



EDCOM2

The Second Congressional
Commission on Education



BASIC EDUCATION

Measurement of Learning Outcomes

PRIORITY AREA #6



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The Green Paper aims to stimulate discussion on priority areas being considered by the Second Congressional Commission on Education. It hopes to invite concerned stakeholders and the general public to participate in the debates surrounding specific areas, and to submit relevant research, as well as specific comments and suggestions.

Cover Photo courtesy of the Office of Senator Win Gatchalian.

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1. Introduction

This Green Paper is an opportunity to comment on issues related to the *Measurement of Learning Outcomes*. It seeks to identify the specific barriers to establishing and maintaining an effective system of assessments in Philippine basic education. The goal is to develop and institutionalize an assessment system that will improve evidence-based decision-making, enhance accountability, increase efficiency, and ultimately lead to improved learning outcomes for Filipino learners.

2. Priority

Briefly, the *assessment system* refers to the coherent set of assessment strategies that combine to support the teaching and learning of students and the overall educational philosophy of the country (Care, 2018). In the Philippine basic education system, these strategies are implemented through *classroom assessments* such as quizzes, performance tasks, and quarterly exams that measure individual learners' progress in mastering the competencies prescribed by the curriculum; *system assessments* like the National Achievement Test (NAT) and the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), which ascertain whether the goals of the entire education system are being met; and special assessments, such as the Philippine Education Placement Test (PEPT) and the Accreditation and Equivalency (A&E), which are administered to specific individuals for the purpose of promotion and placement. While examining the quality and alignment of all these elements is important, this green paper shall specifically focus on system assessments only.

Through this priority area, EDCOM II aims to examine the adequacy of the country's assessment system in tracking learners' progress and providing actionable insights for teachers and schools to plan and adjust the interventions that they will provide. The Commission will also look into the coherence of the assessments, as well as the mechanisms in place to ensure the quality of each assessment event.

The data generated from the assessment system should serve as feedback for teachers, school leaders, government, and private sector partners so that curriculum planning, pedagogy, governance, and the allocation of resources will be aligned with the actual needs of learners on the ground. In this light, the commission also intends to **review the mechanisms and practices related to the reporting and utilization of data** across the governance levels of the Department of Education (DepEd).

3. Current Situation

In *Making Education Work: An Agenda for Reform*, the first EDCOM highlighted the limited opportunities for large-scale assessment, which can be used as a basis for reforms. Thus, they recommended the development and administration of external national achievement tests that will be administered to learners at the end of Grades 4 and 6 and during the senior year of high school. Along with this, they endorsed the adoption of a policy of accountability that will reward schools, teachers, and learners for excellent achievement, as well as the regular assessment of learning with corresponding systems for remediation.

In the past three decades, this gap has been addressed with the introduction of various tests for both elementary and secondary levels. Currently, the DepEd administers national assessments at the end of every key stage (*see Table 1*). Guidelines on classroom assessment, grading, promotion, awards, and remediation through end-of-school-year classes have similarly been institutionalized through department orders and memoranda. The country has also participated in the most recent rounds of the PISA, the Southeast Asian Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM), and the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) to benchmark the implementation of the K to 12 curriculum.

TABLE 1: Administration of National Exit Assessments

Assessment	Schedule of Administration
Early Language, Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (ELLNA)	End of Key Stage 1 (Grades 1-3)
National Achievement Test (NAT)	End of Key Stage 2 (Grades 4-6) and Key Stage 3 (Grades 7-10)
Basic Education Exit Assessment (now also referred to as NAT 12)	End of Key Stage 4 (Grades 11-12)

Nevertheless, it appears that the availability of data from these assessments have not translated to improvements in teaching practices and learning outcomes. One key issue is the irregular administration of tests, particularly of the national system assessments. For instance, the conduct of the Early Language, Literacy, and Numeracy Assessment (ELLNA), as well as the exit assessments for Grades 6, 10, and 12 were delayed for both 2017 and 2018. These system assessments, along with the A&E test, were also postponed for 2020 and 2021, as the majority of the schools were still unable to implement face-to-face classes at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. These delays and postponements lead to gaps in the datasets and make it difficult to analyze trends. Additionally, regional and division

achievement tests were disallowed from 2013 to 2022 pursuant to DepEd Order No. 07 s. 2012; thus, regional and division offices had limited opportunities to validate and extract more granular data on student and school performance in the absence of regular national assessments. Thus, these various levels and types of system assessments should be curated to allow for effective measurement of learning outcomes, while also considering the time and resources required to develop and administer tests, as well as to process and distribute the results.

Moreover, policies on national system assessments provide limited details on the testing framework. In 2016, DepEd released the “Policy Guidelines on the National Assessment of Student Learning for the K to 12 Basic Education Program”, which describes the country’s national assessments, including the target clientele, purpose, design, and test administration procedure, among others for each test. While Section 7 of this policy outlines the general test development process, there are no public documents that communicate the subject-specific content topics and the skills that will be measured for each assessment. Among others, a high-achieving assessment system must “address the depth and breadth of standards as well as all areas of the curriculum, not just those that are easy to measure” (Darling-Hammond, 2010); this can only be ensured if the standards for each test will be clear to all stakeholders, especially to the teachers and the learners who will take the assessments.

Finally, the current policies on assessment do not provide specific guidelines on the distribution and utilization of results. Hence, education stakeholders in different areas of the country are unevenly informed about the status of basic education, making it difficult to collaborate on targeted interventions. These issues are even more pronounced in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), which has been excluded in the sampling frame for PISA, TIMSS, and SEA-PLM and therefore only has the national assessments as their basis for system performance.

4. Issues Under This Priority



ISSUE #1: Adequacy of the assessment system to track learners' progress and inform system reforms

Questions of the Standing Committee on the matter:

1. How can the measurements of learning outcomes be placed on a single scale and be used to track learners' progress from Kinder to Grade 12?
2. How does the current assessment system compare with other international exemplars?
3. How appropriate are the current assessments in determining what learners know and can do? What changes do we need to implement to ensure that we are assessing targeted outcomes?
4. What are the best modes of quality assurance and performance monitoring of learning outcomes, particularly for Senior High School?



ISSUE #2: Reporting and utilization of assessment results for improving learning outcomes

Questions of the Standing Committee on the matter:

1. Do all levels of (DepEd) governance have access to the data on learning measures? What are the challenges that the different levels of DepEd governance have encountered in accessing the data on learning outcomes?
2. Do they have the liberty to share assessment data with stakeholders? If not, what policies need to be in place to ensure that offices/ organizations get the data they need when they need it?
3. What practices do the schools/SDOs/ROs/CO employ to utilize assessment results in crafting learning improvement outcomes?
4. What strategies can be taken to ensure the timely distribution of the results?

5. How to Take Part in the Consultation

This green paper launches a 8-week public consultation. Submissions should be received by **July 25, 2023**. The Commission invites concerned stakeholders to submit their contributions using the electronic form, which can be found here: <https://bit.ly/EduKonsultasyon6>

The Commission will consider all contributions in its future work and provide feedback on the results of the consultations. All submissions will be made publicly available by the Commission unless the respondent indicates otherwise, or requests that part of the submission be kept confidential and acceptable reasons are provided.

The directions outlined in this paper are for consultation purposes only and no final decisions have been made by the Government on the reforms presented.

6. References

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- Darling-Hammond, L. (2010) *Performance Counts: Assessment Systems that Support High-Quality Learning*
- Department of Education (2015) *Policy Guidelines on Classroom Assessment for the K to 12 Basic Education Program*
- Department of Education Order (2016) *Policy Guidelines on the National Assessment of Student Learning for the K to 12 Basic Education Program*
- Department of Education Order (2017) *Policy Guidelines on System Assessment in the K to 12 Basic Education Program*
- Department of Education Order (2012) *Discontinuing the Conduct of the Regional and Division Achievement Tests*

SCAN TO PARTICIPATE!




About EDCOM 2

The Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM II) is a national commission tasked to undertake a comprehensive national assessment and evaluation of the performance of the Philippine education sector.



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