

(FULL TEXT) Vice President Sara Duterte Basic Education Report 2023 Speech

January 30, 2023

His Excellency Ferdinand Marcos, Jr. President of the Republic of the Philippines

Ladies and Gentlemen, Assalamualaikum.

Madayaw ug Maayong adlaw kaninyong tanan.

Magandang araw sa inyong lahat.

Sa bahay, bilang ina, kasama ko pong namumuhay ang apat na uri ng learners: isang kindergarten, isang Grade 4, isang Grade 7, at isang Grade 9.

Nakikita ko po ang iba't ibang uri ng problemang nararanasan nila sa kanilang pag-aaral araw-araw. Sa trabaho, bilang Kalihim ng Department of Education, kasama ko namang namumuhay ang mahigit sa 28 million Filipino learners sa buong bansa. At nakikita ko ang napakaraming problemang hinaharap at binubuno nila sa kanilang pag-aaral araw-araw. Four learners at home. Over 28 millions learners all over the Philippines. These, ladies and gentlemen, make my interest in the future of Philippine education a very personal matter. Filipino learners are NOT academically proficient.

Oftentimes, Filipino learners experience emotional abuse and exhaustion. Some Filipino learners suffer from psychological fatigue. And being academically insecure, many of them may fail to meet the standards of the demanding and competitive world. These are caused and triggered by conditions present at home, in our communities, and even in our schools as a result of problems ingrained in our system. This is the truth. Ito po ang katotohanan. Mao kini ang kamatuoran sa dagway sa atong kaugmaon. This is our future. But this is a future that we can change. And that's why we are here.

Let us remember that even in the face of death, Dr. Jose Rizal was the perpetual obstinate patriot as he was courageous and defiant before his firing squad executioners. Let us remember that Gabriela Silang, an Ilocano, was unshaken by the grief of widowhood and continued the revolution even after the death of her husband, Diego Silang. Let us remember that in Bohol, Francisco Dagohoy led the longest revolution in our history. And let us remember that in Mindanao, the successful Moro resistance was fortified by the unity forged between Moro leaders across Mindanao and North Borneo by the great Sultan Kudarat. These are just a handful of Filipinos whose sacrifices changed the course of our history as a people. They are Filipinos who demonstrated the indomitability of our spirit as a people.

Our children are the children of heroes. They are the descendants of Dr. Jose Rizal, Gabriela Silang, Francisco Dagohoy, and Sultan Kudarat. Our children are bound for greatness. Yes, it is necessary to emphasize that abilities are important to navigate life successfully. But our children must understand that hardships in life are NOT overcome by the best minds. Hardships in life are overcome by the strongest hearts. Today is an opportunity for us to renew our commitment to our children and their future. Hard work. Hard work. Hard work. And only if we work the hardest will our children fly, soar, fight, and win!

This is the Basic Education Report 2023. [School Facilities and Learning Resources] The lack of school infrastructure and resources to support the ideal teaching process is the most pressing issue pounding the Philippine basic education. The Department is not blind to the reality that there is a need to build, repair, and maintain school infrastructures to accommodate the growing number of learners all over the Philippines. Today, there are over 28 million Filipino learners studying in public schools all over the Philippines. Our latest inventory shows we have 327,851 school buildings in the country. Out of these school buildings, only 104,536 are in good condition.

Due to various reasons, there are also 100,072 school buildings that need minor repairs; 89,252 require major repairs, and 21,727 are set for condemnation. Our schools are not calamity-proof. Among the significant roadblocks to our education infrastructure program are earthquakes, typhoons, landslides, flooding, and even armed conflicts.

In the Visayas alone, a total of 17,263 classrooms damaged by Super typhoon Odette are still subject for repair and replacement. Last year in July, I personally visited Clarin National Highschool in Bohol and in August, the Triana Elementary School in Limasawa Island in Southern Leyte. The destruction left by Super typhoon Odette in these schools were heartbreaking — raising the urgency of an appropriate action and collaboration between DepEd and education stakeholders from the local government units, the private sector, and international partners. In Triana Elementary School, a tent donated by an international aid agency has served as the temporary learning space. We need P9.82 Billion for the repair and replacement of Odette-damaged classrooms in the Visayas. For 2023, the Department has allocated a total of P15.6 Billion for new construction.

[Procurement]

Our assessment of the Department's procurement practices showed cracks that, if left unresolved, will harm our vision to providing our learners with quality basic education. These procurement practices also illuminated the concern for transparency and accountability.

Our assessment showed that the centralized procurement of DepEd has been hounded by:

- delays in the submission of technical specifications
- lack of updated guidelines

- lack of qualified bidders, and
- low participation rate of prospective bidders

There were successful bidders who failed to deliver on time. And worse, there were successful bidders who failed to make deliveries at all. The procurement practices at the Department of Education had red flags that demanded immediate actions. The creation of a separate strand dedicated entirely on matters of procurement was made to improve procurement in DepEd. This strand is ordered to ensure that the delivery of services is done within the period required by law, following the processes mandated by law. Our intention here is to solve a problem that has permeated within the system and ensure that transparency and accountability are present.

[Enrollment and LearnerSchool Data]
 As we confront the dilemma in school infrastructure and learning resources, we looked at the trends in our enrollment and learner data during the pandemic and now, we are implementing post-pandemic programs and reforms. After a significant decrease in 2020 due to COVID-19-related school closures, enrollment has since started to recover. This year, we welcomed around 28.4 million learners in 44,931 public schools and 12,162 private schools nationwide.

But recovery in enrollment is limited only to public schools. We saw the decline of enrollment figures in private schools — and eventually, saw some private schools terminating their operations. From 2020 to 2022, more than 1,600 private schools stopped operations.

Currently, the Department of Education is responsible for almost 80 percent of schools nationwide — of which, 79 percent are elementary schools. Evidently, there is a wide disparity between the number of elementary and secondary schools in the country. With such a disparity, inclusivity in education remains to be a concern. Despite gains in bridging gaps, learners from Indigenous People’s communities Geographically-Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas, Muslim youth, learners with disabilities, and out-of-school youth and adults still require the attention of the community. We need to improve their participation rate in basic education.

[Curriculum and Employability]
 The core of Basic Education is the Curriculum. The ongoing review of the K-12 curriculum has revealed:
 Ø that the Curriculum content is congested;
 Ø that some prerequisites of identified essential learning competencies are missing or misplaced; and
 Ø that a significant number of learning competencies cater to high cognitive demands.

For Senior High School, our work immersion program has contributed to a high passing rate of 90 percent in the National Certificate assessment administered by TESDA.

However, industry partners have expressed concern that the time allotment for work immersion is only for familiarization and not for actual skills acquisition. Today, most Senior High School graduates find the need to pursue higher education in order to find employment. The National Senior High School tracer study conducted by the Bureau of Curriculum Development showed that 83 percent of the respondents pursued higher education while only a little over 10 percent of graduates were employed. The K-12 curriculum promised to produce graduates that are employable. That promise remains a promise.

[Teaching]

Our teachers. They are the lifeblood of the Department of Education. Without our teachers, our mission to carve a better future for our children will fail.

Lagi ko pong sinasabi sa ating mga guro — importante kayo sa pag-unlad ng ating bayan. Kayo ang gumagabay at tumutulong sa ating mga kabataan sa pagpapanday ng kanilang mga pangarap sa buhay at pagsa-katuparan ng mga pangarap na ito. And to empower our learners with the relevant skills and knowledge, we shall focus on upscaling your knowledge and capacities as public servants. The assessment on K-12 Curriculum revealed the weak teaching methods of our teachers in addressing 21st-century skills. Studies done by the Research Center for Teacher Quality, the World Bank, and UNICEF showed that teachers need further support, particularly in explicitly and strategically teaching critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

While critical thinking was the most evident in the curriculum, it was also the least taught to students by teachers. Instead, lessons leaned towards conceptual or content-based teaching. And lessons lacked in-depth processing to cultivate critical thinking and problem-solving.

Finally, there appears to be insufficient knowledge on developing 21st-century skills, including higher-order thinking skills among learners. This is not the fault of our teachers — whose dedication, integrity, and the commitment to serve Filipino children and the country strengthened our collective effort to achieve our shared dreams for our learners. The sad reality is that the system has failed them. This is a system that burdens them with backbreaking and time-consuming administrative tasks, a system that provides no adequate support and robs them of the opportunity to professionally grow and professionally teach, assist, and guide our learners. Ladies and gentlemen, our teachers must return to our classrooms and they must teach.

[Learning

Outcomes]

Another alarming issue that we must address appropriately and effectively is literacy. The 2018 study results of the Programme for International Students Assessment or PISA are distressing as it is alarming for me as a mother and as Secretary of the Department of Education. The study results showed 81 percent of participating Filipino learners could not deal with basic math problems, 81 percent had trouble understanding texts of moderate length, and 78 percent could not recognize correct explanations for scientific phenomena or draw valid conclusions from given data. We can do better than

this. We are better than this. But studies like these are opportunities for us to thoroughly examine our system and the defects that hurt our children's abilities. The current state of basic education behooves us all to take a courageous stand and calls us to work together with the intention and commitment to resolve the challenges in basic education. We fail and we fail our children. In 2022, guided by its mandate and the renewed hope under the administration of President Marcos Jr., the Department of Education took steps toward education reforms. We brought our learners back to school.

On August 22, 2022, DepEd opened its doors to over 28 million learners across the nation. Today, 99.54 percent of our public schools are now implementing 5-day-in-person classes. We implemented the National Learning Recovery Plan to support the efforts of our field offices in addressing learning loss. Our road to recovery has begun with learning remediation and intervention programs. We continue to engage parents and legal guardians in facilitating learning and regularly conduct home visitations and follow-ups. We reskilled and upskilled teachers and school leaders. We have provided various capacity development initiatives to 226,367 teachers and school leaders. 15,331 teachers and school leaders received graduate scholarships. 17,636 were trained in early-grade language literacy. 161,700 teachers completed

NEAP-subsidized teaching courses. And 31,700 have undergone the Teacher Induction Program. We started the review of the curriculum. As we speak, the revised Kindergarten to Grade 10 curriculum is being finalized. We have also started the review of the Senior High School curriculum.

[EDUCATION

AGENDA]

We have taken small steps. We need to take more. The Department of Education, under the Marcos administration, guided by the Philippine Constitution, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Sustainable Development Goals, reaffirms our commitment to improving the quality of basic education in the country.

We know that the road will be bumpy, but our direction is clear. We know that the challenges are vast but we, Filipinos, are resilient. We will overcome. Tayo po ay magiging MATATAG. Tungo sa isang Bansang Makabata at Batang Makabansa. I present to you our Education Agenda ----- [Play AVP]

[After

AVP]

Sa gitna ng hamon sa edukasyon, tayo po ay magiging MATATAG.

First, we will MAke the curriculum relevant to produce competent, job-ready, active, and responsible citizens. We will revise the K to 12 Curriculum to make them more responsive to our aspiration as a nation, to develop lifelong learners who are imbued with 21st-century skills, discipline, and patriotism. We will reduce the number of learning areas in K to 3 from 7 to 5 to focus on foundational skills in literacy and numeracy in the early grades, particularly among disadvantaged students. We will strengthen our literacy and numeracy programs. We will revitalize our Reading, Science and Technology, and

Math programs by utilizing the gains of previous programs. The programs will be benchmarked with local and international best practices, consulted with experts, and will be research or evidence-based.

We will improve English proficiency while recognizing linguistic diversity. We will work towards the goal of English language proficiency within the context of a multilingual nation. We will review the implementation of the Mother Tongue-based Multilingual Education Policy, guided by the basic principle that, among others, learners learn when taught in a language that they understand. We will further intensify the values formation of learners in curriculum and teaching, particularly through the Good Manners and Right Conduct and Values Education in adherence to Republic Act 11476. We will embed the culture of peace in our curriculum to develop learners who are peace builders in communities. We will integrate “peace competencies” such as social awareness responsibility, care for the environment, value for diversity, self-esteem, positive character, resilience, and human security into the various learning areas of the K to 12 Curriculum.

We will be transparent with curriculum guides. We will share our draft curriculum guides with interested education stakeholders to help us develop a robust curriculum. We will be transparent about our test scores. We will make our test data available for researchers and analysts to aid us in making evidence-based policy decisions. We will share sample test items with schools and teachers to strengthen the use of assessment to improve the teaching and learning process. We will engage with CHED and TESDA, and various industry partners to address the issue of skills mismatch in our Senior High School Program. And we will need your help. To make our graduates employable, we appeal to the industry, and to employers, to accept our students in work immersions, and hire them when they graduate. Secondly, we will TAKE steps to accelerate the delivery of basic education facilities and services. We have recently created the School Infrastructure and Facilities Strand. This strand will be devoted entirely to addressing long-standing issues on educational facilities and infrastructure. We will build more resilient schools and classrooms. For 2023, we have the budget to build around 6,000 classrooms. We commit to closing the remaining gaps in school infrastructure with policies to eliminate corruption, and insulate the allocation of school building funds from politicization. We will establish fully-functional library hubs in our division offices.

We will provide schools with electricity. In the next 5 years, we will work towards providing electricity especially in our last-mile schools. We will provide e-classroom packages for teaching and learning. Each package will consist of 46 laptops, 2 charging carts, 2 wireless routers, and 1 smart TV. This will accelerate the integration of ICT in teaching and learning and institutionalize blended learning. We will optimize the use of technology, both online and offline, to ensure that learners have opportunities to learn even in the event of a pandemic or other emergencies. We will digitize our essential processes, including our national assessments.

We will launch our National Education Portal or NEP, which will provide a dynamic “one-stop-shop” platform available to all basic education stakeholders, such as teachers,

learners, and parents. The NEP will substantially cut down the manual process, reduce transaction costs and eliminate errors due to human intervention. We will strengthen the complementarity between public and private schools through the seamless implementation of the Government Assistance and Subsidies program of the DepEd with the creation of the Voucher Program Management Office. Working with private school organizations, we will also speed up the issuance of the Revised Manual of Regulation for Private Schools. We will work closely with Congress in pushing for the expansion of GASTPE coverage to include kindergarten and elementary learners. For our BARMM brothers, sisters and learners, we will always make ourselves available to provide technical expertise. We will fully support your School Building Program and GASTPE direction.

The Department of Education is not without legal problems, but we will cooperate with government agencies for a swift and truthful resolution of these issues. Effective education governance is crucial in accelerating the achievement of education outcomes. Next, we will TAKE good care of learners by promoting learner well-being, inclusive education, and a positive learning environment. As part of our National Statement of Commitment in the Transforming Education Summit, the DepEd reaffirms its pledge to ensure that all school age children and youth, and adults in situations of disadvantage are

participating in inclusive basic learning opportunities and receiving appropriate quality education. We will undertake initiatives to provide schooling to many more children and youth in situations of disadvantage, regardless of gender, abilities, psycho-emotional and physical conditions, cultural and religious identity, and socio-economic standing. We will strengthen and institutionalize the reintegration program for adolescent mothers, Children at Risk (CAR), and Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL) by developing inclusive models and mechanisms applicable to both formal and non-formal learning. We will continue to strengthen the mechanism in safeguarding our learners against all forms of discrimination and dangers. Our Learners Rights and Protection Office (LRPO) has been acting on the reported cases ranging from all kinds of bullying, many forms of abuse, corporal punishment, discrimination, and child neglect. We will improve our learning environments to encourage support, discourage bullying; strengthen the implementation of child protection policies; make students feel safe and respected; and make them, including our IP learners and those with disabilities, feel that they belong.

We commit to seeking out mental wellness experts to form interventions at the school level. We will also ensure that all learners have access to relevant guidance and psycho-social services managed and delivered by mental health professionals. To achieve this, we will work with the Department of Budget and Management to obtain higher salary grades for guidance counselors and propose the creation of additional items that will focus on providing learner support services, including guidance-related services in schools. We will strengthen our inclusive education programs, including the alternative learning system, last mile schools, and programs for IP learners and learners with disabilities. We will endeavor that all learners, no matter what their backgrounds are, will be afforded quality learning opportunities and services.

We will continue with the establishment of Inclusive Learning Resource Centers (ILRCs). We will provide assessment assistive mechanisms such as audio-assisted technology, Braille, and large-print test materials to students with disabilities. We will introduce digital textbooks for certain core subjects in Senior High School. We will work with the regional offices and our partners to facilitate the development of learning resources for special needs learners, specifically our visually and hearing-impaired learners. We will work with legislators and local government units through the Literacy Coordinating Council to eradicate illiteracy at the city, municipal, and barangay levels through relevant policy issuances, and community literacy program interventions. We will involve our parents and guardians in the education of our children.

Finally, we will Give support to teachers to teach better. Teachers are critical to the success of education. When they are supported, education quality improves. We will continuously provide professional development programs, including graduate degree scholarship programs to teachers focusing on their learning area specialization and graduate certificate programs for nonmajors. We will provide support in terms of innovative, responsive, and inclusive teaching approaches following the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST).

We will capacitate our teachers and learners in utilizing technology in remote learning to maximize the benefits of digital learning.

We will provide training and other learning and development interventions for school leaders, namely the school heads, supervisors, superintendents, and assistant superintendents, so that they can better support our teachers to teach better. We will remove non-teaching tasks and provide administrative officers in schools. We will provide adequate manpower complement in schools, manage teachers' workload, and compensate teachers for unique school challenges. We will fast-track the implementation of the career progression policy, so teachers get more opportunities for promotion. We will strictly implement the Merit Selection Policy so that HR recruitment, selection, and appointment to vacant positions in the DepEd are based on key knowledge, skills, attitudes and desired behaviors, and not due to any form of intervention from other government personnel or similar entities outside of DepEd.

Within the year, we aim to make the new Teacher Education Council and Secretariat fully functional and start working on its mandates, including setting minimum requirements for pre-service teacher education programs in the country. We will continuously advocate for additional benefits for our teachers. We will implement the policy on the distribution of teacher workload and payment of teaching overload, as provided in the Magna Carta for Public School Teachers.

We have also requested the Department of Budget and Management to expand the coverage for the grant of Special Hardship Allowances. We will work towards addressing issues affecting the net-take-home pay of teachers. We are discussing with

the Department of Health for the provision of free annual physical examinations for our teachers.

We are also closely coordinating with the GSIS for an improved and superior benefits package for all DepEd personnel. We will resolve issues on teachers' loans, premium remittances, and other benefits. We have committed to meeting at least once a month until these issues are resolved.

Lastly, we are looking to provide free legal assistance facility for teachers on matters concerning loan contracts, obligations, and cases. To our teachers, we recognize your zeal, integrity, commitment, and passion. And yes, we also recognize your sacrifices. We thank you for your sacrifices. Maraming salamat po sa inyong dedikasyon. Hindi po namin kayo pababayaan.

[Closing Statement]

This is our MATATAG Agenda. This is our roadmap. This is our commitment.

Now, please allow me to introduce the team that will see to it that those commitments are met.

Please stand as I call your name:

Curriculum and Teaching Strand

- Undersecretary Gina Gonong
- Assistant Secretary Alma Ruby Torio
- Assistant Secretary G.H. Ambat

Human Resource and Organizational Development Strand

- Undersecretary Gloria Jumamil-Mercado

Operations Strand

- Undersecretary Revsee Escobedo
- Assistant Secretary Francis Cesar Bringas
- Assistant Secretary Dexter Galban

School Infrastructure and Facilities Strand

- Undersecretary Epimaco Densing III

Legal and Legislative Affairs Strand

- Undersecretary Jose Arturo De Castro
- Assistant Secretary Amanda Marie Nograles

Administration Strand

- Undersecretary Kristian Ablan
- Assistant Secretary Christopher Lawrence Arnuco

Finance Strand

- Undersecretary Annalyn Sevilla

Procurement Strand

- Undersecretary Gerard Chan

- Assistant Secretary Omar Alexander Romero

Today, DepEd stands before you - heart in hand – humbly seeking your support. Improving access, equity, quality, resiliency and well-being will not happen overnight, nor can it be done by DepEd alone. We need a national commitment and sustained effort from all sectors of the society.

Together, we will rally for an improved learning system in the country.

Together, we will rally for every Filipino child.

Para sa isang MATATAG na Bayan.

Para sa ating mahal na Pilipinas.

Ang lahat – para sa Diyos, sa Bayan, at sa bawat pamilyang Pilipino.

Shukran.

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