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DIVISION MEMORANDUM

No. 074 s. 2016

February 19, 2016

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DepEd-MALAYBALAY CITY DIVISION

RELEASED

Date: FEB 19 2016 4:46

[Signature]

**DISSEMINATION OF DEPED REGIONAL MEMORANDUM NO. 33, s. 2016
(RESEARCH AGENDA)**

TO: Chief Education Supervisor & Staff, Curriculum Implementation Division
Chief Education Supervisor & Staff, Schools Governance & Operations Division
Public Schools District Supervisors/District OICs
Public Elementary/Secondary School Heads/Administrators
Unit/Section Heads
All Others Concerned
This Division

1. Enclosed is **DepED Regional Memorandum No. 33, s. 2016** entitled **Research Agenda** the content of which is self-explanatory.
2. Interested researcher may submit research proposal on or before **March 4, 2016** for consolidation and submission to PPRD, DepEd Region X, Attention: **ROSALIO P. ARANGCO**, SEPS- Planning & Research.
3. For wide dissemination and compliance.

[Signature]
EDILBERTO L. OPLENARIA, CESO VI
OIC-Schools Division Superintendent



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Department of Education
REGION X – NORTHERN MINDANAO
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REGIONAL MEMORANDUM
No. 93, s. 2016

DepED-X
Cagayan de Oro City


RESEARCH AGENDA

18 FEB 2016

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To: Schools Division Superintendents
Asst. Schools Division Superintendents
All Others Concerned

1. Pursuant to DepED Order No. 43, s. 2015 re: *Revised Guidelines for the Basic Education Research Fund (BERF)* and DepED Order No. 4, s. 2016 re: *Amendment to DepEd Order No. 43, s. 2015*, this Office hereby disseminates the Research Agenda.
2. To promote the culture of research in the region, the field is directed to focus on the **thematic areas**.
3. Submission of research proposals is extended until March 7, 2016 thru the **Regional Research Committee Secretariat Attention: Grace N. Quiblat, Education Program Specialist, PPRD**.
4. Wide dissemination of and strict compliance with this Memorandum is directed.


ALLAN C. FARNAZO
Regional Director

Enclosure: as stated
Reference: as stated
Allotment:
To be indicated in the perpetual index under the following subjects:
BERF Programs and Projects, Research
nbsm/pprd



RESEARCH AGENDA FOR BASIC EDUCATION PHILIPPINES, 2015-2020

CONTEXT

Learning is at the core of the Department of Education's (DepEd) mandate. However, DepEd is not only a learner-centered government institution; it is also an organization that constantly incorporates the learning process in implementing education policies and programs consistent with its vision, to wit:¹

"We dream of Filipinos who passionately love their country and whose values and competencies enable them to realize their full potential and contribute meaningfully to building the nation.

As a learner-centered public institution, the department of education continuously improves itself to better serve its stakeholders."

The Department sustains its progressive orientation by ensuring that its actions are informed by sound and relevant evidence from research. Evaluation research can draw lessons from past and existing education programs and identify ways to improve them. Policy studies can define problems and generate possible solutions. Social experiments can compare the effects of school interventions, and weed out ineffective from promising ones.

DepEd Order No. 13, series of 2015 established a policy development process within the Department. To reinforce the crucial role of research in DepEd, the Order also created the Policy Research and Development Division (PRD) under the Office of Planning Service. Consistent with the DepEd's legal mandate to undertake "national educational and research studies,"² the PRD is tasked, among others, to conduct, support, and manage empirical studies, and thereby promote evidence-based decision and policy making at various levels of the Department.³

While there are myriads of topics to probe in the education sector, the Department's research thrusts are strategically geared towards supporting its mission "to protect and promote the right of every Filipino to quality, equitable, culture-based, and complete basic education where:

Students learn in a child-friendly, gender-sensitive, safe, and motivating environment.

Teachers facilitate learning and constantly nurture every learner.

Administrators and staff, as stewards of the institution, ensure an enabling and supportive environment for effective learning to happen.

¹ Department of Education's Vision (2013).

² Chapter 1, Sec. 7 (5) Rep. Act No. 9155.

³ Department Order No. 13, series of 2015.

Family, community, and other stakeholders are actively engaged and share responsibility for developing lifelong learners.”⁴

Accordingly, priority themes surfaced as research areas that are most necessary and practical in light of the Department's vision and mission, as well as local and international developments in the sector. It is important to note that 2015 marked the end of the Education For All initiative and began the era of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Philippines is also in the middle of implementing the Kto12 Program and is gearing up for the first nationwide batch of Senior High School students in 2016.

These emergent priority themes are captured in the Research Agenda. In this document, the themes have been translated into questions to prompt scientific inquiry and yield significant findings that can improve the quality and delivery of basic education in the Philippines.

PROCESS

The working draft of the agenda emanated from a comprehensive problem tree analysis by PRD staff and other key informants from the Central Office. Executive pronouncements, official documents and professional expertise influenced the initial prioritization and analysis of the problem tree. As is standard, the problem tree was transformed into a solution tree that aimed to address the controllable aspects of the problems. The resulting tree was uneven in terms of depth, as can be expected, but it provided distinct directions for the Research Agenda.

PRD staff then synthesized the outputs with the help of external partners.⁵ Key clusters of solutions were identified and studied for appropriateness and completeness. After the key solution clusters were agreed upon, the depth of knowledge on these areas were assessed. Topics such as the impact of education programs that are already subject of prior or ongoing studies were set aside. For areas where knowledge is still unsatisfactory, research questions were formulated. The questions were then assessed to determine if these were purely informational in nature or represent genuine opportunities for deeper study.

The resulting document was then presented to a purposively-selected but nationally-representative group of key informants. This consultation process yielded numerous comments at various levels of implementation and sophistication. The team then processed all these comments and ultimately made the final decisions to prepare the document for presentation to the DepEd Executive Committee.

⁴ Department of Education's Vision (2013).

⁵ A team from the World Bank led the agenda development process with the support of colleagues from the Australia Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

The working document was presented to the ExeCom and a lively discussion ensued. All the points raised by the DepEd officials were considered and the document was again revised and prepared for approval. The Secretary of Education then signed this Research Agenda on _____.

PURPOSE

This Research Agenda is a list of priorities, not possibilities. It represents a compromise made up of research areas that are less known to the people involved compared to other concepts, and does not embody all researchable topics in basic education in the country. It identifies research topics that will fill in critical knowledge gaps and respond to pressing concerns in Philippine basic education, consistent with the Department's vision and mission and in line with local and international developments in the sector. By articulating specific study areas, this document seeks to:

- (1) Build on gains from existing research;
- (2) Generate new knowledge on less explored but priority fields of basic education;
- (3) Systematically focus the DepEd's attention to relevant education issues; and
- (4) Maximize available resources for research within and outside the Department.

The Research Agenda shall guide the PRD and other DepEd units in the central and field offices in gathering and examining evidence that can inform the Department's actions. In fact, regional and division research agendas are encouraged as long as these fit seamlessly into the national agenda.

Further, this document is expected to drive the utilization of the Basic Education Research Fund (BERF),⁶ the Department's institutionalized facility for funding internal and external research and studies on basic education. The Research Agenda spells out a range of topics that can be subject of BERF proposals at the national, region, division, district and school levels. Importantly, the agenda ensures that BERF-supported initiatives respond to the knowledge needs of the sector.

The DepEd recognizes that basic education research is not the Department's task alone. The Department thus hopes that even outside of BERF, the Research Agenda can inspire and guide other constituents and partners to undertake empirical studies to better understand and advance basic education in the country. For instance, educators can apply the research agenda to reflect on their experiences towards improving their craft. Academics and researchers can find in the agenda prospects for scholarly study and discourse. For institution leaders and administrators, the agenda presents trends and issues that can provoke new insights and practical solutions upon investigation. Advocates can rely on the agenda to argue and strengthen their cause.

⁶ Department Order No. 43, series of 2015.

Importantly, the Research Agenda can orient and advise policy makers on matters that necessitate policy actions.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The DepEd adheres to the following principles in the conduct of basic education research:

Excellence

Given the influence of research on education decisions and actions, quality research is expected. Excellence demands that the inquiry is relevant and researchable; methods applied are appropriate; and findings are logical, coherent, and supported by data. Although the research design may vary depending on the nature of the study, researchers must apply rigorous and empirical methods grounded on scientific inquiry.

Integrity

The highest ethical standards shall be applied to basic education research. Whether or not human subjects are involved, researchers must ensure that the study will not cause people harm. Research participants should be informed about the general purpose of the study and should not be exposed to unusual risk. Consistent with the principle of excellence, integrity also requires honesty and accuracy in the collection, analysis and reporting of data.

Openness

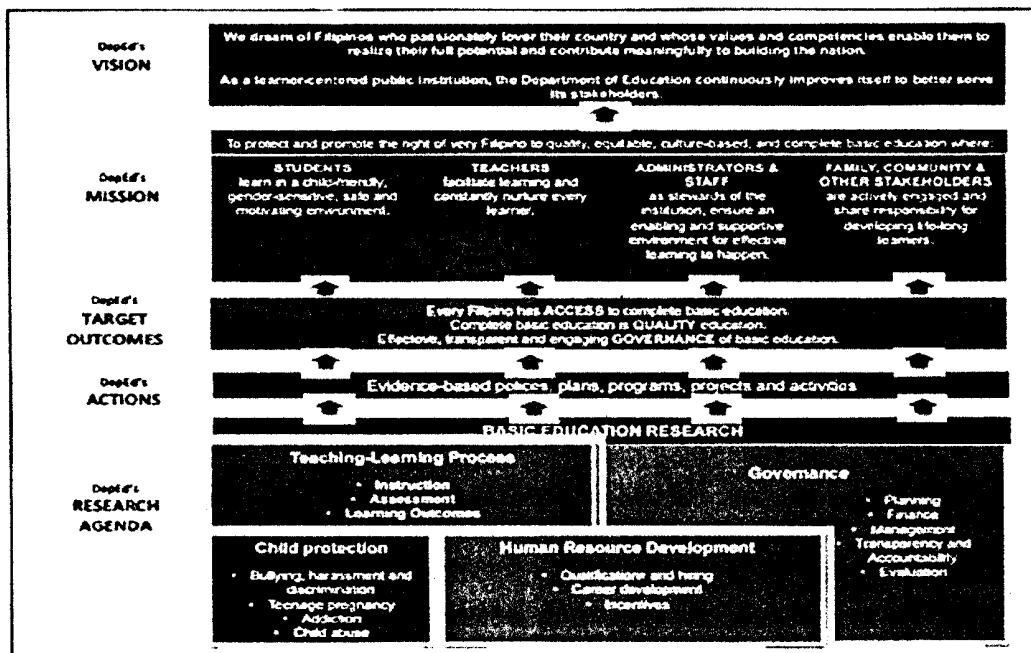
DepEd acknowledges the importance of collaboration in its work, including in research. Openness emphasizes the need to engage more partners in basic education research and to employ multi-disciplinary perspectives. The same principle likewise ensures truthful and timely dissemination of research results to DepEd and other stakeholders, for appreciation, application as well as peer evaluation.

RESEARCH THEMES & QUESTIONS

Based on a survey of the agency's policies and programs, review of literature, and nationwide consultations with representatives of DepEd central and field offices, four research themes or basic education topics were identified. It is expected that the findings generated from each theme will fuel evidence-based actions that strategically support the attainment of the Department's vision and mission, as well as target outcomes of ensuring that: (1) every Filipino has access to complete basic education; (2) complete basic education is quality education; and (3) effective, transparent and engaging governance of basic education.⁷ (see Figure 1)

⁷ Department of Education's Vision (2013).

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Department of Education Research Agenda



Arguably, studies on all themes taken together support the DepEd's general mandate. However, it is evident each theme has unique contributions to the Department's target outcomes and mission. For instance, focus on Child Protection directly enhances the access outcome, while the Teaching-Learning process squarely impacts on the quality of education. The Governance theme ties in with the same outcome, while the Human Resource Development has implications on all targets.

In the same manner, the identified themes dovetail with the Department's mission, particularly its four key stakeholders. The Teaching-Learning process responds to students' and teachers' needs. Child protection focuses on the students. Human Resource Development addresses concerns of teaching and non-teaching staff, while Governance centers on administration and stakeholder engagement.

Each of the research themes are described below with a brief discussion of their general background and coverage. The themes have been expanded into research questions to focus the investigation and shape the design of a study. Sub-areas have been identified to point to more specific topics of interest, and not necessarily to limit the scope of the general research question. Explanation

is provided to offer context on the intention of the research questions and subtopics.

While the themes and questions appear as stand-alone areas of inquiry, the Research Agenda recognizes that many of the listed concerns cut across themes and relate to each other. Hence, it is possible to combine or reformulate research questions. Moreover, all questions are illustrative and need not be phrased verbatim to allow flexibility in the research design. Questions serve as concrete starting points for discussion and may thus evolve upon further analysis.

Theme 1: Teaching-learning process

As the national institution mandated to provide quality basic education to all Filipinos, DepEd seeks to ensure that learning outcomes are achieved through a process that maximizes the abilities of teachers and of all kinds of learners. This theme thus covers the actors, activities and fundamental aspects of teaching and learning in various contexts. Specifically, the Research Agenda looks into the implementation, best practices, and facilitating and hindering factors in three sub-areas, namely: instruction, assessment, and learning outcomes.

Instruction incorporates strategies to enhance teaching especially of the new K to 12 Curriculum. Particular attention is given to teaching various subjects in light of reforms under the K to 12 Program, and the growing importance of honing well-rounded learners able to compete in the current as well as in future economies. There is likewise interest in the implementation of Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) and on how it contributes to learning.

Key topics under **Instruction** include, but are not limited to the following:

Main research questions	Important sub-areas / topics	Explanation
What teaching and learning strategies can teachers apply to ensure inclusive learning?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual learning styles • Multiple intelligences • Inclusive education • Child-centered approach • Resources and materials • Emerging good practices 	DepEd is interested in teaching strategies that work effectively and efficiently in various settings. The intent is not to find an education "silver bullet", but rather to generate a comprehensive menu of strategies for any given situation. The topic also has a comparative dimension because most teaching strategies possibly produce positive results, yet not all of them have the same magnitude of effect. The sustainability of the strategies also needs to be considered given the unique situation in every place of learning.

Main research questions	Important sub-areas / topics	Explanation
What factors affect the teacher's delivery of the curriculum?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various subjects (English, Science, Math, etc.) • High order thinking skills • Spiral progression • Class size • Contact time • Materials and resources 	In a situation where the curriculum is standardized and teachers meet minimum requirements, the inner workings of the education "black box" still needs to be unbundled. Nonetheless, the Kto12 program consists of many moving parts, at least in its early stages, and represents various new areas for study. International studies are available on these moving parts, but a relevant and unifying theme specific to the Philippines might not yet exist.
How can electronic gadgets and other forms of information and communications technology (ICT) be effectively used to enhance the teaching-learning process?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computerization • ICT classrooms • Electronic tablets • Cost-benefit analysis • Issues and concerns 	It is now common belief that ICT will help improve learning, even if global and local evidence is still uneven and many experts continue to advice caution when dealing with ICTs. DepEd is interested to find out how ICT can be used properly in the Philippine setting.
What role does language play in the teaching-learning process?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mother tongue • Multi-lingual education • Emerging good practices • Issues and concerns • Evaluation 	DepEd issued a landmark Mother tongue-based Multilingual Education policy. ⁸ A few years into its implementation, the discussion now focuses on two things: the effectiveness of this policy and how best to implement it moving forward. Localized research on the relationship of the policy and learning in specific languages and dialects are also important to ascertain whether gains are systematic or uneven.

DepEd has defined the official Kto12 Assessment Framework.⁹ It lays out current policies and shows the current thinking on the matter. As a key component of the teaching-learning process, Assessment requires further study to provide more information on the details of its framework and its implementation.

Key topics under **Assessment** include, but are not limited to the following:

⁸ Department Order No. 16, series of 2012.

⁹ Department Order No. 8, series of 2015.

Main research questions	Important sub-areas / topics	Explanation
For students undergoing Alternative Delivery Modes (ADMs), Alternative Learning System (ALS) and other special programs, what role does Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) play?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of Prior Learning • Alternative Delivery Modes • Alternative Learning System • Special programs 	DepEd also aims to serve a subgroup of the population who are more suited for (or more interested in) education outside the formal classroom setting. A key part of the success of these programs is RPL, but it is still uncertain how well this is done nationwide.
What factors affect the implementation of formative assessment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom assessment • Emerging good practices 	Other than testing, DepEd is interested in the role assessment plays in improving learning and how this can be properly done in various learning situations. There are numerous studies on this topic both locally and abroad, but the Kto12 reform necessitates deeper investigation on the matter.
What is the best way to benefit from all the testing being done in the Philippine education system?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom tests • National tests • International test • System diagnostics • Aptitude tests • Cost-benefit analysis 	Testing is another educational topic that has been widely studied globally. It would be important to find out the correct system for all these tests in the country and if there are more ways to use the enormous data generated by these tests.

The Research Agenda further examines Learning Outcomes by understanding what drives their achievement, and by assessing and comparing the progress of learners across subjects, grade levels, and geographical regions.

Key topics under Learning Outcomes include, but are not limited to the following:

Main research questions	Important sub-areas / topics	Explanation
How does the achievement of expected learning outcomes vary per region and/or division, including ARMM?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional and division variation • Role of leaders (Director, Superintendent, Supervisors and Principals) • Geographic, political and economic factors 	With the assumption that there is no birth pattern that would endow any region in the country with more intelligent and diligent students, other factors cause the variation in learning outcomes across areas. DepEd does not have control over all these factors, but recognizing them might help improve the quality of service delivery. This is another widely studied area both here and abroad, but deeper insight into the Philippine context seems warranted.

Main research questions	Important sub-areas / topics	Explanation
What factors within the education system affect the achievement of learning outcomes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialization • Training • Experience • Materials • Class size • Language • Assessment • Resources • Governance 	There are many factors that affect attainment of learning outcomes, all documented in various studies globally. What will be useful this time would be in-depth analysis of these factors, and the design of policies and programs to ensure support for factors that facilitate achievement of learning outcomes in the Philippine setting.

Theme 2: Child protection

DepEd's learner-centered approach recognizes that a person's condition can significantly affect the achievement of learning outcomes. While DepEd may not have the direct mandate and resources to address many of the social, economic, and personal issues of each learner, the Department is committed to ensure their well-being, particularly in situations where the possible harm can occur in school or can seriously disrupt their studies.

The Department's commitment warrants a separate section on child protection, particularly to address reported incidents of bullying, teen-age pregnancy, addictive behaviors, and child labor. While a number of laws and Department Orders are in place to address these, there is need for in-depth studies on their prevalence and effects, as well as on the effectiveness of previous interventions, and the potential of new approaches to better protect learners in schools.

Main topics under **Child Protection** include, but are not limited to the following:

Main research questions	Important sub-areas / topics	Explanation
How can DepEd best prevent bullying?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types • Prevalence • Effects • Policies • Programs • Implementation 	At the very least, bullying makes the school an unattractive place for the victim. So does any other form of harassment or discrimination. These affect both attendance and learning and DepEd is interested in solving these problems.
How can DepEd help reduce the incidence of teenage pregnancy and still provide attractive learning options for those involved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Factors • Reproductive health education • Supportive environment • Policies • Programs • Implementation 	Teenage pregnancy is a major interruption to the lives of persons and families involved. It sets both the personal and professional (including economic) trajectories of the actors in a different direction. Continued education can help address this long-run issue and DepEd should be ready to provide the best options and support to those involved.

Main research questions	Important sub-areas / topics	Explanation
How can DepEd effectively help reduce addiction among its students and staff?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smoking • Drugs • Alcohol • Gambling • Gaming • Policies • Programs • Implementation 	Any form of vice diverts attention and resources from learning (or service delivery) to non-productive activities. Curtailing addictive behaviors can be a very daunting task due to their complexity and the amount of resources required. But DepEd should be ready to help address these challenges, especially since addiction negatively affects both the addict and the people within the social environment.
How can DepEd best support victims of child abuse?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child labor • Physical and verbal abuse 	Attendance and learning will not take place if the student is physically and/or emotionally in pain. Again, much of the phenomenon is beyond DepEd's control but the price of inaction might be steeper than any extra effort the Department might invest in.

Theme 3: Human resource development

DepEd carries out its mandate through a huge workforce composed of the biggest population of civil servants and the staff complement of private schools. This theme thus centers on how the Department can nurture such vast human capital involved in delivering basic education.

Teachers from public and private schools are primary subjects due to their front line role in reaching out to learners. Research questions probe into the teachers' existing qualifications and competency requirements vis-à-vis the needs of the K to 12 and special education programs such as ALS. The topics extend to teacher education institutions particularly on ways to upgrade preservice preparation, as well as on DepEd's role in providing continuous quality training.

Key topics under Teacher Qualifications and Hiring include, but are not limited to the following:

Main research questions	Important sub-areas / topics	Explanation
What teacher qualifications and competencies are required to effectively deliver each of the subjects of the K to 12 Curriculum?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCBTS • Various subjects (English, Science, Math, etc.) • Years of experience • Specialization • Academic skills • Inter-personal skills 	The Kto12 program has huge implications on the teaching profession. The new Senior High School (SHS) level with various tracks of specialization and the rest of the revised curriculum requires specific teaching competencies. With the massive hiring that DepEd is undertaking to supply adequate number of teachers for the program, it is important to know what to look for in potential public school teachers.

Main research questions	Important sub-areas / topics	Explanation
What qualifications and competencies are required for teaching in other specialized basic education programs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive Education • Indigenous People • Special Education • Muslim Education • Alternative Learning System • Alternative Delivery Modes 	Aside from catering to the mainstream population, DepEd also aims to serve those in difficult situations. Teaching these target groups may require different strategies and skills. Moreover, different personal and professional perspectives might be required to implement and excel in such programs.
How can pre-service teacher education be improved to develop teachers who can effectively deliver the K to 12 Curriculum?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher Education Institutions • Core courses • Non-core but important courses • New courses 	DepEd has no direct control over TEIs but it can use various channels to influence how these institutions develop future teachers. A new program like Kto12 requires new thinking way before entering government service. Preparation should begin as early as pre-service education and DepEd, as the biggest client of these TEIs, is in the best position to define this new perspective.
What are the issues and challenges in hiring public school teachers and how can these be addressed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Localization law • Ranking system • Natural Vacancies • Planned positions • NOSCA • Political influence • Competition between public and private sector • Emigration and/or foreign contractual work 	Governments face various challenges in implementing their own lofty employment standards. It is important to know the practical problems hounding the implementation of teacher hiring standards so that the public sector attracts the best people into the teaching profession.

There is likewise keen interest on the career development of both teaching and non-teaching personnel in order to surface and address their capacity-building needs, and examine various dimensions of and determinants of their professional growth. Specific questions attempt to validate reported challenges to their personnel movement and progression.

Key topics under Career Development include, but are not limited to the following:

Main research questions	Important sub-areas / topics	Explanation
How can public sector hiring, retention, assessment, development, promotion, and recognition be enhanced to support DepEd employees in different career stages in support of the implementation of the K to 12 Program?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career path • Personal considerations • Quota system • Item reclassification • Mentoring • Training • Further study • Patronage and corruption 	Over the course of a DepEd employee's career, numerous opportunities come and go and decisions regarding these opportunities will be made depending on many personal and professional factors. Better understanding of these factors will not just enable DepEd to take better care of its employees, but also provide a better environment for services to be delivered and, ultimately, for learning to happen.
What kind of capacity-building activities are necessary and most effective in improving the work performance of teachers and other DepEd personnel?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall training program • Specialized training program • Selection process • Training strategy • Practical application • Monitoring and Evaluation • Feedback and redesign 	Training in the Department represents two things: first, a chance for employees to gain more knowledge and perform their work better and second, a chance for DepEd to provide career advancement opportunities for all of its members. A deeper analysis of DepEd's training system will help ensure that the system is effective, efficient and fair.

Understanding career development also includes studying the nature and effectiveness of existing employee incentives. The Department seeks to explore monetary and non-monetary strategies as well as non-traditional mechanisms to keep its personnel, especially teachers, motivated to perform well.

Key topics under **Incentives** include, but are not limited to the following:

Main research questions	Important sub-areas / topics	Explanation
What is the most appropriate incentive structure for all kinds of DepEd employees?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professionalization • Salary • Benefits • Incentives • Non-cash compensation • Protection and safeguards • Grievance 	DepEd employees, like other government employees, are governed by national laws on public sector pay. However, it is important to assess the effectiveness of these existing laws and see if there is enough flexibility in the current system to amend and/or improve incentives and ultimately, motivation and performance. Special attention is also given to circumstances wherein existing policies might expose DepEd employees to become possible victims of harassment or exploitation.

Theme 4: Governance

Managing the largest budget and workforce towards educating the nation's future requires efficient and effective operations. The governance theme of the Research Agenda underscores DepEd's commitment to ensure that its structure, systems and processes contribute to the successful achievement of basic education outcomes.

DepEd has already issued internal guidance (DO 13, s2015) for the issuance of effective and efficient policies. With this in place, DepEd's next concern is to plan for implementation. Because it governs a very large sector with complex interrelationships, DepEd often encounters challenges in its planning process. This section deals with standards and policies that need to be thought out properly so that the goals of the Department are achieved.

Key topics under Planning include, but are not limited to the following:

Main research questions	Important sub-areas / topics	Explanation
<p>How can DepEd effectively and efficiently determine its requirements for critical education resources for schools, community learning centers, and other special programs?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning standards • Responsiveness and flexibility • Typologies and classifications • Critical resources • Teachers • Classrooms • Furniture • Textbooks • Equipment • Water and sanitation • Hygiene facilities • Operating budget • Disasters 	<p>As of 2015, DepEd has one large Central Office, 17 Regional Offices, 219 Division Offices and over 47,000 public schools with over 720,000 employees serving over 24 million students of various circumstances per year. Such scale carries with it differing local contexts and operational challenges. Any attempt to standardize resource allocation will be difficult yet it is crucial to ensure all schools meet the minimum capacity and service standards for quality education.</p>
<p>How can DepEd improve its overall planning process?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeframe • Requirements • Participation • Consolidation 	<p>Aside from planning standards, the overall planning process also needs to be improved. With the scale of DepEd, the effectiveness and efficiency of the process is usually sub-optimal. This results to discontent from some sectors of the bureaucracy because of lack of funds, overstated targets, or both.</p>

After planning, the oft-reported tedious process for securing and disbursing funds is also an area of study. Relevant research includes how to balance efficiency in the budget releases with government budget and accounting requirements. Lastly, it highlights the need to closely examine the negative

effects of poor financial management not just on program managers, but also on the intended beneficiaries.

Key topics under Finance include, but are not limited to the following:

Main research questions	Important sub-areas / topics	Explanation
How can DepEd improve its process for the efficient acquisition and disbursement of program and project funds, consistent with applicable government issuances on budgeting and accounting?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies and practices • Issues and challenges • Timeframe • Budget defense and Complete Staff Work • Budget execution • Evaluation and policy amendment 	Over the years, considerable progress has been made in augmenting resources for basic education. The Department of Budget and Management and Congress have been supportive in meeting the DepEd's stated requirements. However, the budgeting process is still cumbersome and very complex. The same observation applies to the use of these funds, which are governed not just by DepEd policies, but also by policies from government oversight agencies.
How does financial performance affect key stakeholders in DepEd?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund managers • Intended beneficiaries • Accountability • Conscientiousness 	DepEd's hard-fought allocation is not always maximized because of implementation bottlenecks. This results to low utilization of financial resources as well as forgone, delayed or otherwise sub-optimal programs, projects and activities. This has caused uproar both from those who failed to receive the funds and from those who receive program funds too late in the year. It is time to clearly measure the effects of such inefficient practices.

Program management focuses on how DepEd can best develop, implement, monitor and evaluate programs, projects and activities. However, evaluation is discussed in a separate section. This section focuses on the core implementation phases of program management. After its core mandate of teaching, program management is essentially the next most important function of DepEd.

Main research questions	Important sub-areas / topics	Explanation
How effective is DepEd's brand of program management and how can it be further improved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program and project development • Operational efficiency • Coordination and provision of technical assistance • Monitoring and feedback • Capability building • Personnel selection • Support structures and processes 	Program management is one of DepEd's main functions. Accordingly, DepEd personnel should be effective program managers in order to perform their work properly. Unfortunately, there has been no formal training on the skill set so far, and much of the existing knowledge and practices have been brought in by employees themselves or were learned on-the-job over the years of implementation. Deeper analysis of the program management environment in DepEd is warranted especially during this period of major reform.

The Governance theme further encompasses transparency and accountability in various levels of the DepEd's operations. At the central and field offices, the Department would like to consider ways to incorporate in the budget process accountability for the achievement of targets and outcomes. Studies can also delve on how mechanisms such as the bulletin board and grievance procedures promote transparency and accountability in schools.

Key topics under Transparency and Accountability include, but are not limited to the following:

Main research questions	Important sub-areas / topics	Explanation
What practices promote transparency and accountability in school operations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accounting and auditing rules and regulations • Procurement law • Transparency Board • Implementing units • Fiscal autonomy • Manpower and resource requirements 	DepEd is continuously working with financial oversight agencies in the battle against graft and corruption. However, the culture of transparency and accountability is still uneven throughout the country. Even in places that claim or seem to be transparent, empirical evidence on the effectiveness of these accountability measures are unclear. As support for operations, this area merits extensive study like other aspects of basic education governance.

Main research questions	Important sub-areas / topics	Explanation
How can schools effectively address grievances from teachers, learners, parents and the community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies and practices • Nature / types • Issues and challenges • Resolution 	On paper, all government offices have some form of grievance redress system available to employees. Unfortunately, availing of these systems take considerable amount of time and resources from the complainant / victim. In addition, social and cultural norms in the country often render these systems ineffective because of the ensuing pressures. Further study is needed to improve such <i>status quo</i> .

A separate section is dedicated to evaluation, which by itself offers a multitude of agenda topics. In this document, monitoring is treated as part of management, as it provides timely information for periodic decisions that need to be made while implementing various activities. Evaluation, on the other hand, aims to determine if the undertaking produced its intended result in the best way possible so that decisions can be made whether to continue, revise or stop the said undertaking at the appropriate stages of the project cycle.

Key topics under **Evaluation** include, but are not limited to the following:

Main research questions	Important sub-areas / topics	Explanation
How effective have selected DepEd policies been in meeting their stated objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RA 9155 • Private school engagement • Private sector partnerships 	The Congress and the Department have issued numerous policies affecting basic education and many of these have been in place for years without the benefit of a formal evaluation. Empirical studies to prove their effectiveness and usefulness can guide policy makers' future decisions.

Main research questions	Important sub-areas / topics	Explanation
<p>How effective have key DepEd programs, projects and activities been in meeting their stated objectives?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Resource Training and Development Fund • Every Child A Reader Program • Multi-grade schools • Regional Science High Schools • Special Science Elementary Schools • Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Program • Strengthened Technical-Vocational Education Program • Adopt-a-School Program • Library Hub • MTB-MLE • Alternative Delivery Modes • School-based initiatives implemented in various versions in different divisions 	<p>DepEd has been implementing numerous programs, projects and activities for a long time and most of these have not been systematically and credibly evaluated. Aside from enabling improved implementation, evaluations may also serve as basis for education investments in the future.</p>
<p>How can DepEd fully benefit from the abundance of evaluation outputs and expertise from within and outside the Department?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research utilization • Partnerships and joint undertakings • Issues and concerns • Roles and responsibilities • Capability building • Incentives 	<p>Assessments and evaluations are increasingly gaining popularity in the country, taking after major developments at the international level. DepEd staff have some expertise in evaluation, while local and international experts are always keen to provide technical assistance. So far DepEd is not maximizing all these opportunities and it is important to know how to improve this current situation.</p>