



# Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda (2005-2010)

Republic of the Philippines  
**National Education For All Committee (NEC)**  
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The Department of Education (DepED) is mandated by the Philippine government to provide quality basic education that is equitable to all.

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To operationalize the Philippine Education For All (EFA) 2015 plan, as an implementation approach of the first six years of EFA (2005-2010), the Department of Education (DepED) is currently implementing the ***Schools First Initiative***. It is an effort to improve basic education outcomes through a broadly participated, popular movement featuring a wide variety of initiatives undertaken by individual schools and communities.

Moreover, networks of schools at localities involving school districts and divisions, local governments, civil society organizations and other stakeholder groups and associations are also involved in this program.

Even as the ***Schools First Initiative*** seeks to improve the way all public schools perform now, the DepED is also undertaking fundamental reforms to sustain better performance. DepED is pursuing a package of policy reforms that as a whole seeks to systematically improve critical regulatory, institutional, structural, financial, cultural, physical and informational conditions affecting basic education provision, access and delivery on the ground. These policy reforms are expected to create critical changes necessary to further accelerate, broaden, deepen and sustain the improved education effort already being started by the ***Schools First Initiative***.

This package of policy reforms is called the **Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda (BESRA)**. This document summarizes the contents of this agenda.

### Overall Objectives of BESRA

The policy actions comprising the BESRA seek to create a basic education sector that is capable of attaining the country's



**Education for All** Objectives by the year 2015. In summary, these objectives are:

1. **Universal Coverage of Out-of-School Youths and Adults in the Provision of Basic Learning Needs:** All persons beyond school-age, regardless of their levels of schooling should acquire the essential competence to be considered functionally literate in their native tongue, in Filipino or in English.
2. **Universal School Participation and Elimination of Drop-outs and Repetition in First Three Grades:** All children aged six should enter school ready to learn and prepared to achieve the required competencies from Grades 1 to 3 instruction.
3. **Universal Completion of the Full Cycle of Basic Education Schooling with Satisfactory Achievement Levels by All at Every Grade or Year:** All children aged six to eleven should be on track to completing elementary schooling with satisfactory achievement levels at every grade, and all children aged twelve to fifteen should be on track to completing secondary schooling with similarly satisfactory achievement levels at every year.



*All children aged six should enter school.*



4. **Total Community Commitment to Attainment of Basic Education Competencies for All:** Every community should mobilize all its social, political, cultural, and economic resources and capabilities to support the universal attainment of basic education competencies in Filipino and English.

In order for the basic education sector to achieve the above listed desired educational outcomes for all Filipinos, the BESRA focuses on specific policy actions within five key reform thrusts (KRT) as follows:


- KRT 1: Get all schools to continuously improve;
- KRT 2: Enable teachers to further enhance their contribution to learning outcomes;
- KRT 3: Increase social support to attainment of desired learning outcomes;
- KRT 4: Improve impact on outcomes from complementary early childhood education, alternative learning systems, and private sector participation; and
- KRT 5: Change institutional culture of DepED to better support these key reform thrusts.

In short, the five key reform thrusts of BESRA are on: schools, teachers, social support to learning, complementary interventions, and DepED's institutional culture.

### **Preparation of BESRA Policy Proposals**

From August 2005 to May 2006, various task teams organized by DepED, with members drawn from various stakeholder groups and consultants engaged to assist them, have prepared the specific proposals for each policy action identified and described in this document.

Most of the proposals are matters within the function, authority and power of DepED management to decide in accordance with existing laws; others require action by other government offices including the Office of the President; yet community-based social institutions that provide the most widely




available formally organized instruction, which is expected to enable students to learn and thereby attain their desired educational outcomes.

### **Key Reform Thrust 1: School-level stakeholders improve their own schools continuously.**

***Why this reform thrust is important?*** Schools are the community-based social institutions that provide the most widely available formally organized instruction, which is expected to enable students to learn and thereby attain their desired educational outcomes. If schools are to deliver better outcomes in a sustainable manner, the key stakeholders, within the school and the community served by the school, must be enabled and empowered to manage their school-level affairs so that they deliberately and continuously improve the link between their own efforts and their collectively desired educational outcomes. The central insight of this reform thrust is that people most actively and directly involved in and affected by the school's operations are the best people to improve the quality of these schools.

Progress in this key reform thrust will be indicated by:

1. Increased percentages of all public schools that have current school improvement plans (SIP) prepared, implemented and monitored through a participatory process led by school heads working with organized school governing councils (SGC).
2. Increased percentages of public schools with SIP's prepared, implemented and monitored through a participatory process that meets specific quality dimensions included in an SIP assessment instrument. (These quality dimensions include: linkage of SIP activities with improved learning outcomes; depth or level of community participation; priority given to meeting teachers' needs for better teaching practice; support given to classroom improvement; and consistency with school's long-term development plans).

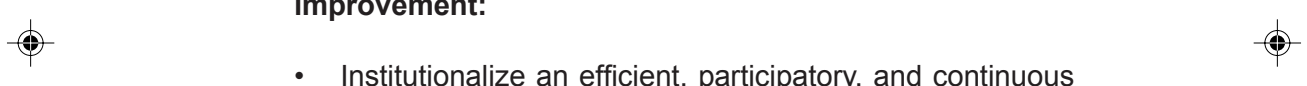
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3. Increased levels of resources managed and controlled at the school level.
  4. Improved levels of school-wide student performance based on results of national standardized tests.

**Main policy actions identified to generate progress in this key reform thrust:**

The following three policy actions are all within the legal mandate of Chapter 1- Governance of Basic Education, Section E. School level of Republic Act No. 9155, *Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001*.

1.1 **A head for every school:** Ensure that every school or cluster of schools is led by a school head who is selected, prepared, supported, monitored, and made accountable for organizing and leading an institutionalized school improvement process at the school/community level.

1.2 **A school/community process of continuous school improvement:**

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- Institutionalize an efficient, participatory, and continuous school improvement process in every school.
  - Enable every school to routinely prepare a school improvement plan (SIP), implement it, monitor and report its implementation, and evaluate its results in terms of school-wide attainment of desired learning outcomes.
  - Enable every school and its community to establish and maintain functional and empowered School Governing Councils supporting the operational leadership of the school head in the school improvement process.
  - Provide schools with means to adopt mechanisms and practices for school-level accountability to parents, community, LGU's, and the DepED hierarchy, including use of School Profiles, School Report Cards and similar modes of reporting measurements of school-wide educational outcomes (participation, completion, and achievement).



- Expand schools' use of student tracking systems to, among others, follow-up students who are frequently absent, encountering difficulties, and/or who are lagging behind.
- Establish and sustain school/community level measures for enhancing basic health and nutrition conditions of students and school staff, which should be included as an important part of the SIP and a key responsibility of the SGC.

### 1.3 **A school-based resource management framework:**


- Create a simple and practical school-based framework for comprehensive management of all resources available to schools.
- Evolve an administrative and operational environment, including installation of basic financial management and resource accounting systems appropriate to all types and sizes of schools, that enable schools together with their communities, to become self-governing.

### 1.4 **A schools-driven DepED representation in Local School Boards of LGUs:** Enable school heads and school governing councils to monitor and influence LGUs spending



*Community participates in continuous school improvement.*





for basic education, particularly in relation to the use of SEF collections.

## **Key Reform Thrust 2: Teachers raise the prevailing standards of their profession to meet demands for better learning outcomes.**

***Why this reform thrust is important?*** Classroom performance of teachers is a critical factor behind learning outcomes attained by students of schools. A critical part of school improvement thus involves improvement of teacher performance in classrooms. Schools must be provided with more and better teachers capable of improving their capacity to teach well classes of reasonable size.

**Progress in this key reform thrust** will be indicated by:

1. Increased percentages of all DepED divisions using competency-based standards for assessing teacher performance, determining teacher development needs and priorities, selecting new teachers for hiring, and promoting teachers.
2. Increased percentages of all new teachers (national and local payrolls) deployed in schools at each DepED division that are selected and hired based on teacher competency standards of the division.
3. Frequency distributions of class sizes (schools, divisions, regions, and national) clustered more closely around the average.
4. Increased percentages of all classes requiring assignment of specially trained teachers served by teachers with correct preparation and qualifications.

Main policy actions identified to generate progress in this key reform thrust:

The first five policy actions that follow can all be undertaken by DepED as part of the implementation of Chapter 1 – *Governance*

*of Basic Education of Republic Act No. 9155, Governance of Basic Education Act.*

**2.1 A framework for competency-based standards for teachers:**

Adopt a national framework using teacher competencies as the basis of standards for assessing new teachers'



*Improving teachers with capacity to teach well.*

readiness for hiring and deployment, incumbent teachers' current performance, and teachers' priority needs for professional development. Teacher competencies cover such areas as language proficiency, subject matter mastery, pedagogical and classroom management skills, and commitment to profession and community.

**2.2 A rolling 5-year projection of new teacher hires:**

- Prepare a rolling 5-year projected staffing pattern for all schools that identifies expected staffing requirements and estimates of numbers of future hires for different types of positions in different divisions.
- Maintain a rolling 5-year series of annual forecasts of future teacher demand at the national, regional, and divisional levels, that can be used as basis for announced changes in future hiring standards.

**2.3 Progressive upgrades in division level teacher hiring practices:**

- Enable all divisions to progressively improve the quality of teachers they hire based on national competency standards adapted to local conditions.



- Set up rolling 5-year timetables for each division to program a year-by-year raising of minimum standards for hiring future teachers.
- At all divisions, develop new rules, procedures, and instruments governing hiring, together with appropriate staff who are capable of scientifically assessing teacher applicants.

#### 2.4 **Regional, divisional, and school level targets for distribution of class sizes:**

- Improve the deployment of available numbers of nationally paid teachers in order to fairly distribute the instructional work loads among classes and schools.
- Set up and monitor compliance with rolling 5-year targets for improvements in class size distribution for regions, divisions, and schools.

#### 2.5 **Division and school focus on improving teaching practice in schools:**

- Encourage each division to adapt the national framework for competency-based standards for teachers to the specific conditions and needs of the schools of the division.
- Use the division-specific teacher competency framework (and develop division and district staff capable of providing technical support on its use to schools) as the basis for each school's regular assessment of incumbent teachers' performance and determination of their priority development needs.
- Ensure that the process of SIP preparation, implementation, and monitoring features the regular practice of school heads leading teachers in using student assessment data and classroom observations to collectively identify strengths and weaknesses in teacher performance.
- Engage the SGC to increase the visibility, importance, and commitment of schools/communities for teachers



and students to attain high levels of proficiency in English, Science, and Math.

- Expand availability to schools of cost-effective options for meeting teachers' priority needs for training and professional development.

The next two policy actions involve negotiated agreements with organizations and agencies over which DepED does not have any administrative authority.

Memoranda of agreement will need to be entered between DepED and LGUs on the competency-based standards governing the hiring of locally paid teachers.

The Education Secretary's policy oversight function of the Commission on Higher Education as mandated by Executive Order No. 434 may also be a source of administrative authority to pursue agreements with Teacher Education Institutions and State Colleges and Universities.

**2.6 All other sources of teacher hires to adopt division hiring practices:** Negotiate with local governments, local school boards, Parents, Teachers and Community Associations (PTCA's) and all other sources of local teacher hires supplementing the nationally provided positions to convince them to agree that locally hired teachers shall all be subject to the same procedures and standards adopted by the division for nationally hired teachers.

**2.7 Pre-service teacher education and licensing to support future higher hiring standards:** DepED's 5-year annual projection of future teacher hires can be used as an early signal to teacher education institutions and the professional teacher licensing system about what teacher competencies will be valued by the public schools

The last policy action below will definitely require new legislation or an amendment to existing ones. The thrust of the policy action will be to assemble data and analysis that can support the formulation of draft legislation.



## 2.8 New legislation governing teacher (and non-teaching staff) compensation, benefits, and conditions of employment:

- Develop a long-term strategy for improving teachers' compensation and benefits to attract better students into the teaching profession and keep the best teachers in the service, either in classrooms or in administrative positions.
- Provide incentives and explore public-private partnerships as a source for supporting teacher compensation, benefits, and incentives.
- Adopt a longer probationary period (two to three years) for new teacher hires linked to a professionally mentored induction program with peer appraisals and assessments.
- Consider changes in rules on teacher deployment to include routine changes in grade level and school assignment of teachers to insure that teachers master the span of elementary or secondary curriculum.



*Meet teachers' needs for professional development.*

### Key Reform Thrust 3: Influential social institutions and key social processes are engaged by DepED to support national scale attainment of desired learning outcomes.

**Why this reform thrust is important?** For schools and teachers, and the whole DepED organization to perform better, the basic education sector needs to secure sustained strong support for resources necessary for good instruction. This in turn, depends on parents' and students' recognizing that good instruction is vital to attaining their most valued personal, family, community, and national aspirations.

The central insight of this reform thrust is that ordinary people from different spheres of society (i.e., persons not specifically trained or skilled in professional education) not only can enhance the learning that students derive from schooling, but also strengthen society's support for those teachers, schools, and educators doing the best job in making such learning possible for all.

Progress in this key reform thrust will be indicated by:

1. Increase in the levels of educators' satisfaction with the quality of instruction that schools deliver;
2. Increase in the levels of parents' and children's satisfaction with the quality of education they obtain;
3. Increase in the levels of communities' satisfaction with the performance of schools serving them; and
4. Improvement in national indicators of learning outcomes such as participation and completion rates, achievement rates, and national sample scores in internationally comparable tests.





Main policy actions identified to generate progress in this key reform thrust:

The first three policy actions below are in accordance with Chapter 1 – Governance of Basic Education, Section 7- Powers, Duties and Functions, Part A. National level of Republic Act No. 9155, *Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001*. These three actions involve the adoption of multi-sectoral national strategies in support of learning in three major areas of knowledge of common interest to all Filipinos, namely, learning in English, in Filipino, and in Math and Science.

Each of these national strategies would encompass the basic education curriculum and instruction in formal schooling, as well as the potential learning support provided by media, community, home and workplace, alternative learning options, civil society initiatives and all other social mechanisms that enhance learning.

Part of the strategies would be the streamlining of the curriculum, and the possible extension of the basic education cycle. The strategies will be formulated through consultations, researches, debates, etc. Once adopted, these strategies would include information campaigns to increase popular awareness and understanding about the current trends in educational outcomes in these areas of knowledge, and the current progress in implementing reforms necessary to sustain improvements in desired learning outcomes.

### 3.1 **A national strategy in support of learning in English language:**

- Engage leaders, influentials, experts, groups and institutions with an interest in Filipinos learning in the English language.
- Articulate a consensus on the role and importance of Filipinos learning in English.
- Identify resources, capabilities, assets, strengths, and advantages available for Filipino mastery of English language.





- Propose actions, policies, projects, activities, and initiatives that can accelerate, enhance, enrich and universalize Filipinos learning in English language.
- Recommend appropriate directions or priorities for schools, media, professions, enterprises, government agencies, churches and religions, and other social institutions.

### 3.2 **A national strategy in support of learning in Filipino language:**

- Engage leaders, influentials, experts, groups, and institutions with an interest in Filipinos learning in the Filipino language.
- Articulate a consensus on the role and importance of Filipinos learning in Filipino.
- Identify resources, capabilities, assets, strengths, and advantages available for Filipino mastery of Filipino language.
- Propose actions, policies, projects, activities and initiatives that can accelerate, enhance, enrich, and universalize Filipinos learning in Filipino language.
- Recommend appropriate directions or priorities for schools, media, professions, enterprises, government agencies, churches and religions, and other social institutions.

### 3.3 **A national strategy in support of learning Mathematics and Science:**

- Engage leaders, influentials, experts, groups, and institutions with an interest in Filipinos learning Math and Science.
- Articulate a consensus on the role and importance of Filipinos learning Math and Science.
- Identify resources, capabilities, assets, strengths and advantages available for Filipino mastery of Math and Science.





- Propose actions, policies, projects, activities, and initiatives that can accelerate, enhance, enrich, and universalize Filipino learning Math and Science.
- Recommend appropriate directions or priorities for schools, media, professions, enterprises, government agencies, churches and religions, and other social institutions.

The national level of DepED is also authorized, and held accountable and responsible by RA 9155 for “promulgating national educational standards and monitoring and assessing national learning outcomes”. As part of the national strategies in support of learning, the policy action described below involves a more detailed specification of the standards and outcomes which formal basic education schooling should meet.

**3.4 A national quality assurance framework for basic education schooling:** The existing Revised Basic Education Curriculum (RBECE) will be further developed into an explicit learning accountability framework.



*Strategies will be identified for children to learn science.*



- This framework will be based on the national curriculum, but will provide leeway for local flexibility and relevance. To enable schools and divisions to meet expected learning outcomes, the framework should also include adequate support to instruction through sufficient quantity and better quality textbooks across all subjects, essential teachers' guides and manuals (especially for all newly hired teachers) and other instructional materials, preferably locally developed.
- The framework will thus encompass standards for inputs and processes linked to desired learning outcomes. This QA framework defines the minimum standards all schools should meet and the key measures to be taken to assure attainment of these standards.
- It will include a set of minimum national standards for capabilities, structures, processes and output based on a template for school improvement processes from planning to implementation to monitoring and evaluation.
- Finally, the QA framework shall include a system of nationally standardized student assessments, outcomes measurement and reporting of basic school statistics that together will provide the basic data about directions, levels and trends of progress in the ongoing educational reforms.

When the national strategies in support of learning in the three key areas have emerged, and the national quality assurance framework for basic education schooling has been drafted, DepED will then consider institutionalizing the multi-sectoral participation in national-level governance of basic education.

Section 5 of RA 9155 talks about communication channels that “facilitate flow of information and expand linkages with other government agencies, local government units and non-government organizations for effective governance”. The policy action below is a step in such direction.



### 3.5 **An institutionalized national forum for multi-sectoral coordination in support of basic education outcomes:**

- Establish a national governing council on basic education standards that can serve as the institutional steward and champion of the implementation of the national strategies in support of learning.
- This council can help DepED define, articulate and advocate the concept of quality Filipino basic education as one that forms a desired type of Filipino with certain distinct identities and core ethical values, apart from acquiring certain valued competencies.
- The national council can also enable local communities to understand and internalize this concept of quality Filipino education (an “educated Filipino” as one of “being” not just of “doing” or “knowing”) so that parents can assess the quality of schools from the kind of students they form.

This last policy action focuses on the preparation and training of basic education managers, which is a task implied by the many mandates and functions of DepED.

### 3.6 **A program and institution for forming basic education managers:**

- Establish a training and development institution for higher-level education managers, such as assistant superintendents, superintendents, assistant directors and directors, which is linked to the principals and school heads institute.





## **Key Reform Thrust 4: Providers of early childhood care and development, alternative learning systems, and private sector increase their respective complementary contributions to national basic education outcomes.**

***Why this reform thrust is important?*** Even good public schools with good teachers will require the assistance and contribution of others in attaining the nation's desired learning outcomes. Children entering school at Grade 1 need to be made ready for school through early childhood education from their birth onward.


Progress in this key reform thrust will be indicated by:

1. Increased percentages of all Grade 1 entrants who meet the standards for school readiness;
2. Increased percentages of ALS clients completing courses in basic and functional literacy;
3. Increased percentages of takers of accreditation and equivalency tests in elementary and secondary levels pass; and
4. Percentage of total school enrollment served by private schools reach the target set by national policy.

Main policy actions identified to generate progress in this key reform thrust:

### **4.1 Local delivery models for cost-effective early childhood education:**

- Develop new or scale up existing locality-based (municipal, city or province) ECE delivery models that feature, among others: assessments of readiness for school of all Grade 1 entrants; schools giving feedback to parents about the readiness of their children for school; schools giving feedback to local governments and community leaders about groups of Grade 1 entrants not ready for school; expansion of local ECE programs that demonstrate effectiveness in getting



children ready for school; and LGU coordination of local ECE efforts at home, in communities, at day care and in pre-schools by government, non-government and private sectors.

#### 4.2 **Enhanced and accelerated ALS coverage:**

- Review existing mandate of Literacy Coordination Council for possible revision to cover governance of alternative learning system, including adoption of policies and standards for alternative learning systems.
- Develop or scale up locality-based (municipal, city or province) ALS delivery models.
- Develop capacity of service providers (public and private) to identify potential ALS learners in the areas where they operate through referral and drop-out tracking system.
- Establish structure and support mechanism of convergence at various levels.



#### 4.3 **A private sector strategy for basic education:**

- Identify potential of various roles of private sector in basic education: private schools; private management of public schools; private sector participation in public schools governance; private enterprises performing public education functions as contractors or suppliers; private financial contributions to public education.
- Determine the optimum level of private sector in these various roles.
- Ensure private sector participation to meet this optimum level.
- Expand private sector participation in education through reforms in the Educational Service Contracting scheme, such as expansion of coverage through all areas of basic education and improved targeting where public sector capacity constraints are matched by available private sector capacity.



- Consider also possible private management of public schools and private sector services to public schools or school clusters (for example, INSET, supervision and assessment).

### **Key Reform Thrust 5: DepED changes its own institutional culture towards greater responsiveness to the key reform thrusts of BESRA.**


***Why this reform thrust is important?*** The first four key reform thrusts would change the policy environment of schools, teachers, social support for learning, providers of early childhood education and alternative learning systems, and private sector involvement in basic education.

The key institutional player behind the formulation, adoption, and implementation of these policies, now and over the long-term, is the Department of Education, particularly its national, regional, and divisional offices.

If these reforms are to advance, take root, blossom, and bear fruit, the institutional culture of DepED will need to change to become more hospitable to these reforms.

Progress in this key reform thrust will be indicated by:

1. High levels of deep understanding among incumbent DepED managers at central, regional, and divisional offices of DepED's strategy for culture change and its integration into the modernization plans of DepED offices.
2. A new national budget framework established featuring multi-year, goal-based funding levels with equitable allocations to localities linked to LGUs' contributions and allocations to schools specified according to a transparent formula.
3. Increased levels of favorable public perceptions of honesty, integrity, and professional excellence of DepED offices.
4. ICT strategy adopted and implemented according to targets.



Main policy actions identified to generate progress in this key reform thrust:

**5.1 A strategy for institutional culture change integrated into organizational modernization plans for central, regional, and divisional offices:**

- Develop a strategy for changing the institutional culture of DepED towards becoming more supportive of the directions of the reforms comprising BESRA.
- Implement the culture change strategy in the improvement of the operational capacity of central DepED through the modernization of its staff and facilities, as well as through increasing the transparency, accountability and integrity of its units, based on the newly rationalized structure and operations.
- Implement the culture change strategy in the improvement of the operational capacity of 17 DepED regional offices through modernization of staff and facilities, as well as through increasing transparency, accountability, and integrity of its units.
- Implement the culture change strategy in the improvement of the operational capacity of 184 DepED division offices through modernization of staff and facilities as well as through increasing transparency, accountability, and integrity of its units.

**5.2 A new national budget framework for basic education:**

- Seek approval for a new national budget format for basic education that is based on DBCC-approved multi-year baseline allocations sufficient to meet the basic resource needs of schools, providing sub-allocations to localities that is linked to specific levels of LGUs' contributions, specifying school-level sub-allocations that serve as the basis of school-based budgets.
- Increase annual budget outlays to meet enrollment and cost increases, eliminate resource gaps and attain target goals. Identify sources of potential savings in the





existing budget for possible re-allocation to finance policy reform initiatives.

- Increase level and effectiveness of LGUs spending for basic education at school and locality levels through direct mandates and cost-sharing schemes. Integrate all other international and local project initiatives in basic education within the overall basic education reform and operations framework. Integrate performance and internal audit mechanisms in the routine functions of the public schools system. Identify measures to increase revenues from education sector assets and administrative rules to enable DepED to use these revenues to finance policy reform initiatives, including teachers' compensation and benefits.

## 5.2 An ICT strategy for basic education:

- Develop and adopt a strategy for cost-effective use of ICT in basic education (for classroom instruction and teachers' training in schools, as well as for use by DepED offices).
- Expand and mainstream those already tested, cost-saving educational technologies as tried out in past programs and projects.

