



# **DISCUSSION PAPER ON THE ENHANCED K+12 BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAM**

*DepEd discussion paper*  
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## THE ENHANCED K+12 BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAM

*“We need to add two years to our basic education. Those who can afford pay up to fourteen years of schooling before university. Thus, their children are getting into the best universities and the best jobs after graduation. I want at least 12 years for our public school children to give them an even chance at succeeding.”*

**– President Benigno S. Aquino III**

### RATIONALE

- 1 **Enhancing the quality of basic education in the Philippines is urgent and critical.** Thus, we have to come up with a proposal to enhance our basic education program in a manner that is least disruptive to the current curriculum, most affordable to government and families, and aligned with international practice.
- 2 **The poor quality of basic education is reflected in the low achievement scores of Filipino students.** Many students who finish basic education do not possess sufficient mastery of basic competencies. One reason is that students do not get adequate instructional time or time on task. The National Achievement Test (NAT) for grade 6 in SY 2009-2010 passing rate is only 69.21%. Although this is already a 24% improvement over the SY 2005-2006 passing rate, further reforms are needed to achieve substantial improvement. The NAT for high school is 46.38% in SY 2009-2010, a slight decrease from 47.40% in SY 2008-2009.
- 3 International tests results like 2003 TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) rank the Philippines 34<sup>th</sup> out of 38 countries in HS II Math and 43<sup>rd</sup> out of 46 countries in HS II Science; for grade 4, the Philippines ranked 23<sup>rd</sup> out of 25 participating countries in both Math and Science.<sup>i</sup> In 2008, even with only the science high schools participating in the Advanced Mathematics category, the Philippines was ranked lowest (**Table 1**).<sup>ii</sup>

- 4 **The congested curriculum partly explains the present state of education.**<sup>iii</sup> The current basic education is designed to teach a 12-year curriculum, yet it is delivered in just 10 years.

Table 1 Philippine Average TIMSS Scores				
	Scores	International Average	Rank	Participating Countries
<b>2003 Results</b>				
<b>Grade IV</b>				
<b>Science</b>	332	489	23	25
<b>Mathematics</b>	358	495	23	25
<b>HS II</b>				
<b>Science</b>	377	473	43	46
<b>Mathematics</b>	378	466	34	38
<b>2008 Results</b>				
<b>Advanced Mathematics</b>	355	500	10	10
<i>Source: TIMSS, 2003 and 2008</i>				

- 5 **This quality of education is reflected in the inadequate preparation of high school graduates for the world of work or entrepreneurship or higher education.** High school graduates also do not possess the basic competencies or emotional maturity essential for the world of work. About 70.9% of the unemployed are at least high school graduates and 80% of the unemployed are 15-34 years old (**Table 2**). While the availability of economic opportunities contributes to this, it also illustrates the mismatch in the labor and education markets. The World Bank Philippines Skills Report in 2009 reveals,

based on a survey of employers, serious gaps in critical skills of graduates such as problem-solving, initiative and creativity, and, to a lesser extent, gaps in job-specific technical skills.

Description	Proportion Unemployed	Total
15-24 years old	51.5%	80.6%
25-34 years old	29.1%	
High School Graduates	33.1%	70.9%
College Undergraduates	19.3%	
College Graduates	18.5%	

Source: NSO, LFS 2010

6 Further, most graduates are too young to enter the labor force. This implies that those who do not pursue higher education would be unproductive or be vulnerable to exploitative labor practices. Those who may be interested to set up business cannot legally enter into contracts.

7 **The current system also reinforces the misperception**

**that basic education is just a preparatory step for higher education.** For most parents, basic education is usually seen as a preparation for college education. Even this misperception falls short of expectations as most students usually have to take remedial and high school level classes in colleges and universities.

8 The short duration of the basic education program also puts the millions of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs)<sup>1</sup>, especially the professionals, and those who intend to study abroad at a disadvantage (**Table 3**). **Our graduates are not automatically recognized as professionals abroad.** Filipinos face mutual recognition problem in other countries that view the 10-year education program as insufficient. The Philippines is the only country in Asia and among the three remaining countries in the world that has a 10-year basic education program.<sup>2</sup> The Washington Accord<sup>iv</sup> prescribes 12-years basic education as an entry to recognition of engineering professionals. The Bologna Accord<sup>v</sup> requires 12 years of education for university admission and practice of profession in European countries.

Country	Basic Education Cycle Total
Brunei	12
Cambodia	12
Indonesia	12
Lao PDR	12
Malaysia	12
Myanmar	11
<b>Philippines</b>	<b>10</b>
Singapore	11
Thailand	12
Timor-Leste	12
Vietnam	12

Mongolia recently added grades to make basic education 12 years.

Source: Adapted from SEAMEO-INNOTECH

9 **More importantly, the short basic education program affects the human development of the Filipino children.** A Filipino is legally a child before he or she turns 18 years old. Psychologists and educators say that children under 18 are generally not emotionally prepared for entrepreneurship or employment or higher education disciplines.<sup>vi</sup>

<sup>1</sup> POEA estimates just over a million OFWs. However, there is also a large number of unregistered overseas workers.

<sup>2</sup> From UNESCO's 155 member countries, Djibouti and Angola are the other two countries that retain a 10-year pre-university education system.

- 10 **Cognizant of this urgent and critical concern and in line with the priorities of the Aquino Administration, the Department of Education is taking bold steps to enhance the basic education curriculum.** Hand in hand with vigorous efforts to address the input shortages, DepEd intends to raise the quality of basic education through the enhancement of the curriculum and the expansion of the basic education cycle.
- 11 The Enhanced K+12 Basic Education Program seeks to provide for a quality 12-year basic education program that each Filipino is entitled to. This is consistent with Article XIV, Section 2(1) of the 1987 Philippine Constitution which states that *“The State shall establish, maintain, and support a complete, adequate, and integrated system of education relevant to the needs of the people and society.”*
- 12 **K+12 means Kindergarten and the 12 years of elementary and secondary education.** Kindergarten refers to the 5-year old cohort that takes a standardized kinder curriculum. Elementary education refers to primary schooling that involves six or seven years of education; meanwhile secondary education refers to high school. Under the K+12, the intention is not just to add two years of schooling but more importantly to enhance the basic education curriculum.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 13 **As early as 1925, studies have observed the inadequacy of the basic education curriculum.**<sup>vii</sup> As one of the most well studied reforms, recommendations of either adding or restoring 7<sup>th</sup> grade or adding an extra year to basic education have been put forward.
  - a) **Monroe Survey (1925):** Secondary education did not prepare for life and recommended training in agriculture, commerce, and industry.
  - b) **Prosser Survey (1930):** Recommended to improve phases of vocational education such as 7<sup>th</sup> grade shopwork, provincial schools, practical arts training in the regular high schools, home economics, placement work, gardening, and agricultural education.
  - c) **UNESCO Mission Survey (1949):** Recommended the restoration of Grade 7.
  - d) **Education Act of 1953:** Under Section 3, mandates that “[t]he primary course shall be composed of four grades (Grades I to IV) and the intermediate course of three grades (Grade V to VII).”
  - e) **Swanson Survey (1960):** Recommended the restoration of Grade 7
  - f) **Presidential Commission to Survey Philippine Education (PCSPE) (1970):** High priority be given to the implementation of an 11-year program; Recommended program consists of 6 years of compulsory elementary education and 5 years of secondary education
  - g) **Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM) Report (1991):** If one year is to be added in the education program, it recommends one of two alternatives: Seven years of elementary education or Five years of secondary education
  - h) **Presidential Commission on Educational Reforms (2000):** Reform proposals include the establishment of a one-year pre-baccalaureate system that would also bring the Philippines at par with other countries

- i) **Presidential Task Force on Education (2008):** In discussions on a 12-year pre-university program, it is important “to specify the content of the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> years and benchmark these with programs abroad.”

## EDUCATION VISION

- 14 Every graduate of the Enhanced K+12 Basic Education Program is an empowered individual who has learned, through a program that is rooted on sound educational principles and geared towards excellence, the foundations for learning throughout life, the competence to engage in work and be productive, the ability to coexist in fruitful harmony with local and global communities, the capability to engage in autonomous critical thinking, and the capacity to transform others and one’s self.
- 15 **A Vision Grounded on Human Development:** The complete human development of every graduate is at the core of the Enhanced K+12 Basic Education Program. Every graduate holds an understanding of the world around and a zest for life-long learning, which addresses every child’s basic learning needs, including learning to learn, the acquisition of numeracy, literacies, and scientific and technological knowledge as applied to daily life.
- 16 The graduate also has the courage, the drive, and the relevant skills to engage in work and have a productive life. Every graduate will be able to embark in the modern world prepared to meet challenges.
- 17 Every graduate will be able to think for himself/herself and make sound decisions on the best courses of action to take in the different circumstances of his or her life. The graduate’s autonomous thinking is a product of the capability for comprehension and critical thinking as well as the full development of one’s unique personality.
- 18 Every graduate is inculcated with the respect for human rights and values, notably, *Maka-Diyos, Maka-tao, Makabansa, and Maka-Kalikasan*. This makes every graduate empowered to effect positive changes in his/her life and that of others.
- 19 **A Vision Achieved through an Enhanced Curriculum:** Every graduate of the Enhanced K+12 Basic Education Program will benefit from a reformed and updated curriculum that is focused on enabling every child to achieve mastery of core competencies and skills.
- 20 **A Vision that has Socio-Economic Relevance:** Every graduate of the Enhanced K+12 Basic Education Program is ready to take his or her place as a productive member of society. They are equipped to take on every opportunity in life he or she chooses—to find work, to engage in higher studies, or to start an entrepreneurial endeavor.
- 21 This vision is consistent with the definition of an educated Filipino as conceived in the Philippine Constitution and the World Declaration on Education for All.

## GOALS

- 22 **The goal of the Enhanced K+12 Basic Education Program is to create a functional basic education system that will produce productive and responsible citizens equipped with the essential competencies and skills for both life-long learning and employment.** The program will enhance the basic education system to full functionality to fulfill the basic learning needs of students. This is in line with the agenda of the President Aquino of having quality education as a long-term solution to poverty. In order to achieve these goals, the program has the following twin-objectives:
- a) **To give every student an opportunity to receive quality education based on an enhanced and decongested curriculum that is internationally recognized and comparable**
- Develop a curriculum that is rational and focused on excellence (decongested, uses research-based practices, uses quality materials and textbooks, etc.)
  - Produce a pool of highly qualified and adequately trained teachers.
  - Achieve high academic standards, especially in Mathematics, Science, and English at all levels
  - Produce graduates who are globally competitive and whose credentials are recognized internationally
- b) **To change public perception that high school education is just a preparation for college; rather, it should allow one to take advantage of opportunities for gainful career or employment and/or self-employment in a rapidly changing and increasingly globalized environment**
- Produce graduates who possess skills and competencies that will allow them to be productive members of society or pursue higher education.
  - Through coordination between the academic and business sectors, to change industry hiring practices taking into account the enhanced skills and competencies of K+12 graduates.

## BENEFITS OF ENHANCED BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAM

- 23 The Enhanced K+12 Basic Education Program will be instrumental in achieving the nation's vision of a high school graduate. The benefits of the K+12 proposal far outweigh the additional costs that will be incurred by both government and families.

### To Individuals and Families

- 24 **An enhanced curriculum will decongest academic workload**, giving students more time to master competencies and skills as well as time for other learning opportunities beyond the classroom, thus allowing for a more holistic development.
- 25 **Graduates will possess competencies and skills relevant to the job market.** The K+12 proposal will be designed to adjust and meet the fast-changing demands of society to prepare graduates with skills essential for the world of work.

- 26 **Graduates will be prepared for higher education.** Due to an enhanced curriculum that will provide relevant content and attuned with the changing needs of the times, basic education will ensure sufficient mastery of core subjects to its graduates such that graduates may opt to pursue higher education if they choose to.
- 27 **Graduates will be able to earn higher wages and/or better prepared to start their own business.** There is a strong correlation between educational attainment and wage structure and studies specific to the Philippine setting show that an additional year of schooling increases earnings by 7.5%. This should also allow greater access to higher education for self-supporting students.
- 28 **Graduates could now be recognized abroad.** Filipino graduates, e.g. engineers, architects, doctors, etc., could now be recognized as professionals in other countries. Those who intend to study abroad will meet the entrance requirements of foreign schools.

#### **For the Society and the Economy**

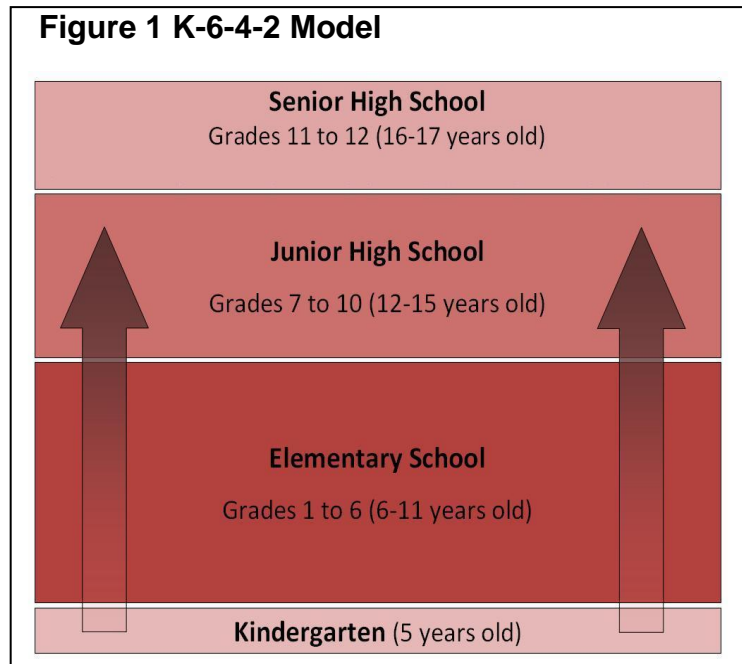
- 29 **The economy will experience accelerated growth in the long run.** The objective of the K+12 program is to improve quality of basic education. Several studies have shown that the improvements in the quality of education will increase GDP growth by as much as 2%. Studies in the UK, India and US show that additional years of schooling also have positive overall impact on society.
- 30 **The Philippine education system will be at par with international standards.** K+12 will facilitate mutual recognition of Filipino graduates and professionals following the Washington Accord and the Bologna Accord.
- 31 **A better educated society provides a sound foundation for long-term socio-economic development.** The Enhanced K+12 Basic Education system will contribute to the development of emotionally and intellectually mature individuals capable of pursuing productive employment or entrepreneurship or higher education disciplines.

### **ENHANCED K+12 BASIC EDUCATION MODEL**

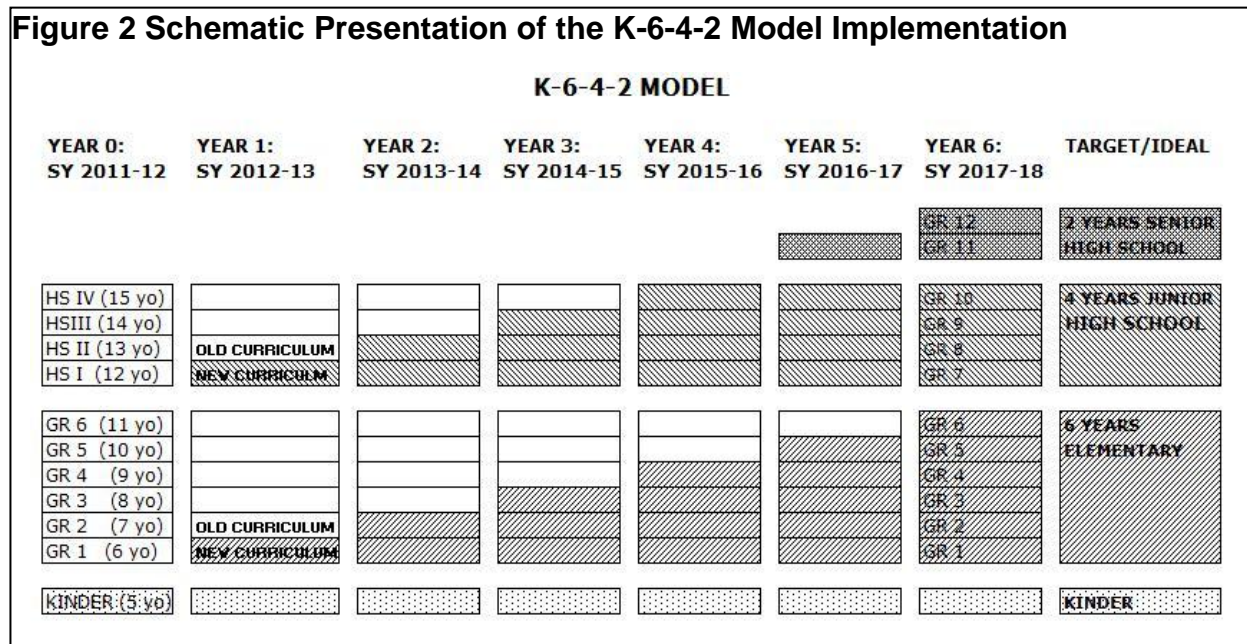
- 32 After considering various proposals and studies, the model that is currently being proposed by DepEd is the **K-6-4-2 Model**. **This model involves Kindergarten, six years of elementary education, four years of junior high school (Grades 7 to 10) and two years of senior high school (Grades 11 to 12).** The two years of senior high school intend to provide time for students to consolidate acquired academic skills and competencies. The curriculum will allow specializations in science and technology, music and arts, agriculture and fisheries, sports, business and entrepreneurship, etc.

33 The Figure 1 illustrates the K-6-4-2 model.

34 Kindergarten and 12 years of quality basic education is a right of every Filipino, therefore these should be provided by government for free in public schools. Those who go through the 12-year program will get an elementary diploma (6 years), a junior high school diploma (4 years), and a senior high school diploma (2 years). A full 12 years of basic education will eventually be required for entry into tertiary level education (entering freshmen by SY 2018-2019 or seven years from now).



35 Figure 2 shows the K-6-4-2 implementation plan.



36 The implementation of the K+12 program will be phased. Universal kindergarten will be offered starting SY 2011-2012. By SY 2012-2013, the new curriculum will be offered to incoming Grade 1 as well as to incoming junior high school students. The target of DepEd is to put in place the necessary infrastructure and other necessary arrangements needed to provide Senior High School (SHS) education by SY 2016-2017.

- 37 The SHS curriculum (which assumes already an unclogged basic education curriculum) will offer areas of specialization or electives such as science and technology, music and arts, agriculture and fisheries, sports, business and entrepreneurship, etc., and subjects for advanced placement.
- 38 In implementing the K-6-4-2 proposal, DepEd will take into account the issues and concerns of all stakeholders, including the high school graduates before 2016. The mechanics and other details of the transition plan will be threshed out with HEIs in coordination with CHED, TESDA and other critical stakeholders.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 39 **The enhancement of the curriculum is the central focus of the Enhanced K+12 Basic Education Program.** The curriculum enhancement will be designed in line with the desired competencies and skills of a K+12 graduate. The Department of Education will constitute a body to review the current basic education curriculum and detail the implementation plan.
- 40 **The development of tracks based on different competencies and/or student interest will be an integral component of the program.** Basic education program should develop tracks based on competencies to meet the country's varied human capital requirements, and to prepare students for productive endeavour. The SHS curriculum will offer areas of specialization or electives.
- 41 **As part of the bigger basic education reform, the enhancement of the basic education curriculum is being undertaken hand in hand with the vigorous efforts to ensure adequacy of inputs.** Expanding the education program (additional years of schooling) will be pursued mindful of the need to address the input shortages – teachers, classrooms, desks, water and sanitation, and quality textbooks. DepEd already included a provision for substantial physical requirements for 2011 budget, and is looking to introduce in subsequent years a budget that will constitute a significant increase not just in nominal terms but also in real terms.
- 42 **Change is two-fold: curriculum enhancement and transition management.** The intention of K+12 is not merely to add two years of schooling but more importantly, to enhance the basic education curriculum. DepEd is preparing a carefully sequenced implementation plan to ensure smooth transition with the least disruption.
- 43 **An open and consultative process will be adopted in the promotion of the Enhanced K+12 Basic Education Program.** In accordance with the "*Tao ang Boss*" principle, an open and consultative process will be adopted to ensure the successful development and implementation of the K+12 program.

## ACTION STEPS

- 44 **Creation of a Task Force.** To jumpstart the program, a Task Force will be formed to refine and detail the K+12 implementation model. The Task Force will be chaired by DepEd.
- 45 **Stakeholder Consultations.** Regional Consultations leading to a National Summit on Enhanced Basic Education will be conducted to solicit inputs and feedback on the proposed model. Consultations will cover all stakeholders (PTAs, public and private elementary and high schools, legislators, government agencies, business sector, education experts, teacher associations, students and education associations) and all regions. The nationwide consultation will start in October 2010 and the Education Summit will be held in the first quarter of 2011.
- 46 **Financial Study.** In parallel, a study will be undertaken to determine the financial implications (government, implied costs to households and private education) and the options for financing of the K+12 Basic Education model that will be adopted.<sup>3</sup> The financial study will also look into the GASTPE provision to accommodate senior high school students in private HEIs during the transition years and to review government support to education beyond GASTPE.
- 47 **Curriculum Review and Enhancement.** This will start with the development, validation, and nationwide implementation of the Enhanced Basic Education Curriculum for Grade I and HS I by SY 2011-2012. Senior High School curriculum shall be developed and validated, along with the development of appropriate learning resources.
- 48 **Teacher Training.** The training of Grade I and HS I teachers using the Enhanced Basic Education Curriculum will start in SY 2011-2012. The training of Grade 2 to 12 teachers will be implemented in subsequent years.
- 49 **Legislation.** DepEd will work for the passage of all necessary and related legislations on the K+12 Basic Education program.
- 50 **K+12 Information, Education and Communication.** All stakeholders shall be consulted. A massive public information campaign based on the 12-year design model and implementation scheme will be implemented.

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<sup>3</sup> The 2010 education budget is 11.35% of national budget and only 2.21% of GDP (benchmark is 6% of GDP).

## ENDNOTES

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<sup>i</sup> National center for Education Statistics. *Highlights from the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study 2003*. December 2004

<sup>ii</sup> Mullis, I.V.S., Martin, M.O., Robitaille, D.F., & Foy, P. (2009). Chestnut Hill, MA. *Trends in International Mathematics and Science Advanced 2008*.

<sup>iii</sup> Batomalaque, Antonio. *Basic Science Development Program of the Philippines for International Cooperation*. University of San Carlos.; Marinas, Bella and Ditapat, Maria. Philippines: Curriculum and Development. UNESCO International Bureau of Education

<sup>iv</sup> International Engineering Alliance. *The Washington Accord*. <http://www.washingtonaccord.org/Washington-Accord/FAQ.cfm> (Accessed 11 September 2010)

<sup>v</sup> Seamo-Innotech. *Additional Years in Philippine Basic Education: Rationale and Legal Bases*. Presentation to the Department of Education on 25 August 2010.

<sup>vi</sup> Presentation notes of Dr. Isagani Cruz, 28 September 2010.

<sup>vii</sup> SEAMEO-INNOTECH. *Additional Years in Philippine Basic Education: Rationale and Legal Bases*. Presentation to the Department of Education on 25 August 2010.

**For comments and suggestions, please send them via email to [kplus12.secretariat@gmail.com](mailto:kplus12.secretariat@gmail.com) or fax to (02) 636.4879**