X-ED

YOUTH-LED MULTI-LEVEL ACCOUNTABILITY
FOR EDUCATION DURING PANDEMIC

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Ensuring Learning Continuity in a Resilient Public Education System in the Philippines:

Mapping of Standards and Baselining of Current Practices

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I.   Background

MultiplY-Ed or X-Ed is a project of the Center for Youth Advocacy and Networking (CYAN) (https://cyanpilipinas.com) and Government Watch (G-Watch) (www.g-watch.org) that aims to set up a *youth-led, multi-sectoral, and multi-level monitoring of education in the time of COVID-19*. The project aims to improve transparency, participation and accountability in various levels of education governance, particularly in the implementation of learning continuity plans for Senior High Schools and the transition to face-to-face classes post-COVID.

One of the key steps in laying the groundwork for the MultiplY-Ed project is the setting up of the monitoring system to be used in tracking education services vital to the Filipino youth. To develop this monitoring system, research was conducted to map the standards of education governance at different levels. Alternatively called Standards Mapping, this research involves scanning of all relevant policies, guidelines and standards procedures in service delivery to clarify what is to be expected from government at every step of its policy implementation.

G-Watch defines standards mapping as—

> "the process of researching/ clarifying the standards of what you will monitor…This enables the understanding of what happens or what goes on during the delivery of the service identified…. Mapping out standards ensure what to expect in the identified critical process and variables in terms of time, quantity, [processes], cost and quality." (G-Watch 2012: 12)

G-Watch further elaborates that the standards mapped from this process will form part of the monitoring tool. It sets what is to be checked during the monitoring wherein actual performance of a given service delivery is documented and assessed.

G-Watch defines standards as—

> "…norms, guide and criterion based on laws, policy guidelines or processes. They are guides, rules, SOPs, normative or plans that are based on laws, policy documents/ guidelines or even sometimes unwritten norms." (G-Watch 2012: 86)

G-Watch standards mapping involves five indicators of standards in a service delivery: time, cost, quantity, quality and process.

> "Time standards are answerable by the amount of time it takes to finish or to deliver the service. Cost standards are answerable by the amount paid to the supplier or amount used for the delivery of the service. Quantity standards are answerable by the amounts or measurements used in the service delivery. Quality standards are answerable by stating color, texture, taste and other physical appearances of the service delivery. Process standards are answerable by yes or no depending on the compliance to specific processes." (G-Watch 2012: 87)

G-Watch standards mapping involves looking at different levels of policy implementation and service delivery – from budget allocation to procurement to actual implementation and

delivery of services to assessment and auditing at international, national, regional, local and very local (this case, school) levels. Such multi-level mapping of standards enables the setting up of a multi-level monitoring that ensures all aspects of decision-making are covered, preventing duty-bearers from passing on blame or evading accountability (for multi-level monitoring, see Aceron 2018; Fox and Aceron 2016).

In the first round of Standards Mapping, three (3) Senior High School (SHS) services under the government's learning continuity policy were identified to be the focus of X-Ed monitoring. These are:

- Curriculum and learning resource (module)
- Teachers' training
- Access to education during the pandemic

Specifically, Multiply-Ed monitoring focuses on education services for Senior High School. SHS refers to Grades 11 and 12 of Philippine basic education. It is the last two years of basic education that was newly added under the 'K-12 Basic Education Program' that DepEd has been implementing since 2013.

Implemented during the Noynoy Aquino administration, the K-12 Program includes kindergarten, six years of primary education, four years of Junior High School and two years of Senior High School. According to the government, this reform that involves adding two years in basic education—

"aims to provide sufficient time for mastery of concepts and skills, develop lifelong learners, and prepare graduates for tertiary education, middle-level skills development, employment, and entrepreneurship." (GovPH)

The Philippine government provides the following details on SHS:

"Senior High School is two years of specialized upper secondary education, where students may choose a specialization based on aptitude, interests, and school capacity. The choice of career track will define the content of the subjects a student will take in Grades 11 and 12. Each student in Senior High School can choose among three tracks: Academic; Technical-Vocational-Livelihood; and Sports and Arts. The Academic track includes three strands: Business, Accountancy, Management (BAM); Humanities, Education, Social Sciences (HESS); and Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM)." (GovPH)

The objectives of the second round of X-Ed Standard Mapping (2.0) were the following:
- To update the data and outputs from the first standards mapping
- Further sharpen the priority standards to be looked into by the monitoring
- Identify the specific offices and officials responsible for the compliance of the priority standards
- Start documenting the efforts to ensure compliance to the standards
- Get a sense of the level of awareness and the level of effort being done to ensure compliance to the standards

- Map existing accountability mechanisms and rapidly assess their current status
- Start mapping education budget processes and trends in education spending
- Map other key standards being recognized and observed at the local level
- Pilot-test the monitoring tools

This report presents the key findings from the data-gathering activities undertaken by X-Ed to lay down the current state of policy and response, map the standards and baseline the emerging practices in the efforts of the government towards learning continuity and resiliency of the public education system.

The data-gathering activities utilized a tool (see Annex 1) that involved interviews with responsible officials at multiple levels, namely: DepEd Central Office, DepEd regional/ division offices, target local governments and a few covered schools in the target sites. X-Ed's target sites include: Quezon City and Pasig City in NCR, Naga City and Legazpi City in Bicol, Puerto Princesa and Palawan in MIMAROPA Region, Cebu City and Cebu Province in Region VII and Cagayan de Oro City and Marawi in Region X. Annex 2 presents the list of schools covered by X-Ed and their general profile following the selection criteria set.

The accessibility and availability of data is highly varied. Not all target interviews were conducted in each of the sites. The report intends to provide an indicative picture of the baseline situation at every level. Only whenever necessary that the report cites the respondents.

The report starts with a section on how the public education system of the Philippines has been disrupted by COVID-19 and other disasters. This is followed by the mapping of policies and guidelines released for the government, particularly DepEd, to ensure learning continuity despite the disruptions.

The next part delves more on the standards surrounding the services X-Ed deems critical: learning resources, teachers' capacity-building and student access in Senior High School (SHS), particularly the specific offices responsible. This is followed by a discussion on the baseline situation on learning continuity practices, including level of awareness of standards and preparations being done by key policy actors. The final part presents the existing accountability mechanisms in education governance that can be tapped and explored by any citizen action for accountability.

II.   Learning Disrupted

The Philippine education sector has long been in a state of crisis[1] even before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted learning. The sector has long struggled with overcrowded classrooms, weak public school infrastructure, and low wages for teachers.[2] The education sector has also dealt with mass layoffs of school teachers and workers; drops in enrollment; lack of resources for online learning; lack of accessibility for online learning; mental health of students, teachers, and parents; poor quality of modules; and learning loss, among others.[3]

Long standing issues on distance learning, academic dishonesty, and quality of education only became more apparent because of the remote setup during the pandemic.[4] Despite the Philippines being a middle-income country, many Filipino children miss out on the opportunity to learn, with out-of-school children reaching 2.8 million as of 2019.[5]

Aside from COVID, natural disasters have increasingly affected the Philippine education sector. Data show that from SY 2014-2015 to SY 2018-2019, there has been a 13% increase of schools affected by storms. The same increasing trend has been observed for earthquakes. Volcanic eruptions also damage schools—as with the recent eruption of Taal Volcano in 2020—even as schools were also used as evacuation centers for displaced families. Armed conflicts also have adverse impacts to children's education, posing a threat to their security.[6]

When the Philippine administration imposed strict lockdowns as its core pandemic response, learners are one of the most affected. The education sector, already in crisis, was forced to put on hold the education of nearly 28 million learners[7] (the number of learners pre-COVID-19). The Philippines is also one of the last countries to reopen its schools in late 2021—owing to a prolonged lockdown period—with fears of a "lost generation" hounding the sector.[8]

As the pandemic took hold, so did the impact of the disruption to Filipino learners. Dropout rates in schools increased, further hindering access to education in the Philippines. In 2020, UNICEF reported that at least 2.3 million children have not enrolled for the current school

[1] CMFR Staff (2021), "The Philippine Crisis in Education," *Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility,* 17 September 2021, at https://cmfr-phil.org/in-context/the-philippine-crisis-in-education/

[2] Gutierrez, J. & Bilefsky, D. (2021), "As Covid Surges, Filipino Teachers Begin Second Year Online," *New York Times,* 13 September 2021, at https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/13/world/asia/philippines-students-remote-covid.html

[3] CMFR Staff (2021), "The Philippine Crisis in Education," *Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility,* 17 September 2021, at https://cmfr-phil.org/in-context/the-philippine-crisis-in-education/

[4] Abad, M. (2021), "Issues with distance learning, academic freedom, persist in 2021," *Rappler,* 21 December 2021, at https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/iq/review-2021-issues-distance-learning-academic-freedom-persist/

[5] "Education: Quality and inclusive and lifelong learning," *UNICEF,* at https://www.unicef.org/philippines/education

[6] DepEd Order No. 024, s. of 2022, "Adoption of the Basic Education Development Plan 2030," p. 100-101, at https://www.deped.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/DO_s2022_024.pdf

[7] DepEd Order No. 024, s. of 2022, "Adoption of the Basic Education Development Plan 2030," p. 31, at https://www.deped.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/DO_s2022_024.pdf

[8] De Guzman, C. (2021), "The Philippines Still Hasn't Fully Reopened Its Schools Because of COVID-19. What Is This Doing To Children?" *Time,* 1 December 2021, at https://time.com/6124045/school-closures-covid-education-philippines/

year, stating that the decrease was less about the cost of tuition, but driven by poor families' lack of gadgets and access to the internet.[9]

As of May 2021, the World Bank reported that overall enrollment in formal basic education is around 5% lower than the previous year—citing that this "non-negligible" share of households that did not enroll their children was because of various concerns, including pandemic concerns, inefficient learning, and costs of education.[10] However, DepEd would later report, in November the same year, that official enrollment in basic education is 3.83% higher than the previous school year.[11]

Latest data from DepEd (via its Basic Education Development Plan 2030) show that from school year 2017-2018 to 2019-2020, DepEd observed a declining trend of enrollment rates in kindergarten and elementary. Meanwhile, it noted an increasing trend of enrollment for secondary education,[12] even as the net enrollment rate declined for SY 2019-2020:

Table 3: Gross Enrollment Rate and Net Enrollment Rate by Educational Level, SY 2017–2020

Level of Education	Gross Enrollment Rate (GER)			Net Enrollment Rate (NER)		
	SY 2017-2018	SY 2018-2019	SY 2019-2020	SY 2017-2018	SY 2018-2019	SY 2019-2020
Kindergarten	102%	107%	90%	84%	76%	63%
Grade 1 to 6	105%	102%	101%	94%	94%	94%
Junior High School	95%	100%	102%	76%	81%	83%
Senior High School	67%	74%	78%	46%	51%	48%

Source: LIS/BEIS SY 2017–2018, SY 2018–2019 and SY 2019–2020.[33]

DepEd also measured cohort survival and completion rates to determine its internal efficiency. The cohort survival rate indicates the percentage of pupils in a given cohort who started Grade 1 or Grade 7 and reached Grade 6 and Grade 10, respectively, while the completion rate indicates how many persons in a given age group have completed the relevant level of education.[13]

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[9] "UN Philippines renews call for inclusive education at launch of new UNESCO report," *United Nations Philippines*, 26 November 2020, at https://philippines.un.org/en/102473-un-philippines-renews-call-inclusive-education-launch-new-unesco-report

[10] Cho, Y., Kataoka, S., & Piza, S. (2021), Philippine Basic Education System: Strengthening Effective Learning During the COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond, Philippines COVID-19 Monitoring Survey Policy Notes, May 2019, *World Bank,* at https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/35649/Philippines-COVID-19-Monitoring-Survey-Policy-Notes.pdf

[11] "DepEd posts 4% increase in enrollment for basic education for SY 2021 to 2022," *Department of Education,* 18 November 2021, at https://www.deped.gov.ph/2021/11/18/deped-posts-4-increase-in-enrollment-for-basic-education-in-sy-2021-2022/

[12] DepEd Order No. 024, s. of 2022, "Adoption of the Basic Education Development Plan 2030," p. 31, at https://www.deped.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/DO_s2022_024.pdf

[13] The DepEd provides data on the aforementioned rates up to the junior high school level. There is no data available on these rates in the SHS level.

Table 6: Cohort Survival Rate and Completion Rate- SY 2009 to SY 2019

School Year	Cohort Survival Rate (%)		Completion Rate (%)	
	Elementary	JHS	Elementary	JHS
SY 2009–2010	74	78	72	74
SY 2010–2011	74	79	72	75
SY 2011–2012	74	79	71	74
SY 2012–2013	74	78	73	75
SY 2013–2014	79	79	78	76
SY 2014–2015	85	81	84	78
SY 2015–2016	88	82	84	74
SY 2016–2017	94	83	93	81
SY 2017–2018	94	86	92	84
SY 2018–2019	97	89	97	89
SY 2019–2020	97	87	97	86

Source: EMISD-EBEIS.

72% of teachers in the Philippines observed learning loss from impoverished school children during the pandemic, higher than the global average of 56%. Learning loss was also observed in learners whose parents or guardians have been unable to guide them in lessons outside the school.

While DepEd itself states that there are improvements in its ability to retain school children in the last 10 years, it notes that elementary schools need to address dropout issues at the primary level, owing to the fact that 75% of dropouts in SY 2018-2019 and 2019 to 2020 are between kindergarten and Grade 4, with kindergarten and Grade 1 accounting for 60% of dropouts at the primary level. At the secondary level, data on dropouts is highest at the JHS level, with the highest number of dropouts at Grades 7 to 9, constituting 45% of the total number of learners who dropped out of schooling in SY 2019-2020. DepEd, citing the FLEMMS report 2019, says these children aged 12 to 15 do not go to school because of lack of personal interest (41.9% of responses) and insufficiency of family income (14.4% of responses)[14]. As of writing, X-Ed is securing the official data on enrollment rate and cohort survival rate for 2020 to present to see the impact of COVID-19.

Relatedly, access to education was—and has always been—criticized to be available only for those who can afford it, with the distance learning approach raising issues not only of technology access but wider inclusivity.[15] Reports during the pandemic highlighted a host of issues with distance learning: improper procurement, reproduction, and delivery of modules; lack of access to the internet, computers, and gadgets; and the low level of awareness and utilization of the DepEd TV platform.

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[14] DepEd Order No. 024, s. of 2022, "Adoption of the Basic Education Development Plan 2030," p. 47, at https://www.deped.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/DO_s2022_024.pdf
[15] Magsambol, B. (2020), "No student left behind? During pandemic, education 'only for those who can afford,'" *Rappler,* 22 May 2022, at https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/in-depth/261562-education-only-for-people-who-can-afford-coronavirus-pandemic/

COA's 2020 audit report of emergency pandemic funds for the BE-LCP for school year 2020 to 2021 found lapses in budget utilization and flawed/ incomplete/ delayed procurement, reproduction, and delivery of Self Learning Modules (SLMs) in 78 school division offices of 15 regional offices.[16]

Early in the pandemic, DepEd admitted that out of 47,000 schools, 60 to 70 percent still have no internet connection because of the lack of signal from telecommunications companies—a challenge that DepEd deems out of its control.[17] DepEd also promoted DepEd Commons and Open Education Resources to deliver basic education services, even as they stated these may not be accessible to all teachers and learners. [18]

This lack of access would prove critical. An international study, T4 Education, cites that poor Filipino children—including those without access to the internet—may suffer the most "learning loss," defined as a "reversal in academic progress or loss of knowledge and skills due to the disruptions to a student's way of life or educational system." The study notes that 72% of teachers in the Philippines observed learning loss from impoverished school children during the pandemic, higher than the global average of 56%.[19] Learning loss was also observed in learners whose parents or guardians have been unable to guide them in lessons outside the school.[20]

With a limited number of students returning to the classroom and the myriad issues hounding distance learning, the Philippines has also been set back in attaining Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4: Quality Education, which aims to achieve inclusive and equitable quality education and to promote lifelong educational opportunities for all.[21]

III. Policy Response

The Philippine public education system has been going through a massive reform process when COVID-19 struck. In 2013, Republic Act 10533, also known as the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, was passed to address the problems of keeping up with international modern education systems. One of its main stipulations is the K-12 Program which requires

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[16] Commission on Audit (2020), Department of Education Executive Summary 2020, at https://www.coa.gov.ph/download/2407/department-of-education/50154/department-of-education-executive-summary-2020.pdf

[17] Hernando-Malipot, M. (2020). "School opening will depend on status of public health," *Manila Bulletin,* 31 March 2020, at https://mb.com.ph/2020/03/31/school-opening-will-depend-on-status-of-public-health-deped/

[18] Hernando-Malipot, M. (2020). "School opening will depend on status of public health," *Manila Bulletin,* 31 March 2020, at https://mb.com.ph/2020/03/31/school-opening-will-depend-on-status-of-public-health-deped/

[19] Dumlao-Abadilla, D. (2021). "Int'l study notes worst 'learning loss' among poorest PH kids," *Inquirer.net,* 01 October 2021, at https://globalnation.inquirer.net/199341/intl-study-notes-worst-learning-loss-among-poorest-ph-kids

[20] Dumlao-Abadilla, D. (2021). "Int'l study notes worst 'learning loss' among poorest PH kids," *Inquirer.net,* 01 October 2021, at https://globalnation.inquirer.net/199341/intl-study-notes-worst-learning-loss-among-poorest-ph-kids

[21] Yacub, C. & Eadie, P. (2022). "COVID-19 and a new social contract for education in the Philippines," *New Mandala,* 18 February 2022, at https://www.newmandala.org/covid-19-and-a-new-social-contract-for-education-in-the-philippines/

students to start basic schooling at Kindergarten until Grade 12. Previously, Kindergarten was only optional and secondary education spanned from First Year to Fourth Year.

In the new program, kindergarten as well as the senior high level became required steps in schooling. In general, the Philippines' K-12 program aims to produce globally competitive job-ready Filipino students by providing them with life-long learnings and foundational skills that are needed for individual and societal change.

The implementation of K-12 was on its 7th year when COVID-19 happened. This means that while the Philippine public education system was undergoing massive changes, it again had to go through another set of adaptive changes to manage the impact of COVID.

The Philippine government, primarily through DepEd, introduced several policy responses that focused on adjusting to the "new normal" in the education sector. These are the following:

The **Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan** (BE-LCP) is DepEd's policy response to the challenges brought by COVID-19 in basic education. The plan aims to (1) protect the health, safety and well-being of learners, teachers and personnel, and prevent the further transmission of COVID-19; (2) ensure learning continuity through K-12 implementation adjustments; (3) facilitate the safe return to schools; (4) endeavor to address identified inequities; and (5) link and bridge the BE-LCP to DepEd's pivot to quality and into the future of education.

DepEd division heads interviewed by X-Ed state that the BE-LCP's goals are the following:

- Ensure support for inclusive, safe, and continuous education. The BE-LCP ensures that students safely continue their studies amid a pandemic, through blended learning that makes use of online and modular methods. It also aims to strengthen online services, including psychosocial support.[22] Despite the disruption, the aims of higher education, entrepreneurship, employment, and middle-skills development remain the same under the BE-LCP.[23]
- Focus on important learning competencies. Only the most essential learning competencies are included in the continuity plans of the division heads.[24]
- Use of multi-faceted approach. The goals of the BE-LCP are achieved through a multi-faceted approach from the division heads, school heads, to the teachers.[25]

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[22] Interview with Dr. Manuel Laguerta, Chief of Curriculum Implementation Division (Pasig City), 19 November 2021.

[23] Interview with Lilia V. Arro, Education Program Supervisor, Bacolod, [date]

[24] Interview with Mariano B. De Guzman, Division Head (Naga), 9 December 2021.

[25] Interview with Engr. Marc Voltaire Padilla, Assistant Schools Division Superintendent, Quezon City, 16 November 2021.

- Strengthen teacher support. The BE-LCP also aims to improve teaching response for the competency-based curriculum for senior high schools.[26]

For school heads, BE-LCP's goals include the provision of quality education at home and ensuring students' and educators' access to learning experiences amid the pandemic, in a manner that secures their welfare and safety. School heads also expect the BE-LCP to provide programs to learners in partnership with parents and provide enough psychological assistance to support learning. [27]

To achieve these goals, BE-LCP covers only the "most essential learning competencies" (MELC) and introduced multiple learning delivery modalities for teachers, school leaders, and learners (face-to-face classes, distance learning, blended learning, and homeschooling); required health standards in schools and workplaces; and included special activities such as Brigada Eskwela, Oplan Balik Eskwela, and partnerships.

BE-LCP identified four (4) major learning delivery modalities which schools nationwide may implement depending on their local situations:

1. Face-to-face
   This synchronous modality requires teachers and learners to be physically present in a classroom. This setting is advisable for very low risk and geographically isolated areas. Proper health protocols should still be monitored when implementing this set-up. According to D.O. 20 s. 2020, this modality is still highly discouraged during the implementation of school year 2020 - 2021.

2. Distance Learning
   Distance learning systems are implemented when the teacher and learners are geographically separated from each other. This is only a viable option for independent learners as interaction with the teacher can be limited still. There are three types of implementation for this set-up:
   a. Modular Distance Learning
      Self-learning modules (SLMs) are provided to the students which they can use to study at their own pace and time. This can come in print or digital form and activities or performance tasks must be submitted at a set time or date which is why it is usually considered as an asynchronous method of studying. Feedbacking and consultation with the teachers can be done through e-mail or instant messaging.
   b. Online Distance Learning
      This is usually done when synchronous classes can be done. Compared to other modes, teachers and learners can have more time to interact with each other in this set-up. Assignments and other outputs may be submitted through a designated online learning platform.
   c. TV/Radio-based Instruction
      Written modules are converted to audio recordings to help facilitate learning to students who have little to no access to online equipment and infrastructure.

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[26] Ibid.
[27] Interviews with Amparo Silvela, Annalyn Macasinag, Gilberto Inocenco, Dr. Eulogio Pebres, Principals, Pasig City, 19 January 2022.

Due to the geographical lay-out of the Philippines, internet and data connection might be unavailable to most remote parts which are usually only reached by radio waves.

3. Blended Learning
This method attempts to combine synchronous and asynchronous methods of learning.

4. Homeschooling
This learning setup happens when the teacher and the learner meet one-on-one in a home-based environment. Homeschooling is usually led by the learner's parent, guardian, or tutors who are experts on the subjects that they are going to teach.

As quoted from the BE-LCP, the following are the characteristics of the MELCs:

a. It is aligned with national standards or frameworks, such as, for example, "holistic Filipino learners with 21st century skills."
b. They connect the content to higher concepts across content areas.
c. They are applicable to real-life situations.
d. They are important for students to acquire, even if a student drops out from school.
e. They cannot be expected to be ordinarily learned by students if not taught in school.

Figure 10: Streamlining of K to 12 Curriculum into the Most Essential Learning Competencies
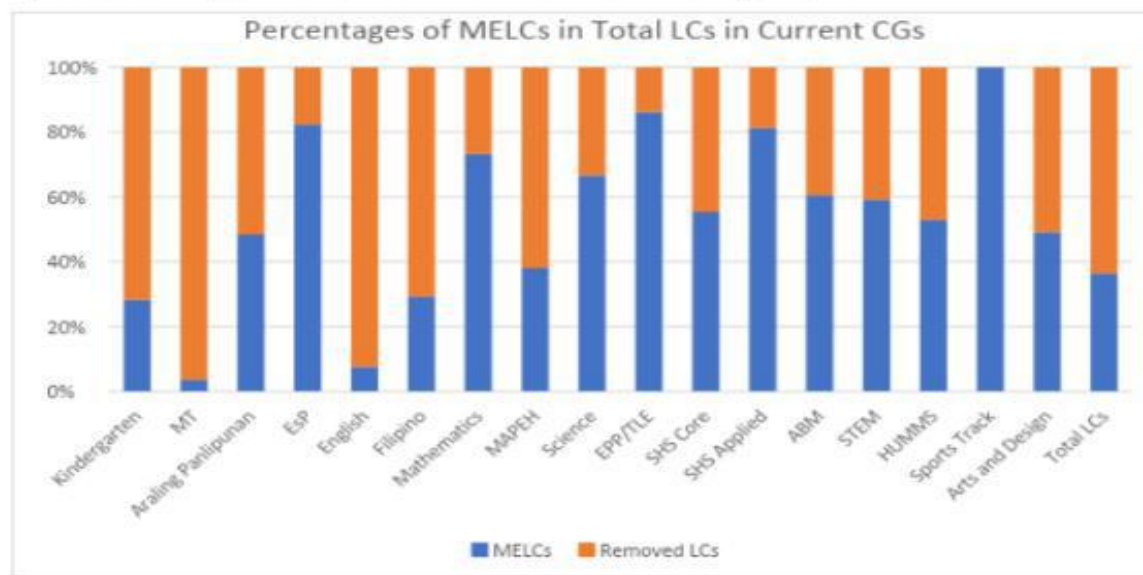
Source: Department of Education, Philippines

Endurance is an important value in its development as it asserts that regardless of the reduction in the number of lessons and required outputs provided to the students, the lessons should make a mark in the learners' minds. MELCs should be seen as a supplementary guide in creating modules rather as a replacement to curriculum guides. Which is also why, teachers are highly encouraged to contextualize the MELCs based on the needs of the students.

In contemplation of classes reopening and to implement the BE-LCP's face-to-face learning modality, DepEd with the Department of Health (DOH) released its Operational Guidelines on the Implementation of the Face to Face Learning Modality, or DepEd-DOH Joint Memorandum Circular No. 1, s. 2021, The JMC's phased implementation of face-to-face classes seeks to (1) deliver quality basic education in a safe learning environment to learners in low- to minimal-risk areas; (2) address teaching and learning gaps encountered in distance learning modalities; and (3) strengthen the school-community health and safety support system for children. This JMC covered rules and guidelines for the pilot implementation of face-to-face classes, including selected secondary learners from SHS in minimal-risk areas.

The eligibility requirements for schools' participation in the pilot run of face-to-face classes are provided in the JMC. The JMC also has a set of guidelines on the safe opening of schools, covering four major pillars: (1) safe operations, which includes physical structures, hygiene and sanitation practices, and safety protocols; (2) ensuring teaching and learning, with schools selecting the most appropriate modality to be adopted for learning; (3) inclusion of the most marginalized; (4) well-being and protection, including strategies to prevent COVID-19 and psychosocial support. The JMC also tasked the DepEd Planning Service to develop and implement a national monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan, the Quality Assurance Division to develop and implement regional M&E plans, and the School Governance and Operations Divisions to prepare M&E plans aligned with national and regional plans.

Subsequently, DepEd and DOH issued the Guidelines on the Progressive Expansion of Face to Face Classes (DepEd Order No. 17, Series of 2022) which seeks to provide guidance to schools on the mechanisms and standards of face-to-face classes and ensure their effective, efficient, and safe implementation, complementing the earlier JMC No. 1, s. of 2021. This Order was issued after DepEd maintained that "the pilot implementation [of face-to-face classes] was highly successful based on the monitoring and evaluation results". Like the JMC, the Order uses a "shared responsibility framework" to guide the expansion of face-to-face classes, covering the four major pillars consistent with the JMC. The progressive expansion covered geographic expansion, the inclusion of all grade levels, and increasing time in school subject to applicable guidelines.

The Revised Operational Guidelines on the Progressive Expansion of F2F Classes (DepEd-DOH JMC 1, s. 2022) was issued thereafter based on feedback on the progressive expansion of face-to-face classes. It updated and refined the standards contained in DepEd Order No. 17, Series of 2022.

IV.   Critical Standards and Responsible Offices

The first round of Standards Mapping was aimed at identifying the standards deemed by X-Ed as critical, i.e., those that need to be checked and monitored because they are vital to the students and youth and are important to ensuring the success of the learning continuity program. Policies of DepEd were reviewed and consultations were conducted to come up with a list of critical standards on three areas: learning resources, teachers' capacity-building

and student access in Senior High School (SHS), per level of governance (national, regional/division, local, and school/barangay level).

A. Modules and learning resources

In the BE-LCP, DepEd earlier defined "intermediate outcomes" which represents what the Department seeks to achieve regarding access to and quality of education during the pandemic. These intermediate outcomes are found in the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework anchored in the Basic Education Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (BEMEF).

In this M&E Framework, DepEd also provided indicators to measure progress for each outcome it seeks to achieve. Notably, some outcomes and indicators set by DepEd overlap with the critical standards defined by DepEd.

First, DepEd provided for *learner-centered outcomes or outputs.* These are outcomes that affect the learner. This pertains to effectiveness of education delivery during the pandemic especially with regards to learner-based indicators.

The complete list of learner-centered outcomes are found below:

Outcomes/Outputs	Indicators
1. Learners are in the basic education system	• Gross Enrollment Rate • Net Enrollment Rate
1.a Appropriate and relevant learning delivery modalities established	Appropriate and relevant learning delivery modalities established
1.b. Learners receive the necessary learning resources for the applicable learning delivery modalities	Percentage of learners receiving learning resources per learning delivery modality
2. Learners can access programs responsive to their needs, consistent with their interest and aptitude	Percentage of learners enrolled in appropriate programs
2.a Learning delivery modalities for inclusive education programs established	Appropriate and relevant learning delivery modes for inclusive education programs established
2.b. Learners receive learning resources responsive to their learning needs	No. of learners receiving learning resources responsive to their needs
3. Learners actively participate in different learning delivery modalities	• Cohort Survival Rate • Transition Rate • School Leaver Rate
3.a Learner support systems are established	Appropriate and relevant learner support systems established
3.b Learners receive support from learner support systems	Percentage of learners receiving support from learner support systems
4. Learners complete education and attain learning standards	• Completion rate • Promotion Rate • ALS Completion Rate

DepEd released a series of Department Orders to be able to accomplish the above outputs. Some notable Department Orders focus on health protocols, setting up Oplan Balik Eskwela (Return to School) program, mobilizing resources to augment deficit, among others.

From the BEMEF's list of outcomes and indicators, X-Ed selected those standards involving modules and learning resources (i.e., 1b and 2b above) and mapped critical standards and responsible offices for such.

According to the BEMEF, "learning resources" refer to "learning materials used by the learners to achieve the set learning competencies and standards." These include printed modules, printed books, DepEd commons, online modules, and broadcast modules. Learning resources must not only be "in conjunction with the adopted learning delivery modes"—they must also be "aligned with inclusive education program principles," according to the DepEd. The outcome is measured, as stated above, by the percentage of learners that receive resources per learning delivery modality and the number that receive resources responsive to their needs.

From the official standards mapped by X-Ed, X-Ed further narrowed down the standards it considered most critical through further consultations within the team and stakeholders. Based on X-Ed's standards mapping, what is critical for modules and learning resources are the sufficiency of materials; sufficiency of budget; existence of open and competitive bidding; quality control; and regularity of evaluation, among others. Below are the specific critical standards on learning resources for X-Ed and the offices that are responsible for it.

Level	Standards	Responsible Office
National	✓ There are sufficient modules and learning resources available to the learners/ students ✓ Sufficient budget for effective curriculum and module development is provided ✓ Curriculum and module development, if contracted out, passed through open and competitive bidding ✓ Modules produced, procured and distributed meet quality standards ✓ Curriculum and modules are regularly evaluated	*Central Office Undersecretary* declares what kinds of competency are required for the modules and learning resources. *The Bureau of Learning Resources* (BLR) manages the acquisition, allocation, procurement, and equitable distribution of learning resources, including textbooks and teacher manuals. It ensures that the Textbook to Pupil Ratio in all public schools will remain at desirable levels (1:1 for core subjects and 1:2 for non-core subjects) throughout the five- year life span of the textbooks and manuals.[28]
Regional/ Division	✓ There are sufficient modules and learning resources available to the learners/ students ✓ Information about curriculum and modules are cascaded efficiently to schools ✓ Modules are regularly evaluated	*Curriculum Implementation Division (CID)* Data gathered by X-Ed provide that generally, the Curriculum Implementation Division is responsible for modules and learning materials. The CID also handles access to education and teachers' training. A division head stated that "there is only one supervisor handling

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[28] DepEd Order No. 024, s. of 2022, "Adoption of the Basic Education Development Plan 2030," p. 96, at https://www.deped.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/DO_s2022_024.pdf

Level	Standards	Responsible Office
		the three standards—module, quality of access to education and teacher's training—and that is the CID supervisor." The CID is comprised of education supervisors and public school district supervisors who are responsible for the implementation of the curriculum. The CID also: • Provides learning materials such as modules that are aligned to the MELC (Most Essential Learning Competencies); • Is in charge of stewardship of the SHS; • Ensures all subjects for each school has a coordinator for the enhancement of curriculums; • Ensures students' access to education during the pandemic; and • Develops curriculum strategies and provides quality assurance.
Local gov't	✓ Modules are contextualized and localized ✓ The Special Education Fund (SEF) is used in any additional needs for curriculum and modules ✓ The Local School Board (LSB) serves as a platform to assess curriculum and modules quality during the pandemic	*Local School Board* Since education is not decentralized in the Philippines, the role of local governments in education is only supplemental, mainly for the provision of additional resources, supplies, equipment, etc. A local school board (LSB) is a special body created under Republic Act No. 7160 or the Local Government Code of 1991 (LGC 91). LSB's main function is to allocate the Special Education Fund (SEF) to primarily supplement the needs of the local public school system. The SEF is an additional 1% levy that is collected together with real property taxes paid to the local government. Under the Local Government Performance Management System (LGPMS), an LGU should be able to provide support to education services by: (1) establishing a functional Local School Board, (2) providing support to elementary and secondary education from the special education fund and the general fund, and (3) providing an alternative learning system. LGUs are also expected to provide support in the improvement of the state of education. This includes improving the elementary participation rate, elementary completion rate, secondary completion rate, tertiary and technical education completion rate and basic or simple literacy rate. In this regard, the LGUs are expected to spend their SEF on the: 1. Operation and maintenance of public schools. 2. Construction and repair of school buildings,

Level	Standards	Responsible Office
		facilities and equipment. 3. Educational research. 4. Purchase of books and periodicals. 5. Sports development. LGUs are further expected to support extension classes and provide locally funded teachers' salaries. By and large, the LGUs are expected to supplement the available resources from the central office, especially for items that are in short supply.[29] There are local governments with a dedicated office or unit for its education program or a comprehensive education program. There are local governments without any education unit, where education-related spending or assistance are under the Office of the Mayor in general. The LSB, as a participatory body composed of representatives from the LGU (mayor as chair, education committee chair of the local council, treasurer), representatives from DepEd (division head as co-chair) and civil society (PTA federation president, teacher's association and non-academic personnel) is expected to have the expanded role to monitor and assess the state of the education system.
School/ barangay	✓ There are sufficient modules and learning resources available to learners/ students ✓ Modules are contextualized and localized ✓ The barangay education committee gets involved in checking curriculum and modules ✓ Student performance is regularly evaluated with evaluation informing adjustments to curriculum	*Public School District Supervisors (PSDS)* Public school district supervisors ensure that the modules/curriculums are properly implemented in every school. *School officials* At the school level, various officials take charge of the critical components of the SHS LCP. Generally, assistant principals are in charge of the development of the curriculum. Other officials that also contribute to the critical components of the SHS LCP are the following: • Subject group heads • Subject group coordinators • SHS school heads • Property custodian for module distribution • Year level coordinator (for modules) School officials from Marawi stated that there are no officers inside the campus who are responsible for the

[29] Aceron, J., et.al. (2013), "GDN Working Paper Series: Civil Society Participation and Education Spending of Philippine Cities," *Global Development Network,* September 2013, accessed via *G-Watch* at https://www.g-watch.org/sites/default/files/resources//civil-society-participation-education-spending-philippine-cities.pdf

Level	Standards	Responsible Office
		SHS LCP, other than the principal itself. Such officials also stated that there are no school level officers responsible for the three components in the SHS LCP, but provided that teachers are generally responsible for modules and learning materials.

B. Teachers' capacity building

Aside from learner-based outcomes and indicators, DepEd's BEMEF also included outcomes and indicators on <u>teachers and learning communities' preparedness for distance modality</u>. These pertain to the enabling environment for learners to thrive, including teacher and school leader readiness, resources available, and involvement of key stakeholders:

Outcomes/Outputs	Indicators
1. Education leaders, teaching, and non-teaching staff practice participative and inclusive management processes during emergencies	• Types of trainings established • Percent of staff trained for various learning delivery modalities o Education leaders o Teaching staff o Non-teaching staff • Types of support systems established • Percentage of staff trained for various learner support systems o Education leaders o Teaching staff o Non-teaching staff • Percentage of education leaders trained/capacitated on emergency planning
2. Investments in the LCP provides learners with options for their required learning delivery modalities	• No. of learning resources procured • No. of learning resources developed • No. of learning resources produced
3. Internal systems and processes serve learners efficiently through continuous monitoring and feedback	• Disbursement rate • Timely delivery of procured projects
4. Key stakeholders actively collaborate to serve learners	Percentage of financial contribution of development partners over the total national education budget for the fiscal year

The first outcome listed above is described as that which improves "the capacity, as well as functional and leadership competencies in participative and inclusive management processes during emergencies, of education leaders, teaching and non-teaching staff." DepEd states that this outcome "ensures that the design and implementation of professional development programs are relevant and appropriate to the current public health situation." As indicated above, this particular outcome is measured mainly through the percentage of staff trained for various learning delivery modalities, learner support systems, and emergency planning.

Based on X-Ed's standards mapping data, what is critical for teachers' capacity building are the existence of training programs; how they are organized and implemented; their quality standards; their regular evaluation; the existence of consultations for the LCP; budget sufficiency for trainings; and the existence of open and competitive bidding for training delivery, among others. Below are the specific critical standards on teachers quality for X-Ed and the offices that are responsible for it.

Level	Standard	Responsible Office
National	✓ There are training programs for teachers under the Learning Continuity Plan (LCP) ✓ Training programs for teachers under the LCP are effectively organized and implemented ✓ Training programs for teachers under the LCP meet quality standards ✓ Training programs for teachers under the LCP are regularly evaluated ✓ Nationwide consultation with teachers regarding LCP is conducted ✓ Sufficient budget for teacher trainings, evaluation and administrative support is provided ✓ Training delivery, if contracted output, is passed through open and competitive bidding	*National Educator's Academy of the Philippines (NEAP),* which is responsible for formulating a national strategic framework for the professional development of DepEd personnel, including all education managers and educators.[30]
Regional/ Division	✓ Training programs for teachers under the LCP are effectively organized and implemented ✓ Training programs for teachers under the LCP meet quality standards ✓ Training programs for teachers under the LCP are regularly evaluated ✓ Budget for teacher training programs and administrative support to teachers under the LCP policy are properly utilized/ disbursed	*Schools Governance and Operations Division (SGOD)* The Schools Governance and Operations Division is an administrative office that facilitates the implementation of the curriculum. SGOD handles faculty / teachers' training, through the Human Resource Development System headed by a senior education specialist. SGOD is also in-charge of support programs, such as ensuring the distribution of the critical resources, ensuring that the teacher-learner ratio is sufficient, and ensuring health protocols are clear and being followed during the pandemic. The office also handles Brigada Eskwela, the Adopt-A-Schol program, and other programs of DepEd in response to the pandemic. The *Human Resource Section* is also responsible for assessing teachers' and school leaders' immediate needs in terms of facilitating learning, as well as implementing and determining appropriate interventions in the new normal.

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[30] "Governance Operations and Functions," *Department of Education,* at https://www.deped.gov.ph/about-deped/central-office/governance-and-operations-functions/

Level	Standard	Responsible Office
Local gov't	✓ SEF is used in any additional needs for teachers' training and evaluation ✓ LSB serves as platform to assess teachers' quality during pandemic/ under LC	Following its role to supplement DepEd resources using mainly the SEF, through the LSB, LGUs may assist DepEd and schools in the form of LGU-SEF-funded teachers if this is needed. LGUs may also provide resources for teachers' training if this is needed.
School/ barangay	✓ Teachers attend trainings under the LCP ✓ Teachers are provided with effective administrative support ✓ Open and participatory evaluation of teachers is conducted ✓ Teachers are consulted about the trainings that they need ✓ Teachers get to give feedback on the trainings that they participated in ✓ PTA meetings serve as venue for feedbacking on teacher performance	*Learning resource coordinators/ school coordinators* are in charge of teachers training. Meanwhile, *principals* identify which teachers shall undergo training under the CID supervisor.

C. Student access to education

DepEd's BEMEF also provided for outcome/s and indicator/s that refer to access—specifically learner access. This was already mentioned in Section (A) above on learner-based outcomes.

When DepEd refers to learners having access, it refers to access that "ensures that learners' needs, interests, and aptitudes are taken into consideration in developing and rolling out learning delivery modalities." DepEd measures this through the number of learners enrolled in appropriate programs. Meanwhile, X-Ed mapped standards that pertain particularly to student access to education and came up with standards it deemed critical.

Based on X-Ed's standards mapping data, what is critical for student access to education are enrolment of students and continued learning despite the pandemic; budget sufficiency to ensure inclusive and accessible learning; evidence-based planning and decision-making in platform/process development; regular monitoring, assessment, and evaluation; open and participatory M&E components; accessible and quick feedback systems; the existence of open and competitive bidding for learning modalities; and catering to learners with special needs, among others. Below are the specific critical standards for X-Ed on access to education and the offices that are responsible for it.

Level	Standard	Responsible Office
National	✓ Learners/ students get enrolled and continue learning safely despite the pandemic ✓ Sufficient budget to ensure inclusivity and accessibility of learning is provided ✓ There is evidence-based planning and decision-making in designing learning process/ platforms of students during the pandemic to ensure inclusivity and accessibility	*Information and Technology Service* under the *Strategic Management Office* supports education specialists in developing ICT-enabled solutions that enhance teaching and learning.

Level	Standard	Responsible Office
	✓ There is regular monitoring, assessment and evaluation (M&E) done on the accessibility and effectiveness of learning processes and platforms under LCP ✓ M&E system includes open and participatory component ✓ There is an accessible quick feedback system that is attended to by responsible persons ✓ Learning modalities (including technology and platforms used) used are passed through open and competitive bidding ✓ Learners with special needs (Ips, PWDs, etc.) are catered to	
Regional/ Division	✓ Learners/ students get enrolled and continue learning safely despite the pandemic ✓ There is regular monitoring, assessment and evaluation done on the accessibility and effectiveness of learning process and platforms during the pandemic ✓ There is an accessible quick feedback system that is attended to ✓ Budget for learning activities and platforms properly utilized/ disbursed	The CID is responsible for developing assessment framework and overseeing the assessment of learning, while the School Governance and Operations Division supports and capacitates schools and Learning Centers in ensuring a conducive learning environment and in compliance with quality standards of Governance and Operations.
Local gov't	✓ SEF is used in any additional needs to ensure access of students to learning ✓ LSB serves as platform to assess students' access to learning	Following its role to supplement DepEd resources using mainly the SEF, through the LSB, LGUs may provide scholarships, assistance to underprivileged students, feedback programs, etc. LGUs may also utilized their General Fund for this purpose.
School/ barangay	✓ Learners/ students get enrolled and continue learning safely despite the pandemic ✓ There is an existing open and participatory M&E system to check if learning processes and platforms are working ✓ There is an accessible quick feedback system	*Information technology teachers* are in charge of the portal for ensuring students' access to education. *School level coordinators* also ensure students' access.

V.   Baseline Practices on Learning Continuity

In general, the baseline capacity of public education system to adapt to the pandemic was low. Philippine public education system is designed using only face-to-face learning delivery. Its curriculum is developed assuming it will be taught face-to-face. Except for some special efforts such as the Alternative Learning System, Philippine public schools never had experience using alternative modalities of learning deliveries. While there have been some modules developed in the past and the schools have been preparing School Improvement Plans (SIPs) before, education governance did not anticipate that such drastic changes would be demanded in the blink of an eye to ensure that the learners continue to learn. One principal described it best: "We were staring at the blank wall."

By and large, the DepEd adapted as fast as it could given its baseline state. The country had one of the longest lockdowns and the longest period the learners being out of school. It took several months before schools were operational again: in October, four months late from its

supposed start in June. By then, the learners continued learning using modules and manuals prepared first by the division offices and later by the Central Office. The DepEd central office and schools took about seven (7) months, from March to October, to set up something from almost scratch.

A. Modules and learning resources

By and large, there has been an enhancement of participation and involvement of the barangay, the communities, and especially the parents in the education of children during the pandemic.

The streamlining of learning competencies using MELCs was a crucial part of DepEd's adjustments. While feedback from a few principals that the MELCs can still be further streamlined, the shortening of the modules (one division shared: from about 30-32 pages for 2020-2021 school year to about 15-18 pages for 2021-2022 school year) showed that DepEd continued to adapt and adjust in the two years that the schools were using alternative learning modalities.

While for the first school year under the pandemic (2020-2021), the modality used was mainly through modules and manuals, some schools with good internet connectivity already tried online classes. By the second school year of the pandemic (2021-2022), there were a variety of learning modalities used: modular, online and even limited face-to-face. Varied learning resources and platforms were also developed: instructional videos, classes via radio and/or TV, digitized modules.

The responsibility for the development and reproduction of modules was mainly lodged in the division offices, particularly the Curriculum Implementation Division. The Central Office and regional offices later on delivered modules, but it arrived at the latter part of the 2020-2021 school year. The division offices had to develop quickly a system of the development/ writing and quality control of modules and manuals, while coordinating with the schools, local governments and other stakeholders the reproduction and distribution of these modules and manuals.

The local governments provided supplemental assistance in the form of equipment and supplies for the reproduction of modules, gadgets and equipment for digital learning, keeping LGU-funded teachers and support to underprivileged students. It is clear, however, that the role of the local governments can further be deepened and made more rational and efficient through the strengthening of the LSBs and improved accountability in the allocation and utilization of the SEF.

However, errors in DepEd's learning modules were consistently reported during the pandemic.

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National level

A key characteristic of the LCP is the streamlining of the curriculum into the MELCs, borne to address the "curriculum congestion" brought about by having 14,171 competences listed in the K-12 curriculum. A study by DepEd found that the K-12 curriculum was more

demanding than in other countries, thus the need for its review. The onset of the pandemic rendered the review urgent and the revision of the LCs was undertaken as part the LCP.[31]

The original LCs were reduced by 60%, which gave greater focus to learning and allowed sufficient time for mastery; but whether there is loss of other learning competencies needs to be examined.[32]

Data from the DepEd show how these LCs been streamlined into the MELCs in SHS subjects:

Subject	Number of LCs in current curriculum guides (CGs)	Number of MELCs	Percentage of MELCs	Percentage of removed LCs
SHS Core	739	409	55%	45%
SHS Applied	219	178	81%	19%
Accounting, Business, and Management (ABM)	257	167	65%	35%
Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)	586	347	59%	41%
Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMMS)	326	168	52%	48%
Sports Track	149	149	100%	0
Art and Design	167	87	52%	48%

These MELCs would be translated into the modules and learning materials produced by DepEd. However, errors in DepEd's learning modules were consistently reported during the pandemic. In October 2020, a report stated that these errors involved a module being printed in black and white instructing children to match colors with names; spelling errors; "impossible" tasks (drawing more than 800 stars in a box); and even an error in a mathematics episode aired on television.[33] According to the report, the DepEd Central Office is responsible for quality control of these materials, although some modules are locally produced by division offices and regional offices with their own quality control systems.

Other errors observed by citizens include: grammatical errors, baffling questions with seemingly no correct answers, gender stereotypes in children's toys, controversial references to celebrities being obese or persons with tattoos being criminals, and erroneous rhythmic patterns taught in music class. These errors were reported to DepEd via the agency's DepEd Error Watch.[34] DepEd reiterated that while quality controls exist for these materials (whether in the central office or local offices), some errors still went unchecked.

[31] DepEd Order No. 024, s. of 2022, "Adoption of the Basic Education Development Plan 2030," p. 85, at https://www.deped.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/DO_s2022_024.pdf

[32] DepEd Order No. 024, s. of 2022, "Adoption of the Basic Education Development Plan 2030," p. 85, at https://www.deped.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/DO_s2022_024.pdf

[33] Adonis, M. (2020), "Errors found in DepEd learning modules, TV lesson," *Inquirer.net,* 13 October 2020, at https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1346930/errors-found-in-modules-tv

[34] Magsambol, B. (2020), "Mistakes were made: Errors in DepEd distance learning materials," *Rappler, Rappler,* 23 October 2020, at https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/iq/distance-learning-mishaps-errors-instances-deped-failed-students-school-year-2020-2021/

In 2021, the House Committee on Public Accounts issued a resolution to conduct a hearing in aid of legislation, inquiring on the audit findings of the Commission on Audit (COA) regarding the various errors in the learning materials and modules of DepEd in view of distance learning.[35] During the hearing, a DepEd official stated that some—not all—of the errors found by COA were corrected via the issuance of "notes to teachers," which are similar to an errata guide to teachers. The resolution also noted that COA has consistently flagged DepEd for errors in learning materials, citing in 2018 errors in materials for elementary school pupils worth approximately Php 254 million.

Region/Division level

From October 2020 to June 2021, a validation by the DepEd found that majority of the errors in modules reported nationwide were from locally produced materials (i.e., from regional and division offices, and schools); and others (in order of frequency) from materials reviewed by the central office, unknown sources, DepEd TV, privately-developed material, and a textbook. A DepEd official maintained that these errors were "matters of usage and editorial preference."[36]

Field data gathered by X-Ed show the following baseline practices in compliance with the standards on modules and learning resources:

Region/ division level	
Standards	**Baseline practices**
✓ There are sufficient modules and learning resources available to the learners/ students ✓ Information about curriculum and modules are cascaded efficiently to schools ✓ Modules are regularly evaluated	The CIDs at the division level performed a central role in the LCP as they were tasked to handle the adjustments of the curriculum and development of learning resources. *There are sufficient modules and learning resources available to the learners/ students:* • At the CDO division level, provision of radio-based instruction and modular-printed instruction for rural areas without internet and procurement of laptops and gadgets for the students[37] • At the Cebu City division level, the development of local Self-Learning Modules (SLM) and quality assurance team for the following areas: language, content, and layout[38] • Partnership with universities for quality control • Strengthening internet connectivity for online classes • Development of instructional videos to digitize learning resources *Information about curriculum and modules are cascaded efficiently to schools:* • Overseeing the operating offices on the process of crafting, developing and implementing the learning resources, as well as overseeing the production of modules in alignment with the appropriate allocation of funds

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[35] "House starts inquiry on errors on DepEd's learning materials and modules," *House of Representatives,* 14 June 2021, at https://www.congress.gov.ph/photojournal/zoom.php?photoid=3044

[36] Mercado, N. (2021), "DepEd finds 155 errors in learning materials from Oct. 2020 to June 2021," *Inquirer.net,* 14 June 2021, at https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1445795/deped-finds-155-errors-in-learning-materials-from-oct-2020-to-june-2021

[37] Interview with Lorebina Carrasco, CDO Superintendent Representative and CID Supervisor, 15 November 2021.

[38] Interview with Alice Ganar, Senior High School Division Coordinator, Cebu City, 7 February 2022.

Region/ division level	
Standards	**Baseline practices**
	• Conduct of a briefing where teachers are oriented on the curriculum and modules used as learning materials • Use of social media, such as Facebook, to post information (such as contents of an ordinance) *Modules are regularly evaluated:* • Assistance in verifying the contained information of every learning material during the process, and ensuring quality for the lessons and learning materials • Gathering of general modules from the central office and updating the resources from time to time • Assisting the master teacher in monitoring the module development process • Evaluation of modules are done by teachers in charge • At the MIMAROPA regional level, there is continuous conduct of reevaluation of SLMs and feedback gathering on the utilization of the materials

Other data gathered by X-Ed from division offices indicate that in CDO, 296 organized classes in SHS use the printed modular mode of instruction, while 74 use bichronous (synchronous and asynchronous) modality. For the printed modular mode, this comprises of the provision of contextualized learning activity sheets and performance tasks; supplemental video lessons; group chats among learners; timely feedback of students' performance; supplemental TV and radio-based lessons; and learners' portfolios. For the bichronous mode, this comprised of synchronous online learning via Google Classroom, Zoom, PowerPoint, multimedia presentation, Google Meet, MS Teams, Kahoot, and others; asynchronous learning via Google Classroom, Google Forms, Google Sheets, messenger apps, call and text, pre-recorded videos, online portfolio, and others; as well as cognitive memory compensation.[39]

In Focus: DepEd Puerto Princesa – CID Efforts[40]
When the pandemic began, DepEd Puerto Princesa immediately took action to adapt. It did not only implement the BE-LCP, but also ensured that the curriculum is properly contextualized to suit the situation of the Division as well as the specific needs of their learners. This meant developing lessons, incorporating topics and providing examples that students of Puerto Princesa are familiar with. To do so, the Curriculum Implementation Division initiated Project CLIK (Contextualized Learning Instruction Kit) to develop modules or Self Learning Materials (SLMs) that featured contextualized themes integrated across different subject areas. This involved identifying teachers who will be part of the pool of writers tasked with drafting the actual modules from kindergarten to senior high school. DepEd Puerto Princesa also sought the assistance of illustrators and layout artists. At the same time, a quality assurance team was also formed composed of experts from Palawan State University to review the (1) quality of the content,

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[39] DepEd Schools Division of Cagayan de Oro City, "The Learning Continuity Plan Cagayan de Oro City," PowerPoint presentation emailed by the Schools Division of Cagayan de Oro City.
[40] Interview with Dr. Cyril Serador of DepEd Puerto Princesa Curriculum Implementation Division, 17 June 2022.

(2) the appropriateness of the social context, and (3) assurance of intellectual property rights.

The Division spent four months developing the modules from April to August 2020. It also did simulation in September involving two elementary and two secondary schools. When Project CLIK was fully implemented in October, barangay drop-off centers were identified for the distribution and retrieval of modules.

A total of 1,019 CLIK modules were produced by the Division.

A unique feature of CLIK modules is a section on feedback and recommendations which served as sources of inputs for DepEd Puerto Princesa in improving the modules.

On the average, a CLIK module had 32 pages. This meant that DepEd Puerto Princesa has to spend Php50 million per quarter for printing alone. To address the logistical challenge of reproducing the modules, the Division sought the help of the Puerto Princesa local government. It presented its LCP to the city council. The Puerto Princesa local government extended help by allocating Php42 million for the purchase of photocopying machines and supplies.

The Division also initiated Project CLAS (Contextualized Learning Activity Sheets) to develop modules that were only 15 to 19 pages long. Its aim was to reduce the pages of the modules without sacrificing the quality and the content. DepEd Puerto Princesa produced a total of 783 CLAS modules.

In addition, the Division also initiated Project DREAM (Digitized Resources in Education for Applicable Modalities), which produced 15-minute educational videos to supplement the modules. These videos are uploaded on the website of DepEd Puerto Princesa and can be freely accessed by anyone.

At present, the entire DepEd bureaucracy, including the Division of Puerto Princesa, is now developing a Learning Recovery Plan to facilitate the transition from limited face-to-face classes to the new normal. Intended to be implemented for School Year 2022-2023, the Plan will be anchored on (1) learning remediation and intervention, (2) professional development, as well as (3) health, safety, and wellness.

Local / school / barangay level

Field data gathered by X-Ed show the following baseline practices in the local level in relation to the standards on modules and learning resources:

Local level	
Standards	**Baseline practices**
✓ Modules are contextualized and localized ✓ The Special Education Fund (SEF) is used in any additional needs for curriculum and modules ✓ The Local School Board (LSB)	Based on X-Ed data-gathering so far, LGUs did not have involvement in the development and monitoring of learning resources, only in the reproduction and distribution. *X-Ed noted the following supplemental services and assistance provided by local governments during COVID:* • Provision of printers, photocopy machine, bond papers, alcohol to

Local level	
Standards	Baseline practices
serves as a platform to assess curriculum and modules quality during the pandemic	teachers • Provision of tablets and laptops • Provision of reading kits • Drafting resolutions to allocate budget for online education and improving interconnectivity of schools and barangays • Passage of an ordinance to institutionalize learning hubs within barangays • Assistance in the distribution and retrieval of the modules and manuals • Assistance in the limited face-to-face classes • Instructional Media Centers to help in the production of video lessons. For schools: • Some teachers were asked to help write the modules developed by the division office which were contextualized according to local setting • Reproduction of module and manuals and setting up of distribution and retrieval system for the modules in cooperation with the barangay and by soliciting private donations • Some principals opined that the MELCs could still be further streamlined since the modules were hardly completed especially during the 2nd round

In particular, LGU assistance went to the reproduction of learning resources and procurement of gadgets and equipment.

Notably, the language of modules and learning materials—which should be controlled at the local level—is one factor that may impede learning and should be closely monitored. The World Bank May 2021 report observed that utilization of learning materials is low among low-income households, among others, because "relatively little programming and material is in local languages even under the normal circumstances and more so under the current situations, which makes it much harder for parents and other adult members of the household to help their children learn."[41]

The role of local governments in education is mainly supplemental. During the pandemic, this remained the practice. In June 2020, DILG urged local governments to "assist DepEd in the adjustment of public schools to the new normal" using the SEF.[42] X-Ed LGUs provided additional resources to schools and division offices.

In particular, LGU assistance went to the reproduction of learning resources and procurement of gadgets and equipment. The local government of Puerto Princesa, for

[41] Cho, Y., Kataoka, S., & Piza, S. (2021), Philippine Basic Education System: Strengthening Effective Learning During the COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond, Philippines COVID-19 Monitoring Survey Policy Notes, May 2019, *World Bank,* at https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/35649/Philippines-COVID-19-Monitoring-Survey-Policy-Notes.pdf

[42] "DILG to LGUs: Assist the DepED in the adjustment of public schools to the new normal," *Department of Interior and Local Government,* 30 June 2020, at https://dilg.gov.ph/news/DILG-to-LGUs-Assist-the-DepED-in-the-adjustment-of-public-schools-to-the-new-normal/NC-2020-1221

instance, procured photocopying machines and supplies amounting to Php42 million.[43] The province of Palawan was reported to have procured tablets for every junior and senior high school.[44]

For Pasig City, assistance provided using both SEF and General Fund aimed "to ensure that the key mandates of DepEd are fulfilled: bringing all school-age children to school; keep all school-age children in school; provide quality education to all school-age children in school."[45]

However, the MOOE was never enough, forcing some principals to solicit private donations on top of the support provided by the local governments.

It was not clear if the decision-making on the assistance provided by local governments to DepEd was done through the LSBs. In Puerto Princesa, the CID presented to the local council to seek assistance in the reproduction of the modules,[46] although respondents said that the LSBs were regularly convened even during the pandemic and that the funds utilized to support DepEd were from the Special Education Funds.

Most of the time of the principals were spent ensuring that learning resources (modules, manuals) were reproduced, distributed and retrieved. They set up a system for the distribution and retrieval of modules and manuals in cooperation with the barangay. The school's main source of funds is the Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE). Schools utilized their MOOE which DepEd Central Office instructed to be used for BE-LCP. However, the MOOE was never enough, forcing some principals to solicit private donations on top of the support provided by the local governments.[47]

Field data gathered by X-Ed show the following baseline practices in the school / barangay level in compliance with the standards on modules and learning resources:

School / barangay level	
Standards	*Baseline practices*
✓ There are sufficient modules and learning resources available to learners/ students ✓ Modules are contextualized and localized ✓ The barangay education committee gets involved in checking curriculum and modules ✓ Student performance is regularly evaluated with evaluation informing	*There are sufficient modules and learning resources available to learners/ students:* • Provision of modules and manuals to all students; support to distribution and retrieval • Ensuring students are provided and secured with devices for online learning • Digitization of modules and manuals • Provision of two-way radio measures, box given to every barangay, or mobile enrollment • Parents having a greater role – provided with briefing by principals and teachers

[43] Interview with Mayor Lucilo Bayron and Administrator Arnel Pedrosa of Puerto Princesa City Government, 16 June 2022.

[44] Interview with Mr. Romel Aniar of DepEd Palawan Division – Curriculum Implementation Division, 28 June 2022.

[45] Written response to interview questions, Rechie Tugawin of Pasig City LGU, 15 June 2022.

[46] Interview with Dr. Cyril Serador of DepEd Puerto Princesa Curriculum Implementation Division, 17 June 2022.

[47] Interview with principals Daniel Libante and Nelbin Palao of Puerto Princesa schools, 21 June 2022.

School / barangay level	
Standards	*Baseline practices*
adjustments to the curriculum	• Collaboration with the learning resource coordinator (LRC) in utilizing DepEd's portal in downloading the modules *Modules are contextualized and localized:* • Contextualizing modules (i.e., using examples, branding, music and design that were attuned to local context), and ensuring these have undergone a quality assurance stage, including checking for copyright issues, coherence, and appropriateness to societal contexts • Collaboration with the division offices and school teachers in writing of modules • Collaboration with teachers to utilize the feedback mechanism on modules *There is no data showing compliance with the other two standards. In Marawi, an interviewee commented that the barangay education committee does <u>not</u> get involved in checking curriculum and modules; this is the responsibility of the regional or national offices.*

The first X-Ed standards mapping report preliminarily identified emerging challenges in curriculum and module development, which included challenges in module development (including issues on correctness, completeness, context, and coherence of modules), module distribution, and consumption.

Based on the discussions above, research for the second round X-Ed standards mapping found that two issues on module development—correctness and contextualization—merited significant attention. News reports heavily highlighted errors found in modules, textbooks, and educational shows that were supposed to have undergone quality control by DepEd. Local contextualization of learning resources was also highlighted based on interviews conducted by X-Ed with teaching and non-teaching staff among different LGUs, rendering the role of division offices crucial.

The first standards mapping report also mentioned distribution as an emerging challenge—an issue addressed in various ways by the X-Ed LGU officials interviewed for this second report. Schools, barangays, and LGUs explored various means, including online and offline modes, by which to ensure modules and learning resources reached students.

B. Teachers' capacity building

While trainings are implemented for teachers, their effectivity, especially for those who take them in the local and division levels, is in question.

By and large, there was no scarcity in trainings for teachers during the pandemic. DepEd Central Office, division offices, and the private sector provided numerous trainings. The likely gap was in the coordination leading to overlap and lack of assessment in the trainings' effectiveness. While assistance and support were provided to teachers for them to effectively continue teaching during the pandemic, there is still no assessment to whether and how the teachers were effective in teaching during the pandemic.

National level

According to DepEd, teachers have been required to embed the 21st century skills of problem solving, information literacy, and critical thinking within the curriculum but without sufficient professional development or provision of resources to assist with teaching these skills. Thus, the ongoing National Educators' Academy of the Philippines (NEAP) transformation required continuing professional development (CPD) programs to include these skills in core subjects, as well as teachers' mastery of content standards for the subjects, as contained in the Philippine Professional Standards of Teachers and School Leaders.[48]

In addition, SHS teachers are not teaching their specializations, according to DepEd. In 2017-2018, 7,343 teachers did not teach their specializations in English, Filipino, Mathematics, and Science, representing 10% of the total number of teachers therein. The demand for teachers for these subjects are deemed "hard to fill." Unequal distribution of qualified teachers—where less experienced teachers are usually assigned to hard-to-reach areas—also occur in secondary schools.[49]

With the implementation of DepEd's LCP, the Department also committed to capacity building programs for teachers starting June 2020, to address curriculum requirements on LCs and content, as well as pedagogy and assessment. As of June 2020, DepEd reported that only 40% of the country's public school teachers have been trained to conduct distance learning. Out of 800,000, only 300,000 have been trained by the Educational Technology Unit of DepEd's Information and Communications Technology Services (ICTS), with training that include sessions on converting printed text to digital materials, creating interactive quizzes, and using 3D graphics software.[50]

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[48] DepEd Order No. 024, s. of 2022, "Adoption of the Basic Education Development Plan 2030," p. 86, at https://www.deped.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/DO_s2022_024.pdf

[49] DepEd Order No. 024, s. of 2022, "Adoption of the Basic Education Development Plan 2030," p. 95, at https://www.deped.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/DO_s2022_024.pdf

[50] Reysio-Cruz, M. (2020), "Only 40% of public school teachers so far trained for distance learning," *Inquirer.net,* 26 June 2020, at https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1297645/only-40-of-public-school-teachers-so-far-trained-for-distance-learning

On August 2021, the Department of Science and Technology published a study which reported that teachers underwent only one or two of teacher trainings.[51] The study also stated that over 90% of teachers used the printed module modality of distance learning, while other modalities had less than 40% utilization, and with TV-based and radio-learning as the least popular options.[52]

As to teachers' readiness to implement online learning, DepEd's BE-LCP states that 87% of teachers surveyed had available laptops and computers at home, with 13% having no such gadgets at home. Of the 87%, only 49% stated they have internet access, with the remainder not having internet access (41%) or not having internet signal in their areas (10%).

Regional / Division level

Field data gathered by X-Ed show the following baseline practices in the regional / division level in compliance with the standards on teachers' capacity building:

Regional / division level	
Standards	**Baseline practices**
✓ Training programs for teachers under the LCP are effectively organized and implemented ✓ Training programs for teachers under the LCP meet quality standards ✓ Training programs for teachers under the LCP are regularly evaluated ✓ Budget for teacher training programs and administrative support to teachers under the LCP policy are properly utilized/ disbursed	*Training programs for teachers under the LCP are effectively organized and implemented:* • In the Quezon City regional level, the development of an online learning portal called "SDO Activate" (Activate in Advancement of Training and Education) which includes the Teachers Academy, where courses are always open and teachers may choose what they want to learn[53] • Conduct of trainings on learning modality delivery to prepare teachers on different approaches to learning during the pandemic • Provided other assistance: psycho-social, mental health awareness, internet access *Training programs for teachers under the LCP meet quality standards:* • Providing teachers training from division down to local offices, including the private sector, to ensure the qualifications and standards on distance learning are met • Development of teacher trainings from general scope to competency-based mentorship, including provision of support and trainings for home learning partners (parents, guardians), and psychosocial support and trainings for mental health • In MIMAROPA, training evaluation tools are floated/answered by teacher-participants to gather feedback on the trainings attended. The trainings set are also based on the technical assistance needs reported by the SDOs; this way, the trainings are directly addressing their needs. [54] *Training programs for teachers under the LCP are regularly evaluated:* • Conduct of consultations and surveys in schools to determine their

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[51] "Remote learners need remediation, teachers say," *DOSTv,* 13 August 2021, at https://dostv.ph/blog/remote-learners-need-remediation-teachers-say

[52] "Remote learners need remediation, teachers say," *DOSTv,* 13 August 2021, at https://dostv.ph/blog/remote-learners-need-remediation-teachers-say

[53] Interview with Engr. Marc Voltaire Padilla, Assistant Schools Division Superintendent, Quezon City, 16 November 2021.

[54] Written response to interview questions. Sent by Freedie Ramirez of DepEd MIMAROPA. 8 June 2022.

Regional / division level	
Standards	**Baseline practices**
	training needs • In MIMAROPA, there is collaboration with the functional divisions of the region to determine the needs of teachers based on the results of the Project KAMUSTAHAN, interfacing with the SDOs and conduct of quarterly Program Implementation Reviews (PIRs) between FDs and SDOs. [55] *Budget for teacher training programs and administrative support to teachers under the LCP policy are properly utilized/ disbursed* • In MIMAROPA, dissemination of regional memorandum based on the Central Office memo which contains the eligible expenditures; request of activity completion report focusing on the physical target and financial target[56]

Data from one division (CDO) provide that senior high school teachers there are the least prepared (6%) for digital education, while junior high school teachers are most prepared (35%) for digital learning. SHS teachers there are not among the majority that is trained to "new normal pedagogies and approaches."[57]

The same data show that SHS teachers also have the least proportion (both 6%) among teachers who have laptops/desktop computers and internet connections at home; and among teachers who have devices but no internet connection at home. In general, out of the total population of both elementary and secondary school teachers, 48% own a smartphone/tablet and have access to internet connection at home. SHS teachers comprise a small, undefined number out of the 9% who do not own a smartphone or tablet in CDO.

Local / school / barangay level

Field data gathered by X-Ed show the following baseline practices in the local, and school / barangay level in compliance with the standards on teachers' capacity building:

Local level	
Standards	**Baseline practices**
✓ SEF is used in any additional needs for teachers' training and evaluation ✓ LSB serves as platform to assess teachers' quality during pandemic/ under LC	*SEF is used in any additional needs for teachers' training and evaluation* – Pasig has grant of scholarship for teachers to become reading specialists in every grade level in every public school (diploma program in PNU) – Puerto Princesa has city-funded teachers, though principals interviewed expressed concern about reports that the numbers of city-funder teachers will be cut[58] – Naga LGU built a recording studio for live telecasts and podcasts, for use by teachers[59]

[55] Written response to interview questions. Sent by Freedie Ramirez of DepEd MIMAROPA. 8 June 2022.

[56] Written response to interview questions. Sent by Freedie Ramirez of DepEd MIMAROPA. 8 June 2022.

[57] "The Learning Continuity Plan Cagayan de Oro City," PowerPoint presentation emailed by the Schools Division of Cagayan de Oro City.

[58] Interview with principals Daniel Libante and Nelbin Palao of Puerto Princesa schools, 21 June 2022.

[59] Interview with Greg Abonal of the Naga LGU, 13 December 2021.

Local level	
Standards	**Baseline practices**
	– Cebu City councilors institutionalized an annual teachers' incentive in the amount of Php 10,000[60] – Provided trainings to teachers on how to conduct online classes *The above assistance to teachers by LGUs used both SEF and general funds.* *LSB serves as platform to assess teachers' quality during pandemic/ under LC:* – Recognition that LSB has a role in ensuring teachers are prepared to implement the SHS LCP

While trainings are implemented for teachers, their effectivity, especially for those who take them in the local and division levels, is in question. On August 2021, DepEd was criticized for conducting a one week virtual training just a few days before the reopening of remote classes, which one group, the Teachers' Dignity Coalition (TDC) stated could have been devoted to rest. The context of the criticism were the "endless webinars" that officials in schools and school district and division levels had to take, with a representative from TDC questioning if such webinars actually improve the teachers' quality of instruction.[61]

School/barangay level	
Standards	**Baseline practices**
✓ Teachers attend trainings under the LCP ✓ Teachers are provided with effective administrative support ✓ Open and participatory evaluation of teachers is conducted ✓ Teachers are consulted about the trainings that they need ✓ Teachers get to give feedback on the trainings that they participated in ✓ PTA meetings serve as venue for feedbacking on teacher performance	*Teachers attend trainings under the LCP:* • Conduct of continuous trainings and webinars for teachers *Teachers are provided with effective administrative support:* • Provision of the manuals and modules they used for teaching • Provision of equipment for online education • Distribution of care kits for teachers' welfare *There is no data showing compliance with the other four standards.*

The first X-Ed standards mapping report preliminarily identified emerging challenges in teaching competencies, which included retrofitting existing skills with the "new normal" framework and learning delivery modalities provided by DepEd. Other challenges earlier identified were the existence and effectivity of trainings for teachers, the lack of a feedback system from teachers to evaluate students' performance, and the burgeoning workload teachers have to carry for performing both teaching and non-teaching responsibilities.

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[60] Interview with Hon. Alvin Dizon, Councilor, Cebu City, Former Education Committee Chair on Scholarship, 2 February 2022.

[61] Ronda, R. (2021), "Teachers hit DepEd over one-week virtual training," *Philstar.com,* 31 August 2021 at https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2021/08/31/2123712/teachers-hit-deped-over-one-week-virtual-training

For this second standards mapping report, research found that all levels of DepEd governance devoted special focus to trainings when discussing capacity building for teachers. News reports highlighted problems with teachers' trainings conducted and questions on their effectivity were also raised. Officials from X-Ed LGUs mentioned various ways the LGU assisted teachers in keeping up with learning delivery modalities this pandemic. However, evident in the data from the second report was that there was less focus given to addressing teachers' welfare and little attention given by some duty-bearers to feedback mechanisms.

C. Access to education

By developing alternative modalities for learning delivery, mainly through modules, DepEd has ensured that the majority of the learners continue to learn. DepEd also adjusted learning assessments and extended proactive efforts and maximum consideration to avoid students from dropping out of class or not completing their studies. Local governments provided assistance to DepEd and also extended support to underprivileged students.

However, resources were never enough at the school level. Many principals had to ask help from communities and private donors. Some teachers had to use their own resources. Parents were given the critical role of facilitating the learning of their children, which emerged as the major challenge in terms of their capacity to facilitate learning and the ability of the public education system to monitor and assess learning facilitated mainly by parents.

National level

There is a total of 18,306 senior high schools nationwide serving almost 3.2 million SHS learners, as of SY 2019-2020. The gross enrollment rate for SHS, for the past three school years, is 67% of the eligible population for SY 2017-2018; 74% for SY 2018-2019; and 78% for SY 2019-2020.[62] According to the DepEd, these figures have consistently grown since 2016, and points to the "gradual acceptance of society of the importance of SHS."

On May 2021, the World Bank stated that challenges of distance learning "include low take-up due to limited access to gadgets and internet, poor quality materials, [and] limited availability of materials in local languages."[63] The limited use of other modalities may also be due to lack of access to the internet among teachers; [64] as stated in an August 2021 report,

[62] DepEd Order No. 024, s. of 2022, "Adoption of the Basic Education Development Plan 2030," p. 37, at https://www.deped.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/DO_s2022_024.pdf
[63] Cho, Y., Kataoka, S., & Piza, S. (2021), Philippine Basic Education System: Strengthening Effective Learning During the COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond, Philippines COVID-19 Monitoring Survey Policy Notes, May 2019, *World Bank*, at https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/35649/Philippines-COVID-19-Monitoring-Survey-Policy-Notes.pdf
[64] Cho, Y., Kataoka, S., & Piza, S. (2021), Philippine Basic Education System: Strengthening Effective Learning During the COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond, Philippines COVID-19 Monitoring Survey Policy Notes, May

majority of teachers use mobile data connection (which they pay for with their personal money) while teaching online, making it difficult to deliver remote lessons.

As of August 2021, DepEd TV stopped airing new episodes for distance learning, owing to problems with the DepEd contractor tasked to produce episodes. Educational programs aired on DepEd TV were supposed to benefit those with no internet connection, and were supposed to be synchronous with self-learning modules.[65]

Regional / Division

Enrollment patterns in a division (CDO) show that only 35% of SHS learners there enroll in public schools, with the rest enrolled in private schools (a reverse of the trends in kindergarten through grade 6, and junior high school). The CDO Division explained that this is because of a national government voucher program that provides financial incentives for those who enroll in private schools.[66]

To promote internet access, division offices (such as CDO) urged all school administrators to work with local telecommunications companies because reports and documentation are submitted electronically. The division also encouraged teachers to consider the needs and contexts of their students as to access, and to use synchronous or asynchronous modes of instruction accordingly.[67]

Field data gathered by X-Ed show the following baseline practices in the regional level in compliance with the standards on access to education:

Regional / division level	
Standards	*Baseline practices*
✓ Learners/ students get enrolled and continue learning safely despite the pandemic ✓ There is regular monitoring, assessment and evaluation done on the accessibility and effectiveness of learning process and platforms during the pandemic ✓ There is an accessible quick feedback system that is attended to	*Learners/ students get enrolled and continue learning safely despite the pandemic:* • Requiring all schools to make continuity plans • Implementation of a zero-fail policy for the pandemic • Applying creative discussions by different modalities in learning • Provision of access, including coordination among barangay officials • In Marawi, securing assistance of the Barangay Local Government Unit (BLGU) to ensure student enrolment[68] *There is regular monitoring, assessment and evaluation done on the accessibility and effectiveness of learning process and platforms during the pandemic:* • Hands-on monitoring of school supervisors along with

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2019, *World Bank,* at https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/35649/Philippines-COVID-19-Monitoring-Survey-Policy-Notes.pdf

[65] Magsambol, B. (2022), "DepEd TV has been replaying distance learning lessons for months. Here's why." *Rappler,* 14 February 2022, at https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/in-depth/why-department-education-television-replaying-lessons-distance-learning/

[66] DepEd Schools Division of Cagayan de Oro City, "The Learning Continuity Plan Cagayan de Oro City," PowerPoint presentation emailed by the Schools Division of Cagayan de Oro City.

[67] DepEd Schools Division of Cagayan de Oro City, "The Learning Continuity Plan Cagayan de Oro City," PowerPoint presentation emailed by the Schools Division of Cagayan de Oro City.

[68] Interview with Anna Zenaida Alangadi Unte-Alonto, Marawi Division Superintendent, 19 November 2021.

Regional / division level	
Standards	**Baseline practices**
✓ Budget for learning activities and platforms properly utilized/ disbursed	superintendents to look into the needs of the students • Quarterly meeting and reporting of accomplishments, challenges encountered • Development of catch-up and adjustment plan to address issues and concerns and challenges encountered *There is an accessible quick feedback system that is attended to:* • Creation of a physical drop box for feedback and comments • In MIMAROPA, there is a 'Project Kamustahan' but seems mainly for DepEd and school officials *Budget for learning activities and platforms properly utilized/ disbursed:* • Continuous coordination meeting and involvement of the program owners, SDO budget officers, SDO planning officers and other functional Divisions/unit/sections in the Region • Submission of activity completion report focusing on the physical target and financial target • Ensuring complete distribution of tablets with installed modules to the student population in partnership with LGU

Local / school / barangay level

Field data gathered by X-Ed show the following baseline practices in the local, and school / barangay level in compliance with the standards on access to education:

Local level	
Standards	**Baseline practices**
✓ SEF is used in any additional needs to ensure access of students to learning ✓ LSB serves as platform to assess students' access to learning	*Data gathered from LGUs do not clearly indicate compliance with the standards identified by G-Watch, although local officials perform the following:* • Monitoring students to lessen dropout rates • Provision of increased cash incentives received by public school students graduating with honors, and incentives to establishments that hire SHS graduates • Drafting of ordinances, such as an ordinance to increase cash incentives to scholars who graduate with honors in college; and an ordinance proposing scholarships to students taking board exams • Institutionalization of budgets for city colleges • Some local governments added slots for scholarships and continued their student assistance programs that provide allowances to underprivileged students
School / barangay level	
✓ Learners/ students get enrolled and continue learning safely despite the pandemic ✓ There is an existing open and participatory M&E system to check if learning processes and platforms are working ✓ There is an accessible quick	*Learners/ students get enrolled and continue learning safely despite the pandemic:* • Provision of modules and manuals to all students; support to distribution and retrieval • Support to pilot face-to-face classes, for some schools • Regular assessment and proactive assistance for students struggling to learn • In Pasig, implementation of academic ease ("Tawid Mag-aaral") program to help students adapt to the new modes of learning,

feedback system	academic health breaks[69]
	• Ensuring students are provided and secured with devices for online learning
	• Digitization of modules and manuals
	• Provision of two-way radio measures, box given to every barangay, or mobile enrollment
	– Parents having a greater role – provided with briefing by principals and teachers, an LGU (Pasig) provided training for parents to teach reading at home
	– Feeding programs, food coupons, food packs
	– Vaccination
	There is an existing open and participatory M&E system to check if learning processes and platforms are working: Learning assessments were regularly done by the teachers following standards and frameworks provided by the division office. By and large, it was not clear whether there were any participatory processes done, though the following were mentioned in some schools:
	• Conduct of home visitation by teachers especially for students who were struggling
	• Holding consistent dialogues with students and parents to process their learning experience
	• Ensuring constant communication between advisers, chairpersons, and parents for failing students
	There is an accessible quick feedback system:
	• A section in the module was provided where the students can write their feedback and suggestions
	• Conducting radio-based reaching out to parents and phone calls

Standards mapping for the second report yielded more challenges faced in terms of access, as described above, including the existence of accessible feedback systems and the need to curb dropout rates through various measures, such as incentives and scholarships.

The first X-Ed standards mapping report preliminarily identified emerging challenges in access to learning platforms and media: poor internet connectivity, problems with procurement of learning equipment, and issues with learning environments.

As discussed above, officials from X-Ed LGUs presented various ways to address problems with internet connectivity based on the second standards mapping report. Learning environments broadly figured in access to education as well, given the focus given to parent support (or the lack thereof) to facilitate learning. News reports and independent assessments also broadly discussed persisting issues of internet connectivity, the digital divide, challenges faced by parents who struggle as both education and financial providers, as well as lack of gadgets. All these were raised by the first and second standards mapping report; however, standards mapping for the second report yielded more challenges faced in terms of access, as described above, including the existence of accessible feedback systems and the need to curb dropout rates through various measures, such as incentives and scholarships.

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[69] Interviews with Amparo Silvela, Annalyn Macasinag, Gilberto Inocenco, Dr. Eulogio Pebres, Principals, Pasig City, 25 January 2022.

VI. Baseline Budget on Education and Learning Continuity

Article XIV, Section 5.5 of the Philippine Constitution mandates the State to "assign the highest budgetary priority to education." While the budget for education has been increasing over the last 10 years, education spending in the country remain relatively low compared to neighboring countries.[70] In 2020, government expenditure for education was 3.9% of the GDP,[71] still below the 4% to 6% recommended in the UNESCO's Education 2030 Framework for Action.[72]

Of the total budget for the education sector, DepEd usually receives majority of it. The table below shows DepEd's budget over the years. For its 2020 budget, the agency received PhP 521 billion. The following year, its budget increased to PhP 557 billion. While higher, it can be noted that this is meager compared to the increase in budget for other agencies such as DPWH and DND.[73]

Year	DepEd Budget (Source: GAA)
2021	557,254,657,000
2020	521,350,651,000
2019	501,115,892,000
2018	553,312,832,000
2017	544,109,087,000
2016	411,905,257,000
2015	321,059,493,000
2014	281,774,247,000
2013	232,595,221,000
2012	201,821,472,000

With the passage of *Bayanihan to Heal as One Act* and *Bayanihan to Recover as One Act* in 2020, the president was given the power to utilize, realign, and readjust savings and funds from the 2019 and 2020 GAA to use for the government's COVID-19 response including DepEd's BE-LCP.[74]

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[70] Albert, J., Basillote, L., & Muñoz, M. (2021). We need to invest in more learners, learners, learners! PIDS Policy Notes. 2021-05 https://pids.gov.ph/publication/policy-notes/we-need-to-invest-more-in-learners-learners-learners

[71] World Bank. "Government expenditure on education, total (% of GDP) data as of June 2022 at https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.XPD.TOTL.GD.ZS?contextual=default&locations=PH&most_recent_value_desc=true

[72] UNESCO. (2016). Education 2030: Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000245656

[73] Albert, J., Basillote, L., & Muñoz, M. (2021). We need to invest in more learners, learners, learners! PIDS Policy Notes. 2021-05 https://pids.gov.ph/publication/policy-notes/we-need-to-invest-more-in-learners-learners-learners

[74] DepEd. (2021). 2021 DepEd Budget and the Shift to the Basic Education-Learning Continuity Plan in response to COVID-19, May 2021, at https://www.deped.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/2021-DepEd-Budget-Mag-Budget_052121-PAGES.pdf

In 2020, the BE-LCP had a total budget of PhP 133.72 billion. The following year, the budget decreased to PhP 100.69 billion was allotted to the program (24.7% decrease)

Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan Programs/Activities/Projects (PAPs)	BE-LCP 2020		BE-LCP 2021	Percent
	2019 GAA	2020 GAA	2021 GAA	Increase/ Decrease
For Learning Resources and Compliance to Minimum Health Standards				
Flexible Learning Options	3.01 B	8.89 B	16.62 B	39.65%
Textbooks and Other Instructional Materials	1.75 B	963.26 M	963.26 M	-64.43%
General Management and Supervision (MOOE)	599.18 M	4.70 B	4.12 B	-22.35%
Operations of Schools (MOOE)	1.37 B	30.95 B	28.16 B	-12.85%
Subtotal	**6.72 B**	**45.50 B**	**49.85 B**	**-4.53%**
For Capacity Building and Digitization of Learning Modalities				
Computerization Program	450.24 M	7.45 B	5.98 B	-24.36%
Human Resource Development for Personnel in Schools and Learning Centers	352.48 M	1.97 B	1.87 B	-19.57%
Subtotal	**802.72 M**	**9.42 B**	**7.85 B**	**-23.27%**
P/A/Ps for Regular Implementation Under BE-LCP				
Disaster Preparedness and Response Program	133.02 M	381.87 K	124.89 M	-6.38%
GAS - Education Service Contracting Program for Private JHS (per RA 8545)	421.46 M	11.25 B	11.24 B	-3.71%
GAS - Private SHS Voucher Program (per RA 10533)	476.20 M	23.93 B	13.69 B	-43.90%
GAS - Non-DepEd Public Schools (per RA 10533)	1.01 B	642.40 M	742.45 M	-55.11%
School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP)	1.01 B	6.47 B	6.04 B	-19.27%
Basic Education Facilities	1.25 B	24.67 B	11.15 B	-57.01%
Subtotal	**4.31 B**	**66.97 B**	**42.99 B**	**-39.69%**
Grand Total	**11.83 B**	**121.89 B**	**100.69 B**	**-24.70%**
		133.72 B		

Source: 2021 DepEd Budget and the Shift to the Basic Education-Learning Continuity Plan in response to COVID-19

VII. Existing Accountability Mechanisms in Education Governance

There are numerous mechanisms for accountability in Philippine education governance, including at times of disasters like COVID-19.

The BE-LCP has a monitoring and evaluation system, feedback mechanism, compliance monitoring and reporting and results-based management system. Meanwhile, X-Ed was unable to map any accountability mechanism for the government's implementation of K-12 or Senior High School. The existing performance assessments for Senior High School (the National Achievement Tests or NATs, exit assessment results and Trends in International

Mathematics and Science Study - TIMMS Advanced are all tests for the students. There is a provision in the K-12 Act or the Enhanced Basic Education Act passed in 2013 that there should be an assessment of the K-12 program by the end of school year 2014-2015 and there is supposedly a congressional oversight to oversee the implementation of the law.

There are numerous mechanisms for accountability at regional, division and schools level as well as in the local governments. There are also general mechanisms that can be utilized for accountability. The key question when it comes to accountability mechanisms in education governance is how effective these mechanisms are not only in ensuring accountable and responsible education governance, but also in accounting for the performance of the public education system.

The key question when it comes to accountability mechanisms in education governance is how effective these mechanisms are not only in ensuring accountable and responsible education governance, but also in accounting for the performance of the public education system.

A. BE-LCP

The **Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework**[75] of the BE-LCP is anchored in the Basic Education Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (BEMEF), and sets the indicators and accountable offices for each of the desired outcomes in the BE-LCP. The M&E Framework guides DepEd in refining and continuously fleshing out the BE-LCP, and animates planned interventions and activities and show desired outcomes.

To monitor and evaluate the provision of learning resources in the implementation of the BE-LCP, the **Bureau of Learning Resources** gathers feedback from the Regional Offices, through the Curriculum and Learning Management Division; School District Offices, through the Curriculum Implementation Division, and to the level of the school. This feedback may also be contained through a Statement of Expenditures submitted by the SDOs.[76]

Compliance monitoring and compliance reports on the BE-LCP[77] are also utilized for monitoring and reporting of compliance with guidelines set for the school calendar and activities for a certain school year. Offices responsible for compliance monitoring are the Bureau of Learning Delivery (BLD), Curriculum Learning Management Division (CLMD), Curriculum Implementation Division (CID), School Governance Operations Division (SGOD), while those for compliance reporting are the SDOs to the BLD, through the Regional Offices.

The **Results-Based Performance Management System** (RPMS) outlines the specific guidelines, including the tools, protocols, and timelines, in the implementation of RPMS as anchored on the BE-LCP of the DepEd, and aligned with the delivery of instruction through the learning delivery modalities (LDMs) appropriate in the context of local conditions and consistent with the COVID-19 guidelines and regulations.

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[75] Enclosure to DepEd Order No. 012, s. of 2020; see DO No. 29, s. 2021 for the BEM-EF.
[76] See DO No. 18, s. of 2020.
[77] See Enclosure to DO No. 029, s. of 2021. Sec. VI.

B. SHS

National Achievement Tests (NAT)[78] determine if learners are meeting the learning standards, help provide information to improve instructional practices, assess/ evaluate effectiveness and efficiency of education service delivery using learning outcomes as indicators. These tests also provide empirical information as bases for curriculum, learning delivery, assessment and policy reviews, and policy formulation.

The NATs are utilized in the planning and M&E cycles of DepEd, and are conducted by the Bureau of Learning Assessment (BEA).

Exit assessment results[79] determine if learners are meeting the learning standards, help provide information to improve instructional practices, assess/evaluate effectiveness and efficiency of education service delivery using learning outcomes as indicators, provide empirical information as bases for curriculum, learning delivery, assessment and policy reviews, and policy formulation.

The dissemination of test results to the public shall be through different modalities, such as the DepEd website, DepEd issuances, conferences, and forums. Requests for access to data may be done in writing through the BEA director.

Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study - TIMMS Advanced[80] is an assessment designed to be taken by most advanced students planning to take further studies in physics or mathematics at the university level. It is conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, and was last conducted in 2019.

At this point, it should be noted that the two years of SHS is a key feature of the K-12 Basic Education Program; however, the K-12 program as a whole has not been institutionally reviewed nor assessed since its implementation. It was only in 2021 that DepEd announced that it was eyeing a gradual review of the "congested" learning competencies in the K-12 curriculum; this year (2022), it was reported that president-elect Ferdinand Marcos, Jr. has instructed vice president-elect Sara Duterte, who is also appointed as DepEd secretary, to review the implementation of the K-12 program.[81]

Policy guidelines were already issued in 2019 via **Department Order No. 021, s. of 2019**,[82] to establish the framework for K-12 monitoring and evaluation. This framework is found in the BEMEF. According to D.O. No. 021, the BEMEF presents a "major shift from the use of school level data to explain the performance of the basic education sub-sector to a more learner-centered description of learners' performance and needs." Pursuant to the BEMEF, DepEd shall utilize large-scale assessments (such as those it conducts, as well as assessments conducted by international organizations), system assessments, and student learning

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[78] See DO No. 29, s. of 2017.

[79] See DO No. 55, s. 2016.

[80] See DO No. 29, s. of 2017

[81] Mateo, J. (2022), "On BBM instructions, Sara to review K-12," *One News*, 21 June 2022, at https://www.onenews.ph/articles/on-bbm-instructions-sara-to-review-k-12

[82] Department Order No. 021, s. of 2019, at https://www.deped.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/DO_s2019_021.pdf

outcomes in its planning, monitoring, and evaluation cycles. Bureaus under the Office of the Undersecretary for Curriculum and Instruction and their regional and division counterparts are responsible for the execution of this framework.

Mechanisms at the division level

At the division level, mechanisms for accountability include the following:

- The Monitoring and Evaluation Unit of the SGOD, as well as the CID, both of which shall monitor the implementation of the BE-LCP and schools' compliance to guidelines and policies
- Collaborations with civil society organizations for education governance monitoring and implementation
- Compliance with COA audit reports
- Tight partnerships with the general parents' association
- Annual state of the school address, where transparency and accomplishment reports accomplished by the school heads are presented
- Performance tasking with parameters, points, and indicators based on distance learning, and which is standardized according to the new curriculum
- Creation of a School Governance Council (SGC) which includes in its membership teachers, parents, barangay councils, LGU, and other civic organizations. The SGC provides a forum for parents, students, teachers, community stakeholders and the school head to work together towards continuously improving student learning outcomes.
- Supreme Student Governments and teachers' unions
- Reactivation of different organizations, such as Education Program Supervisor and Coordinator Association (EPSCA), Public Elementary School Principal's Association (PESPA); Public Principal Secondary Association (PPSA); and Public School District Supervisor Association (PSDSA)

Mechanisms at the school level

- Partnership, trainings and involvement of stakeholders such as the parents and barangay officials through Brigada Eskwela and Memoranda of Agreement.
  - General assemblies, held at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year, is an avenue to consult on how to achieve the school's vision, goals, and objectives, and to present the School Report Card (SRC).
- Parent teacher conferences, which apprise parents on the progress and performance of their children and to ensure parental involvement in school activities.
- School-Based Management (SBM), a mechanism that helps to improve schools' level of practice. The SBM is an venue for school and community learning center heads to mobilize stakeholders and allow for community participation to effectively facilitate and implement essential services, processes, and programs. Under the SBM, school monitoring teams are supposedly formed to help in the monitoring of programs and projects implemented in the schools.
- Performance indicators such as access of enrollment, drop-out rate, completion rate. Before the pandemic, accomplishments were also measured via the number of the National Certificate holders from the graduates.

- Citizen participation in the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), Supreme Student Government (SSG), teacher's union or any other organizations in the campus.
    - The PTA, in particular, is a forum for discussion of issues and their solutions related to school programs and to ensure full cooperation of parents in the implementation of said program.
    - The SSG promotes students' welfare and rights and is the highest governing body of students.

Mechanisms at the local government level

- Local school board, where each sector of a school has one representative, including DepEd heads, student council members, and teachers. Among others, the LSB functions as an advisory committee to the Sanggunian with regard to educational matters.
- Only one local government, City of Pasig, has noted participatory monitoring mechanisms, which are as follows:
    - Presence of CSO observers in all stages of procurement (even in pre-procurement, pre-bid) for procurements related to education.
        - The pre-bid conference for the procurement of learning devices (tablets, laptops), software, and video production services and equipment was streamed live and attended by all stakeholders.
        - A massive operation for the quality inspection of more than 140,000 learning devices purchased by the City Government prior to distribution to schools.
- The major programs on education of the LGU were all communicated to the public through the social media posts of Mayor Vico Sotto. In the first year of the pandemic, the mayor also had several Facebook live sessions to communicate the City's efforts (including those concerning education) to the general public.
- There were also many online discussions with school administrators (private and public) to identify ways to address the challenges of the pandemic.[83]

C. General mechanisms

The Philippine Forum for Basic Quality Education (Educ Forum)[84] is a multi-stakeholder platform for consultation, collaborative research and analysis, and high-level advice aimed at supporting strategic basic education policy, planning and programming at the national level. It also serves as the Local Education Group (LEG) of the Philippines in the Global Partnership for Education (GPE).

The **Learner Information System (LIS) / Enhanced Basic Education Information System (EBEIS)** aims to establish accurate and reliable registries of learners and schools, which will ensure availability of data and information needed for planning and budgeting, allocation of resources and setting operational targets to provide access to compete quality basic education.

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[83] Written response to interview questions, Rechie Tugawin of Pasig City LGU, 15 June 2022
[84] DepEd Order No. 010, S. of 2021, "Convening of Philippine Forum for Inclusive Quality Basic Education (Educ Forum), at https://www.deped.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/DO_s2021_010.pdf

The **Public Assistance Action Center** and **Public Affairs Unit** receive concerns and complaints of DepEd's clients for the improvement of its services.

Data may also be requested through a **Freedom of Information** request with the regional offices or **request for Basic Education data** with the division offices. The data that may be requested for the latter includes official certifications on enrolment, district data on master list of schools, school heads and contact numbers, inventory of teachers and performance indicators.

DepEd Error Watch aims to receive and collate reports of errors found in learning materials, such as SLMs and TV episodes. These complaints will be forwarded to appropriate offices for validation and correction. Complaints and error incidents may be sent to errorwatch@deped.gov.ph or 0961-6805334.[85]

D. CSO Monitoring of Procurement and Budget

Procurement

The Government Procurement Reform Act (GPRA) or Republic Act 9184 provides for several mechanisms for transparency, participation and accountability in government procurement processes. One would be the provision requiring an observer from non-government organizations to observe bidding activities. CSO engagement in procurement further expanded this to cover all parts of procurement from opening of bids to contract implementation.

However, in general, there has been a rollback of participatory reforms in government procurement in the Philippines in recent years. [86] The gains in procurement reforms, as will be discussed below in the context of DepEd, regressed or were not built on.

One such gain relevant to the DepEd is how invitations to CSO observers have been made into a key performance indicator, and how timeframes have been set for such invitations. The purpose of such reforms was to increase CSO participation in biddings—however, it appears there is no consequence for non-compliance to this requirement, and government offices have merely gone through the motions of sending invitations, without ensuring there is actual participation of CSOs in procurement activities.

Applied to DepEd, at best, the extent of CSO monitoring on procurement at present merely extends to being invited to various procurement activities. For the regional offices, the regularity of invitations to CSOs is uneven—in procurement monitoring reports (PMRs) uploaded by each region, some regions indicate "N/A" when asked for the list of invited observers.

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[85] Adonis, M. (2020), "Errors found in DepEd learning modules, TV lesson," *Inquirer.net,* 13 October 2020, at https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1346930/errors-found-in-modules-tv
[86] Aceron, J. (2021), "Rollback on Participatory Reform Gains in Government Procurement?" *G-Watch,* 5 August 2021, at https://www.g-watch.org/think-piece/rollback-participatory-reform-gains-government-procurement

The latest procurement monitoring reports of the DepEd Central Office for 2021 uploaded in the DepEd website[87] show that the CSOs invited to procurement activities (such as pre-bid conference, opening of bids, bid evaluations) were limited to the National Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL), ANSA-EAP Foundation, the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Constructors Association of the Philippines, Inc. The Commission on Audit (COA) was also invited to these activities. For 2020, CSOs invited to DepEd's procurement activities also included Transparency International Philippines, and two CSOs only referred to as PCAI and NCAPI. It is unclear if these CSOs actually attended and observed such activities.

Another gain relevant to DepEd is the bottom-up/demand-driven identification of procurement information that was made accessible to the public. However, this gain is constrained by the lack of support to procurement CSOs—if they still exist—that would have dictated what information is needed or might be useful to support an actual civil society campaign, or an ongoing monitoring effort. Information, while now overflowing online, is supply-dependent, and might not be actionable and may even be unutilized.

Here, while the DepEd provides for PMRs per year, it is uncertain if these are utilized by procurement CSOs (if any) for an ongoing campaign or monitoring of DepEd's procurement of goods and services. The PMRs uploaded online appear to be a reflection of DepEd's openness to releasing information, but whether such access to information contributes to efforts (if any) to improve the procurement process is unknown.

Budget

Citizens may, among others, monitor the implementation of contracts and budget utilization via **Citizen Participatory Audits (CPA).** The CPA is a program of the COA that provides for a mechanism for CSOs and private professional organizations (as members of COA audit teams) to monitor agencies' use of funds for certain projects. Recently, the CPA has been utilized for an audit that focuses on public elementary and secondary school buildings in the National Capital Region for 2019. The audit aimed to determine (a) compliance of such schools with minimum standards and specifications in existing laws, rules, and regulations and (b) the satisfaction of pupils with the classrooms, materials and equipment, and staff.[88]

Budget Partnership Agreements (BPAs) are also utilized as a mechanism to involve citizens in the budgeting process. The DepEd, in its D.O. No. 16, series of 2013, provides for guidelines on the utilization of BPAs in the agency, defining a BPA as a "formal agreement entered into by an NGA/GOCC and a partner CSO defining the roles, duties, responsibilities, schedules, expectations, and limitations with regard to implementing the CSOs' participation in budget preparation, execution, monitoring, and evaluation of specific programs, activities,

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[87] Department of Education, *Procurement Monitoring Reports,* at https://www.deped.gov.ph/procurement-monitoring-reports/

[88] Commission on Audit, *Department of Education's Elementary and Secondary School Buildings and Other Facilities in Metro Manila: A Citizen Participatory Audit Report,* January 2020, at https://cpa.coa.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/CPA-Report-DepEd-School-Buildings.pdf

projects (PAPs) of the partner NGA/GOCC."[89] The DepEd stated that it utilized BPAs in its agency budget proposals for 2021.[90]

VIII. Summary and Conclusions

In general, the baseline capacity of the public education system to adapt to the pandemic was low. Philippine public education system is designed using only face-to-face learning delivery.

This report presents the key findings from the data-gathering activities undertaken by X-Ed to lay down the current state of policy and response, map the standards and baseline the emerging practices in the efforts of the government towards learning continuity and resiliency of the public education system.

The public education system of the Philippines has been immensely disrupted by COVID-19. DepEd released policies and guidelines to ensure learning continuity despite the disruptions.

There are clear and accountable standards surrounding the services X-Ed deems critical: learning resources, teachers' capacity-building and student access in Senior High School (SHS), including which specific offices were responsible for what. X-Ed finds the responsible office for teachers' training, however, as somewhat vague due partly to the lack of a particular office present from national to schools that specifically has the mandate to handle teacher development. There are also various offices responsible for ensuring and supporting student access. At the level of local governments, there is no clear standard as to whether there should be a unit or an office responsible specifically for handling education. The Local Government Code simply sets the need for local governments to form and regularly convene the Local School Board.

In general, the baseline capacity of the public education system to adapt to the pandemic was low. The Philippine public education system is designed using only face-to-face learning delivery. Its curriculum is developed assuming it will be taught face-to-face. Except for some special efforts such as the Alternative Learning System, Philippine public schools never had an experience using alternative modalities of learning deliveries. While there have been some modules developed in the past and the schools have been preparing School Improvement Plans (SIPs) before, education governance did not anticipate that such drastic changes would be demanded in the blink of an eye to ensure that the learners continue to learn. One principal described it best: "We were staring at the blank wall."

By and large, DepEd adapted as fast as it could given its baseline state. The country had one of the longest lockdowns and the longest period the learners being out of school. It took several months before the schools were operational again: in October, four months late from its supposed start in June. By then, the learners continued learning using modules and manuals

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[89] DepEd Department Order No. 16, s. of 2013, *Guidelines on the Partnership between the Department of Education and Civil Society Organizations in the Preparation of Budget Proposals and Execution of the Approved Budget,* at https://www.deped.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/DO_s2013_016.pdf

[90] Department of Education, *2021 DepEd Budget,* p.6 at https://www.deped.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/2021-DepEd-Budget-Mag-Budget_052121-PAGES.pdf

prepared first by the division offices and later by the Central Office. The DepEd central office and schools took about seven (7) months, from March to October, to set up something from almost scratch.

The streamlining of the learning competencies using MELCs was a crucial part of DepEd's adjustments. While feedback from a few principals that the MELCs can still be further streamlined, the shortening of the modules (one division shared: from about 30-32 pages for 2020-2021 school year to about 15-18 pages for 2021-2022 school year) showed that DepEd continued to adapt and adjust in the two years that the schools were using alternative learning modalities.

While assistance and support were provided to teachers for them to effectively continue teaching during the pandemic, there is still no assessment to whether and how the teachers were effective in teaching during the pandemic.

By and large, there was no scarcity in trainings for teachers during the pandemic. DepEd Central Office, division offices, and the private sector provided numerous trainings. The likely gap was in the coordination leading to overlap and lack of assessment in the trainings' effectiveness. While assistance and support were provided to teachers for them to effectively continue teaching during the pandemic, there is still no assessment to whether and how the teachers were effective in teaching during the pandemic.

Resources were never enough at the school level.

By developing alternative modalities for learning delivery, mainly through modules, DepEd has ensured that the majority of the learners continue to learn. DepEd also adjusted learning assessments and extended proactive efforts and maximum consideration to avoid students from dropping out of class or not completing their studies. Local governments provided assistance to DepEd and also extended support to underprivileged students.

However, resources were never enough at the school level. Many principals had to ask help from communities and private donors. Some teachers had to use their own resources. Parents were given the critical role of facilitating the learning of their children, which emerged as the major challenge in terms of their capacity to facilitate learning and the ability of the public education system to monitor and assess learning facilitated mainly by parents.

Local governments provided supplemental assistance in the form of equipment and supplies for the reproduction of modules, gadgets and equipment for digital learning, keeping LGU-funded teachers and support to underprivileged students. It is clear, however, that the role of local governments can further be deepened and made more rational and efficient through the strengthening of the LSBs and improved accountability in the allocation and utilization of the SEF.

By and large, there has been an enhancement of participation and involvement of the barangay, the communities, and especially the parents in the education of children during the pandemic.

There are numerous mechanisms for accountability in Philippine education governance at the national down to the school level, including in times of disasters like COVID-19. The key

question when it comes to accountability mechanisms in education governance is how effective these mechanisms are not only in ensuring accountable and responsible education governance, but also in accounting for the performance of the public education system.

X-Ed conducted this standards mapping and baselining to lay down the current state of policy and response, map the standards and baseline the emerging practices in the efforts of the government towards learning continuity and resiliency of the public education system. While serving as a good reference material to any interested education policy actors, the paper also anchors X-Ed on where and how it will make a difference in the efforts of the public education system to continue learning amid disaster.

Based on the result of the standards mapping and baselining and after further consultations within the X-Ed team, the following are the standards or components of public learning continuity efforts where it is most crucial that X-Ed makes a difference:

1. In pressuring DepEd, the Executive Branch and all concerned authorities to increase the budget allocation for efforts that ensure learning continue amid disasters, which covers the capacity of the public education sector to adapt and use varied learning modalities that are appropriate and effective given emergency circumstances.
2. In checking the sufficiency and appropriateness of services and programs crucial to the success of learning continuity and learning recovery, such as learning resources (i.e., textbooks, modules, learning manuals), classrooms, digital technology, social assistance (i.e., mental health, counselling, feeding program) and teachers' training.
3. In checking compliance to health and safety protocols in schools.
4. In promoting the effectiveness of the mechanisms for transparency, participation and accountability in education governance, particularly (a) performance assessment mechanisms on the learning continuity efforts and the Senior High School/ K-12 program, (b) the M&E processes in School-Based Management (SBM), (c) access to information, transparency and participatory mechanisms at schools; (d) TPA measures in procurement and budget.
5. In exploring whether and how local governments should have a bigger role in education governance and/ or at the minimum, proposing recommendations in improving the effectiveness of the local school boards.
6. In improving the uniformity of quality control processes in the development, use and evaluation of learning resources, as well as the continued assessment of the learning competencies to help ensure that the most essential are taught well and completely.
7. In improving the coordination, oversight and assessment of teachers' training, especially those relevant to learning continuity.
8. In advocating for the review of the processes and standards used in evaluating student learning and competencies.
9. In helping clarify the actual status of the performance of the public education system when it comes to access to education for all and ensuring that no student is left behind.

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Romel Aniar. DepEd Palawan Division, Curriculum Implementation Division. 28 June 2022.

Lilia Arro. Supervisor, DepEd Bacolod.

Lucilo Bayron. Mayor, Puerto Princesa. 16 June 2022.

Lorebina Carrasco; DepEd Cagayan De Oro Assistant Schools Division Superintendent. 15 November 2022.

Mariano de Guzman. Superintendent, DepEd Naga City. 9 December 2021.

Alvin Dizon. Councilor, Cebu City. 2 February 2022.

Alice Ganar. Coordinator, DepEd Cebu City Senior High School Division. 7 February 2022.

Manuel Laguerta. Chief, DepEd Pasig City Curriculum Implementation Division. 19 November 2021.

Daniel Libante and Nelbin Palao. Principals, Puerto Princesa. 21 June 2022.

Marc Voltaire Padilla. Assistant Superintendent, DepEd Quezon City. 16 November 2021.

Arnel Pedroso. City Administrator, Puerto Princesa. 16 June 2022.

Freddie Ramirez. DepEd MIMAROPA. 8 June 2022. (Written response).

Cyril Serador. Chief, DepEd Puerto Princesa Curriculum Implementation Division. 17 June 2022.

Amparo Silvela, Annalyn Macasinag, Gilberto Inocenco and Eulogio Pebres. Principals; Pasig City. 28 January 2022.

Rechie Tugawin. Executive Assistant, Pasig City. 15 June 2022. (Written response).

Anna Zenaida Alangadi Unte-Alonto. Superintendent, DepEd Marawi Schools Division. 19 November 2021.