learners the basic competencies in literacy and numeracy, critical thinking and learning skills, socially aware, patriotic, and responsible citizens.

The overall mission of elementary education is to enable pupils to acquire a basic preparation that will make them an enlightened, disciplined, self-reliant, God-loving, creative, versatile and productive citizens in a national community. In terms of the Education Act of 1982, the main objectives of elementary education are to:

- provide the knowledge and develop the skills, attitudes and values essential for personal development, a productive life, and constructive engagement with a changing social milieu;
- provide learning experiences that increase the child’s awareness of and responsiveness to the just demands of society;
- promote and intensify awareness of, identification with, and love for our nation and the community to which the learner belongs;
- promote experiences that develop the learner’s orientation to the world of work and prepare the learner to engage in honest and gainful work.

The features that make the new 2002 curriculum for elementary and secondary education different from previous curricula implemented in the 1990s are: (i) restructuring of the learning areas, reducing them to five (Filipino, English, science, mathematics and *Makabayan*); (ii) stronger integration of competencies and values within and across learning areas; (iii) greater emphasis on the learning process and integrative modes of teaching; and (iv) increased time for tasks to gain mastery of competencies of the basic tool subjects. The objectives are expressed in terms of



competencies, which are knowledge, skills and attitudes that the learner is expected to acquire at the end of the programme. A significant feature of the competencies is the inclusion of the use of ICTs, articulated in terms of skills in accessing, processing, and applying information, and using educational software in solving mathematical problems and conducting experiments. Content is delivered using a variety of media and resources. The teaching-learning process considers the learner an active partner rather than an object of pedagogy. The learner takes on the role of constructor of meaning, while the teacher serves as facilitator, enabler and manager of learning. (DepEd, 2002).

The weekly lesson timetables for elementary education (1999 and according to the 2002 basic education curriculum) are shown below:

Elementary education: weekly lesson timetable (1999)

Subject	Weekly time allocated to each subject (in minutes)					
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Character-building activities	100–150	100–150	100	100	100	100
Filipino language	300	300	300	300	300	300
English language	300	300	300	300	300	300
Mathematics	200	200	200	200	200	200
Civics and culture	200	200	200	–	–	–
History, geography, civics	–	–	–	200	200	200
Science and health	–	–	200	200	200	200
Arts and physical education, home economics and livelihood education	–	–	200	200	200	200
Optional	–	–	–	200	300	300
Total weekly minutes	1,100– 1,150	1,100– 1,150	1,500	1,700	1,800	1,800
Total minutes per day	220–230	220–230	300	340	360	360

Source: Marifias & Ditapat, 2000.

Elementary education: weekly lesson timetable (2002 basic education curriculum)

Learning area	Weekly time allocated to each subject (in minutes)					
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Filipino language	400	400	400	300	300	300
English language	500	500	500	400	400	400
Science ⁽¹⁾	–	–	200	300	300	300
Mathematics	400	400	400	300	300	300
<i>Makabayan</i> : ⁽²⁾	300	300	300	500	600	600
– Civics and culture	300	300	300	–	–	–
– Social studies ⁽³⁾	–	–	–	200	200	200
– Home economics and livelihood	–	–	–	200	200	200
– Music, arts and physical education ⁽⁴⁾	–	–	–	100	200	200
– Values education, good manners and right conduct ⁽⁵⁾	–	–	–	–	–	–
Total weekly minutes	1,600	1,600	1,800	1,800	1,900	1,900

Source: Department of Education, 2002.

Notes:

⁽¹⁾ In Grades I and II, science is integrated into English and *Makabayan* (Civics and culture); in Grades III–VI, science includes basic health concepts.

⁽²⁾ *Makabayan* is a learning area that serves as a practice environment for holistic learning to develop a healthy personal and national self-identity. Ideally, *Makabayan* entails the adoption of modes of integrative teaching which will enable the learner to personally process and synthesize a wide range of skills and values (cultural, aesthetic, athletic, vocational, politico-economic, and ethical). In Grades I–III, *Makabayan* competencies and topics are developed through ‘Civics and culture.’ Children engage in character-building activities, develop good behaviour, and are taught values like love for the country, good citizenship, and respect for one’s cultural heritage. Children are also introduced to basic health knowledge, healthy practices, and simple scientific skills. Civics and culture also nurtures creative expressions through music, arts, physical exercises and games. In Grade III, Civics and culture focuses on the development of a work ethic.

⁽³⁾ Geography in Grade IV, History in Grade V, and Government & civics in Grade VI.

⁽⁴⁾ Integrated into Civics and culture in Grades I–III.

⁽⁵⁾ Values education and ‘good manners and right conduct’ are integrated in all learning areas.

The learning area *Makabayan* serves as the ‘laboratory of life’ or a practice environment. Among the learning areas, it is the most experiential, interactive area that intends to provide learners interdisciplinary, and value laden (cultural, aesthetic, athletic, vocational, politico-economic, and moral value) education. It is the learning area that is expected to provide learners the quality time to demonstrate practical knowledge and life skills that have been gained, especially the skills of empathy, vocational efficiency and problem solving in daily life. Love of country serves as the unifying principle for the diverse values, and will cultivate in the learners a healthy personal and national self-concept which includes adequate understanding of Philippine history and genuine appreciation of one’s local cultures, crafts, arts, music and games. (DepEd, 2008).

A new student assessment scheme was introduced in school year 2002/03. It included a diagnostic test administered to grade 4 pupils at the start of the school year



to determine learning gaps. The test results served as the basis for implementing remedial measures within the school year. Achievement tests are administered to the same group of pupils at the end of the school year to determine progress in learning, specifically for grade 6 pupils. The National Elementary Achievement Test (NEAT) is an achievement test sat by grade 6 pupils completing the elementary education programme in both public and private schools. In 2000/01, the overall achievement rate was 51.7%. A Grade 1 Readiness Assessment was also introduced for all grade 1 entrants in the public schools beginning 2005 to determine if indeed they are ready for formal instruction. The 2006/07 data showed that less than half of grade 1 pupils (40-45%) were ready to take on the challenge of the grade 1 curriculum. (DepEd, 2008).

In 2003 the Performance-Based Grading System was introduced. The new grading system, designed to truly reflect student performance raised the passing mark and mastery level to 75 from 70 and redesigned the content of the examination. Distribution of test items categorized as easy, medium-level difficulty and difficult is 60%, 30% and 10%, respectively. The new grading system is a way of making teachers pay attention to what they teach their students and ensure that students achieve the desired learning outcomes. Furthermore, through the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI), the reading proficiency level of elementary pupils is assessed and evaluated. Results of the pre-test serve as the basis for implementing interventions for children below the standard reading level. The remedial programme utilizes the Phil-IRI to assess the results. The Phil-IRI standards were adapted from comparisons of several international reading inventories and from the results of the national reading achievement test. (DepEd, 2008).

In 2001/02, the gross enrolment rate at the elementary level was 114.4% (113% in 2004) and the average teacher-pupil ratio in the public sector was 1:36 (1:35 in 2004). The cohort survival rate was 67.1%. The average drop-out rate in 2000/01 was 7.2%.

The net enrolment ratio (NER) at the elementary level was estimated at 96.7% in 2000 (at that time the NER referred to the age group 7-12 years: starting from 2001/02 is based on the age group 6-11 years), but fell to 90.1% the following year and further decreased to 84.4% percent in 2005/06. Drop-out rates have also been increasing. In 2005/06, the drop-out rate in grade 1 was above 14% (between 4% and 6% in grade 2, and slightly more than 4% in grade 3). Of the 37,496 elementary schools in 2005, some 21% or 7,766 schools had incomplete grade-level offerings. In 2007, the elementary education completion rate was estimated at 73%, and the transition rate to secondary education at 96.9%. Approximately 3% of the pupils enrolled in public elementary school belong to the gifted category, while some 2% have various forms of physical disability. DepEd offers distance learning programmes to meet the special needs of these children. It also provides opportunities for continuous upgrading of teacher's professional competencies through self-instructional learning modules. (DepEd, 2008).

In 2008/09, the gross enrolment ratio (GER) was estimated at 102.1% and the NER at 85.1%; the completion rate was estimated at 73.3%. The average drop-out rate remained high at 6% (13.1% in grade 1, 3.8% in grade 2, and 2.7% in grade 3). Significant disparity across regions in terms of the NER still exists. (Government of the Philippines, 2010).

According to DepEd basic education statistics, in 2009/10 there were 44,486 elementary schools in the country of which 7,084 in the private sector. The total enrolment was 13,934,172 pupils (of whom 1,134,222 in the private sector) and the total number of teachers was 410,386 (of whom 52,308 in the private sector). The average teacher-pupil ratio in public schools was 1:36. The GER was estimated at 100.8%, the participation rate or NER at 85%, the completion rate at 72.1%, and the transition rate to secondary education at 97%. (DepEd-RSD, 2010).

Secondary education

Secondary education lasts four years and is part of basic education. Curricular offerings are classified as either general or vocational and technical secondary. In terms of the Education Act of 1982, the objectives of secondary education are to: continue the general education started in elementary; prepare the learners for college; and prepare the learners for the world of work. Typically all secondary schools offer three years of lower secondary (grades 7-9) and one year of upper secondary education (grade 10).

The implementation of the new secondary education curriculum started in 1992/93. The major subject areas were science, mathematics, technology, Filipino, English, and civics/national culture. Technical and vocational education was also revised and adapted to technological progress and employment needs in recent years. In 2002 the new basic education curriculum (also covering secondary education) was introduced.

The weekly lesson timetables for secondary education (1999 and according to the 2002 basic education curriculum) are shown below:

Secondary education: weekly lesson timetable

Subject	Weekly time allocated to each subject (in minutes)			
	I	II	III	IV
English language	200	200	200	200
Filipino language	200	200	200	200
Science and technology	400	400	400	400
Mathematics	200	200	200	200
Social studies	200	200	200	200
Physical education, health and music	200	200	200	200
Values education	200	200	200	200
Technology and home economics	400	400	400	400
Total weekly minutes	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
Total minutes per day	400	400	400	400
Total hours per day	6h40m	6h40m	6h40m	6h40m

Source: Mariñas & Ditapat, 2000.

Secondary education: weekly lesson timetable (2002 basic education curriculum)

Subject	Weekly time allocated to each subject (in minutes)			
	I	II	III	IV
Filipino language	300	300	300	300
English language	300	300	300	300
Science and technology ⁽¹⁾	300	300	300	300
Mathematics	300	300	300	300
<i>Makabayan</i> : ⁽²⁾	780	780	780	780
– Social studies ⁽³⁾	240	240	240	240
– Home economics, agriculture & fisheries, industrial arts, and entrepreneurship	240	240	240	240
– Music, arts, physical education and health	240	240	240	240
– Values education ⁽⁴⁾	60	60	60	60
Total weekly minutes	1,980	1,980	1,980	1,980

Source: Department of Education, 2002.

Notes:

⁽¹⁾ Integrated science in the first year (basic concepts in earth science, biology, chemistry and physics); biology in the second year; chemistry in the third year; physics or advanced chemistry in the fourth year (this scheme shall take effect in the school year 2003/2004).

⁽²⁾ At the secondary level, *Makabayan* is a learning area designed to develop the personal, social and work/special skills of learners, in particular interpersonal skills, empathy with other cultures, vocational efficiency, problem-solving, and decision-making in daily life.

⁽³⁾ The component social studies covers: history of the Philippines (first year); Asian studies (second year); world history (third year); and economics (fourth year).

⁽⁴⁾ Also integrated in all learning areas.

As mentioned, the DepEd Order of June 2010 stipulates that after a four-year piloting, the 2010 Secondary Education Curriculum (SEC) which focuses on teaching and learning for understanding and doing this by design, is ready for roll-out in the first year of secondary education and shall be progressively mainstreamed starting from 2010/11.

According to the Order, the refinement of the curriculum followed the Understanding by Design (UbD) framework which covers three stages: (i) results/desired outcome; (ii) assessment; and (iii) learning/instructional plan. The first two stages are defined in the curriculum guide. The last stage is covered in the teaching guide. The 2010 SEC has the following features:

- lean-focuses on essential understandings;
- sets high expectations (standards-based), expressed in terms of what students should know, do, understand, and transfer in life as evidence of learning;
- is rich and challenging - provides for a personalized approach to developing the student's multiple intelligences through the provision of special curricular programmes: Special Programme in the Arts (SPA), in Sports (SPS), in Journalism (SPJ), in Foreign Language (SPFL), Special Science/Mathematics (S&T), Engineering and Science Education



Programme (ESEP), Technical-Vocational Program (Tech-Voc), that students can pursue on top of the core curriculum;

- develops readiness and passion for work and lifelong learning.

There are eight subject areas of the curriculum: English; science; mathematics; Filipino; *Araling Panlipunan* (social studies, covering Philippine history and government, Asian studies, world history and economics); *Edukasyon sa Pagpapahalaga* (values education); Career Pathways in Technology and Livelihood Education (CP-TLE), and Music and Arts, Physical Education and Health (MAPEH). In addition, Citizenship Advancement Training (CAT), is offered in the fourth year (35 hours). *Araling Panlipunan*, *Edukasyon sa Pagpapahalaga*, CP-TLE, MAPEH, and CAT were included under *Makabayan*, the fifth learning area according to the DepEd Order No. 35 of 1 July 2005 ('Policy guidelines in the implementation of the secondary education programme of the 2002 basic education curriculum for 2005/06').

Proficiency in the use of English as the medium of instruction in science, mathematics, CP-TLE, and MAPEH and CAT shall, on the one hand, continue to be strengthened as a tool for learning how to learn and for improving the students' global competitiveness. The schools' comparative advantage in the use of Filipino as medium of instruction in *Araling Panlipunan* and *Edukasyon sa Pagpapahalaga* shall, on the other hand, be sustained as a tool for building and communicating the values of Filipino identity and nationhood. Integrative teaching and constructivism as key features of the 2002 basic education curriculum shall continue to be strengthened in all learning areas across the curriculum. Connection between and among the subject areas shall be made whenever and wherever appropriate.

The use of ICT as integral to the curriculum shall continue to be pursued in schools where the technologies may already be available. The use of various instructional media is encouraged. Likewise, learning shall be extended as far as practicable to the community as the school's laboratory for authentic learning. CP-TLE, for example, shall include practical work experience in the community that may extend beyond the school hours. CP-TLE has been expanded as to include the special programmes mentioned above. Students taking any of these programmes need not take additional courses in CP-TLE inasmuch as they are all designed to prepare students for a career.

The time allotment should be as follows: English (300 min./week); science (360 min./week); mathematics (300 min./week); Filipino (240 min./week); *Araling Panlipunan* (240 min./week); *Edukasyon sa Pagpapahalaga* (120 min./week in year 1 and 2; 180 min./week in year 3 and 4); CP-TLE (240 min./week); and MAPEH (240 min./week). In addition, 35 hours are devoted to CAT in the fourth year.

Pending the revision of the grading system, the implementing guidelines on the performance-based grading system as defined in DepED Order No.33 of 2004 shall continue to be enforced, with emphasis being placed on the formative function of assessment. Students' progress in the attainment of standards shall be regularly monitored as basis for enrichment or remediation. Every learning deficiency shall be addressed and every learning gap shall be bridged as a matter of urgency. The '60-30-10' test design shall continue to be adopted, where 60% of the items shall be easy,



although assessing critical thinking: 30% shall be average or moderately difficult; and 10% shall be difficult. Authentic assessment that considers application of learning in real-life situations shall be the basic mode of measuring learning outcomes. Alternative assessment shall be utilized whenever appropriate. The use of rubrics as scoring guides shall be continued for a more objective method of rating students.

Student promotion shall be by subject and shall continue to be based on the minimum performance standard of 75%. Sixty-five percent (65%) shall remain the lowest grade that can be indicated in the student's report card. A student shall be retained in the year level if he/she incurs failures of three units or more during the regular school year and is unable to make up for the failed subjects during the summer sessions. Retained students need to repeat only the subjects that they failed and shall not be allowed to take advanced courses in these subjects. (See: DepEd Order No. 76 of 4 June 2010).

As mentioned, the Department of Education plans to introduce an Enhanced K+12 Basic Education Programme, consisting of one year of kindergarten, six years of elementary education, four years of junior high school, and two years of senior high school. The two years of senior high school intend to provide time for students to consolidate acquired academic skills and competencies. The curriculum enhancement will be designed in line with the desired competencies and skills of a K+12 graduate. The development of tracks based on different competencies and/or students' interest will be an integral component of the programme. The senior high school curriculum will offer areas of specialization or electives. The intention of K+12 is not merely to add two years of schooling but to enhance the basic education curriculum.

Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) prepares students and other clients for employment. It also addresses the skills training requirements of those who are already in the labor market and would need to upgrade or develop new competencies to enhance employability and improve productivity. The potential clientele of TVET includes primarily high school graduates, secondary school leavers, college undergraduates and graduates who want to acquire competencies in different occupational fields. Other potential clients include those who are unemployed who are actively looking for jobs. There are four basic modes of training delivery: (a) school-based or formal delivery through TVET programmes of varying duration of at least one year but not exceeding three years; (b) center-based, e.g. provision of short duration non-formal training undertaken in the TESDA regional and provincial training centers; (c) community-based, e.g. training programmes specifically designed to meet the needs for skills training in the community to facilitate self-employment; and (d) enterprise-based programmes like apprenticeship, learners-hip, dual training which are carried out within the firms/industries. In 2007 there were over 4,500 TVET private and public institutions/centers, of which 62% in the private sector. More than 80% of the total enrolment in formal TVET was in the private sector. In the same year, a total of 1,680,402 persons were trained. The public TVET providers included 121 TESDA Technology Institutes composed of 57 schools, 15 regional training centers, 45 provincial training centers and four specialized training centers. Other public TVET providers included state universities and colleges, and local colleges offering non-degree programs; DepEd supervised schools, local government units, and other government agencies providing skills training programmes. (PTFE, 2008).



TESDA pursues the assessment and certification of the competencies of middle-level skilled workers through the Philippine TVET Qualification and Certification System (PTQCS). The assessment process determines whether a graduate or worker can perform to the standards expected in the workplace based on the defined competency standards. Certification is provided to those who meet the requirements of the competency standards. TESDA's advocacy on relevant, accessible and high quality TVET is best articulated in the competency-based training developed and delivered based on training regulations (TRs). The TR serves as the basis for the development of competency-based training programmes, particularly curriculum and learning materials design, training delivery and assessment. The Competency Assessment and Tools (CATs) are used in the assessment of graduates and workers as basis for awards of national qualifications. The Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) and the Competency-Based Learning Materials (CBLMs) are used in the design and delivery of the training programs for the qualifications as defined in the TR. In partnership with the Council on Higher Education (CHED), TESDA started to implement the "Institutionalization of Ladderized Interface between TVET and Higher Education." CHED, TESDA and DepEd jointly worked out the development of the Philippine National Qualifications Framework (PQNWF). In 2006/07, 181 public and private higher education institutions started implementing 293 ladderized programmes in eight priority disciplines such as engineering, agriculture, education, health, maritime, criminology, hotel and restaurant management/tourism and ICT. (UNESCO, 2008).

In 2005, the gross enrolment ratio at the secondary level was estimated at 80.5%, the net enrolment ratio at 58.5% (61.9% in 2007), and the completion rate at 61.6%. The overall drop-out rate was estimated at 12.5%. (DepEd, 2008).

According to DepEd basic education statistics, in 2009/10 there were 10,384 secondary schools in the country of which 4,707 in the private sector. The total enrolment was 6,806,079 students (of whom 1,340,456 in the private sector) and the total number of teachers was 197,684 (of whom 55,166 in the private sector). The average teacher-student ratio in public schools was 1:38. The GER was estimated at 82.1%, the participation rate or NER at 62.4%, the completion rate at 73.7%, and the overall drop-out rate (or school leavers rate) at 7.9%. (DepEd-RSD, 2010).

Assessing learning achievement nationwide

The National Educational Testing and Research Centre (NETRC) has the lead role in the field of educational measurement, evaluation and research as a means of providing information necessary to improve the state of the education system. Among the tests that are annually developed are: the National College Entrance Examination (NCEE), the National Technical and Vocational Examination (NTVE), and the Philippine Educational Placement Test (PEPT), the latter for dropouts desiring to be re-admitted into the formal system. The Centre, in collaboration with the Civil Service Commission, annually develops the test for the Philippine Board Examination for Teachers (PBET). The Centre also develops the National Elementary Achievement Test (NEAT) and the National Secondary Achievement Test (NSAT).

In 1988, achievement scores of elementary pupils stood at only 55.2% against a standard of 75%. Results of the NEAT reflect national mean scores below the target

mean score. The lowest scores were registered in language/reading, science and mathematics. It was further revealed that only 29% or 38 of 131 competencies/skills were learned by the children. The problem of poor quality has been traced to a number of causes which include socio-economic factors, teacher-related factors, inadequate learning materials, and the short and congested school curriculum, among others. Based on the NEAT scores, there was an increase in the percentage of elementary pupils who mastered basic competencies in reading/writing and in mathematics between 1995 and 1998. During the same period, there was a decrease in the percentage mastering basic competencies in life skills/others.

Nationwide, the percentage of pupils mastering reading/writing increased from 59% in 1995 to 61.6% in 1998. Boys and girls had essentially the same rate of increase between 1995 and 1998. There was practically no improvement in the urban areas; in contrast, there was a significant improvement in the rural areas. In terms of the percentage of pupils mastering reading/writing, the urban areas nevertheless had an edge over the rural areas in 1995 (urban: 64.2%; rural: 51.7%) and in 1998 (urban: 64.5%; rural: 57.7%). The percentage of pupils mastering mathematics increased from 67.7% in 1995 to 78.2% in 1998. Boys and girls had essentially the same rate of increase between 1995 and 1998. The rural areas experienced a higher increase (76.3% in 1998 vs. 63.1% in 1995) than the urban areas (79.7% in 1998 vs. 71% in 1995). In terms of the percentage of students mastering mathematics, the urban areas nevertheless had an edge over the rural areas in 1995 (urban: 71%; rural: 63.1%) and in 1998 (urban: 79.7%; rural: 76.3%).

The percentage of pupils mastering competency in life skills decreased from 61.7% in 1995 to 60.9% in 1998. Test scores from the science and HEKASI (geography, history and civics) were used to form the measure for life skills, these subjects being the closest proxy available in the NEAT. There was no change in boys performance between 1995 and 1998; however, girls performance deteriorated, causing the overall decrease in life skills competency among pupils. Nonetheless, the percentage of girls (66.5% in 1995 and 60.9% in 1998) was greater than that of the boys (56.7% for both 1995 and 1998) during both years. While urban performance declined (67.2% in 1995 vs. 64.9% in 1998), the rural areas experienced a slight increase (55.6% in 1998 vs. 54.5% in 1995). In terms of the percentage of students mastering life skills, the urban areas nevertheless had an edge over the rural areas in 1995 (urban: 67.2%; rural: 54.5%) and in 1998 (urban: 64.9%; rural: 55.6%). The decreased level of performance in life skills has been attributed by the DECS to the inadequacy of inputs to support the component subjects, particularly science (DECS, 1999).

Reading and comprehension skills of grade 3 pupils improved from a composite MPS (Mean Percentage Score) of 49.2% in 2006 in English and Filipino to 60.2% in 2007. The gain is attributed to DepEd's investing resources in such programmes as Every Child a Reader Program (ECARP) which ensures that every grade 3 pupil becomes an effective reader with comprehension at their level before they move to grade 4. The achievement level of grade 6 pupils also improved significantly from MPS of 51.5% in 2006 to 57.5% in 2007 for English, science and mathematics. Net performance on all subjects improved from an MPS of 54.6% in 2006 to 59.9% in 2007. Likewise the General Scholastic Aptitude for fourth-year high school students improved. (PTFE, 2008).

In 2009/10, in the National Achievement Test (NAT) for grade 6 pupils the passing rate was only 69.2%. The NAT for high school was 46.4%. International tests results like 2003 TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) rank the Philippines 34th out of 38 countries in high school II mathematics and 43rd out of 46 countries in high school II science; for grade 4, the Philippines ranked 23rd out of 25 participating countries in both mathematics and science. In 2008, even with only the science high schools participating in the Advanced Mathematics category, the Philippines was ranked lowest. (DepEd, 2010).

Teaching staff

Anyone who chooses a teaching career must hold a degree in teacher education. Teachers in public and private elementary schools must have at least a bachelor's degree in elementary education. High school teachers are expected to have a bachelor's degree in secondary education with specialization (a major and a minor) in high school subjects. Both degrees are awarded upon successful completion of approved teacher education courses in recognized institutions. Teaching in colleges or professional degree programmes at the tertiary level requires at least a master's degree in a particular area of specialization. A doctorate is required of those who teach courses in graduate programmes.

The following qualifications for day-care staff are prescribed by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD): being woman; between 18 and 45 years of age; high school graduate; physically healthy—if she has any disabilities, these should not pre-empt performance of tasks as a day-care worker; must be of good moral character; preferably with prior work experience with pre-school children; willing to undergo training and accept technical supervision from the DSWD; must render full-time service for a minimum of two years. Quality of preschool teachers remains a challenge. While privately owned preschool institutions are hiring relatively good teachers because they can afford to pay them higher, public preschools are usually being facilitated with undergraduate teachers since the remuneration is very low. (DepEd, 2008).

All teachers must complete a four-year degree programme. The usual programmes are the Bachelor of Secondary Education and Bachelor of Elementary Education. Specialist programmes are also available in agriculture, business, industrial and physical education. Programmes include a core of general education, at least one year of professional education and studies in the major teaching area. Curricula for each programme are approved by the Commission on Higher Education and institutions have flexibility to vary these models. Non-education graduates may complete an 18-unit Certificate of Professional Education in order to qualify as primary or secondary teachers. Graduates from a teacher education programme must pass the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) organized on an annual basis.

Teachers are recruited at the school level, which is considered the lowest administrative level of the Department of Education (DepEd). All public schools are mandated to serve as authorized offices to receive applications for all available teaching positions in their school division. A school selection committee is created which is responsible for officially receiving and acknowledging applications, ascertaining the completeness of documents submitted by applicants, informing



applicants as to the proper disposition of their applications, and forwarding complete applications to the Schools Division Office Selection Committee for preliminary evaluation of applications. Deployment and management are also the responsibilities of schools division offices. For a teacher to be promoted, first the school head makes a recommendation to the Schools Division superintendent, who will evaluate and issue an appointment for the teacher to be attested by the Commissioner of the Civil Service Commission. Additional teaching positions are created by the national government and approved through legislation. (UNESCO Bangkok, 2009).

The *Magna Carta* for Public School Teachers (Republic Act No. 4670) enacted in 1966 stipulates that “any teacher engaged in actual classroom teaching shall be required to render not more than six hours of actual classroom teaching a day, preparation and correction of exercises and other work incidental to his/her normal teaching duties.” Secondary teachers shall be assigned to no more than six daily forty-minute periods of instruction. For college, the normal teaching load of a full-time instructor shall be eighteen hours a week. The teaching load of part-time instructors who are full-time employees outside of teaching shall not exceed twelve hours per week.

Training activities at the national, regional, district and school levels are conducted by the DepEd, teacher education institutions, other government and non-government agencies, and international agencies as part of staff development programmes and to meet in-service training needs of teachers. The Department through linkages with other agencies and associations, initiates, plans and implements in-service training programmes. Such programmes take the form of conventions, conferences, short-term courses, summer institutes, workshops and seminars. These activities are designed for teachers, supervisors and administrators of various levels.

One of the key reform thrusts under the Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda 2006-2010 is teacher education and development, which paved way to the formulation of National Competency-Based Teacher Standards (NCBTS). The NCBTS will be used as basis for teacher education and development, hiring and deployment of teachers and promotion as well. The NCBTS will practically overhaul the policy on hiring and promotion which is based on credentialism. As a result of the formulation of NCBTS, a Memorandum of Understanding was executed between the DepEd, the Commission on Higher Education, the Civil Service Commission, the Professional Regulations Commission and groups of teacher education institutions adopting the NCBTS as the common framework and primary basis for both pre-service and in-service teacher education and development programmes and policies. (DepEd, 2008).

DepEd has revised their teacher hiring and deployment guidelines, shifting from credentialism to competency-based. In addition amendments to the *Magna Carta* have been drafted to look after teachers’ welfare and benefits. The NCBTS is a set of new and expanded competencies which is a departure from the traditional teacher-centered learning style to a learner-centered mode of teaching. Its structure considers seven domains: social regard for learning; the learning environment; the diversity of learners; the curriculum; planning, assessing and reporting; community linkages; and personal and professional growth. The NCBTS will be implemented by: (i) adopting an appropriate curriculum design, content, teaching methodology and assessment



system for pre-service and in-service training including college instructors of degree programs other than teaching; (ii) ensuring implementation of training received through classroom-based teacher mentoring, articulation of student assessment with content and methods of in-service training, and multi-level accountability of training; (iii) emphasizing English, mathematics, science and technology, including the use of instructional technology and alternative mode of delivery with emphasis in the use of the mother tongue in teaching mathematics and science; (iv) including multi-grade teaching and handling of large classes in the training design. (PTFE, 2008).

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Department of Social Welfare and Development: <http://www.dswd.gov.ph/> [In English and Filipino. Last checked: May 2011.]

Technical Education and Skills Development Authority: <http://www.tesda.gov.ph/> [In English. Last checked: May 2011.]

For updated links, consult the Web page of the International Bureau of Education of UNESCO: <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/links.htm>