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Republika ng Pilipinas  
**Kagawaran ng Edukasyon**  
Tanggapan ng Pangalawang Kalihim

**AIDE MEMOIRE**

March 17, 2021

**RESPONSE TO THE PRIVILEGE SPEECH  
OF SAGIP PARTY-LIST RODANTE MARCOLETA  
ON DEPED'S VANS & COMPUTERIZATION PROGRAM**

**I. BACKGROUND**

On March 15, 2021, SAGIP Party-list Representative Rodante D. Marcoleta delivered a privilege speech titled '*Quo Vadis DepEd?*' at the House of Representatives in which he raised several issues about the Department of Education (DepEd).

Quo vadis is a Latin phrase meaning "*where are you going?*"

This Aide Memoire is answering the points and questions posed by the lawmaker that are under the scope of the Office of the Undersecretary for Administration (OUA).

These are the subject matters on the DepEd service vans and the DepEd Computerization Program (DCP).

**II. DEPED 4X4 PICKUPS AND PASSENGER VANS**

Rep. Marcoleta alleged that "*In the disposition of more than 200 passenger vans procured by DepEd, the Office of the Undersecretary for Administration issued two successive memoranda that made it mandatory for Regional Director, Schools Division Superintendent, Regional and Division Supply Officers and Drivers to attend a Ceremonial Turn Over of Passenger Vans. Both memoranda reminded all concerned recipients to be present in the said event because 'those who are absent or fail to claim the vans during the turn over will forfeit their service vehicle.'*"

These statements are absolutely FALSE.



OUA is presenting the following facts:

The OUA Memorandum on the turnover ceremony issued on 21 September 2020 fully considered the high possibility of the COVID-19 spreading in any gathering during the pandemic.

Thus, it protected and upheld each person's right to health and well-being. This was by announcing that the activity would be shown simultaneously on the internet via various online platforms so that participants could watch it from the safety of their homes.

The memorandum titled '*National Turnover Ceremony of Alloted Laptops, Drones and Vehicles*' was sent to all DepEd Regional Directors and Schools Division Superintendents of the National Capital Region (NCR), Calabarzon and Mimaropa. It emphasized that '*The event in the Central Office shall be held simultaneously via Teams/Zoom to be attended by the Honorable Secretary and the members of the Execom.*'

In requesting for the physical presence of the receiver of the passenger van, the word '*expected*' was used. There was a presumption that very limited number of persons from the Regional and Division Offices would be on hand to pick up the vehicles so that the Central Office (CO) could perform the 'physical turnover' of the units.

The memorandum was, at the very least, advising that the person who would show up should be an "*authorized personnel*," specifically the "*Supply Officer*," to take custody of the units.

It was just impossible for the vehicles to roll out of the CO compound and head to the field offices without human drivers. Thus, there was a need for them to physically report to the CO.

Contrary to the claim of Rep. Marcoleta, the ceremony was not in any way accompanied by threats of forfeiture.

### **III. DEPED COMPUTERIZATION PROGRAM (DCP)**

In his speech, Rep. Marcoleta quoted heavily from COA Audit Reports of 2017 and 2018, about the DCPs from 2015 to 2018.

The observations of the Rep. Marcoleta, which are based on Audit Observations that were made three and four years ago, are duly noted. Many of these situations that were noticed in the past have already been resolved.



As of this year, a total of 740,352 laptops, thin clients, computers and tablet PCs have already been completely delivered. This covers the funds for all of FY 2016, FY 2017 and FY 2018.

Another set of 211,344 devices from the FY 2019 fund and 39,134 from the FY 2020 fund are undergoing deliveries.

The schedule was delayed because of the travel restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Recent deliveries have increased the percentage of schools with ICT equipment to 91%.**

**Once the FY 2019 and FY 2020 projects are delivered, the percentage of schools with ICT equipment will further rise to 98.7%.**

Booking up of the inventories has been made a requirement for payment of the suppliers.

Non-readiness of schools to receive ICT equipment has been addressed by the new packages, which are composed of tablet PCs and laptops contained in storage carts.

These new packages can be moved from room to room and do not need a dedicated computer laboratory.

Defective ICT packages are being reported to the suppliers on a monthly basis. Suppliers are required to resolve all pending issues and complaints before the retention money of the project is released to them.

The use of the ICT equipment is being backed by massive training programs being conducted by the Department on Education Technology (EdTech).

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

OUA hopes it has extensively and satisfactorily responded to the issues and concerns raised by Rep. Marcoleta.

The undersigned welcomes the chance to communicate matters pertaining to Department's computerization program, the transportation for DepEd officials and personnel, as well as its other important programs and projects.

In his speech, Rep. Marcoleta asked "*Quo vadis DepEd? (Where are you going, DepEd)?*"



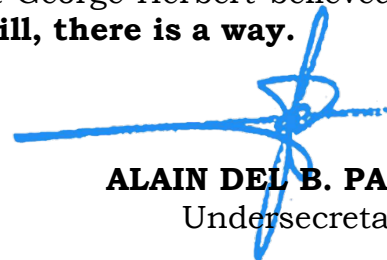
At this time, one may profoundly say, the Department is at a point when it is travelling into an uncharted territory, given the great uncertainties that the coronavirus brought upon the lives of people around the world, including educators, parents and learners.

But through this voyage of discovery, DepEd is guided by a clear mission – the creed of Secretary Leonor Magtolis Briones – that “*education must continue at all cost,*” even during a world war as she had experienced, or a pandemic.

That is the forward direction where the Department is taking, carrying on with the conviction that no learner shall be left behind.

The exploration is filled with obstacles and trials, just like all meaningful journeys.

However, as 17<sup>th</sup> Century English poet George Herbert believed, “***Ubi enim voluntas est viam***” – **Where there is a will, there is a way.**

  
**ALAIN DEL B. PASCUA**  
Undersecretary



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## **QUO VADIS DEPED?**

**Privilege Speech of Rep. Rodante D. Marcoleta**

March 15, 2021

Mr. Speaker, it was General George Patton, American military hero, who said something about planning. He said: “One does not plan and then try to make circumstances fit those plans. One tries to make plans fit the circumstances.”

But the worse kind, Mr. Speaker, is when one pretends to have a plan when there is none and does nothing—not even in trying to make the circumstances fit the semblance of any plan. This, Mr. Speaker, is how the sad state of the Department of Education may be described today.

In the last budget hearing several months ago, this representation asked DepEd how many self-learning modules (SLMs) did they actually print for the 22 million learners from K to 12. They did not have a ready answer, Mr. Speaker. When asked how many modules were produced in the regions, the provinces, and the districts, DepEd could not find a credible answer. When asked as to how many modules were printed per competency after reducing more than 14,000 sets of competencies to only 5,689 most essential learning competencies, the more they could not volunteer a definite answer. This is so because the teachers were the ones tasked to do the job instead, which is why and for the most part, they practically begged for supplies, printers, and other IT equipment because the fund downloaded to their respective areas proved insufficient.

After grappling with their tentative estimates, DepEd came out with an arbitrary number: 1.2 billion modules. Mr. Speaker, even if we believe this number to be true, by assuming 30 pages per module, they will need 36 billion sheets of bond paper to print these. With a conservative estimate of ₱50 cents copying cost per page alone, DepEd needed ₱18B to produce these materials—way beyond their ₱10B budget for 2020 covering two quarters.

The reason of DepEd, Mr. Speaker, in shifting to “self-learning modules” is because some two years ago, I have already pointed out to them that per the mandate of Rep. Act 8047, a law enacted 26 years ago, DepEd should no longer be producing or procuring books for the elementary and secondary education. This law categorically mandated that, “within a period of not more than three (3) years from the effectivity of this law, the DECS (now DepEd) shall phase out its elementary and secondary textbook publication and distribution functions and shall support the phasing in of private sector publishers to assume this function.” The law also mandated the creation of a National Book Development Board to oversee the transition and fruition of this program.

I will not belabor this point, Mr. Speaker, because this textbook issue has been referred to the Committee of Good Government and Public Accountability for inquiry. Suffice it to say, that DepEd tried again to circumvent the law by printing the SLMs or modules, because they believe that technically speaking a 30-page module is not a textbook per UNESCO definition.

Mr. Speaker, even Department Orders and Memoranda are issued in half-hazard and whimsical fashion. The cases in point are two of the more recent DepEd Orders—No. 12, series of 2021 and No. 30, series of 2020—which pertain to amendments of school calendar and calendar of activities. Mr. Speaker, DepEd must carefully, meticulously, and logically spell out said orders in order that teachers could carry out such directives efficiently. But if orders from the DepEd are unclear and lacking in sufficient detail, the teachers will be left to fend for themselves.

For instance, DepEd Order No. 12, s. 2021, ordered that on March 1 to 12, 2021 schools shall conduct intervention and remediation activities based on the unique needs of the learners. Although it is recognized that such intervention and remediation is a vital part of the learning process, especially in such extraordinary times, details of how such intervention and remediation shall be carried out by the teachers is basic. How will these intervention and remediation activities be implemented? How many students are in need of remediation and intervention? What will students, who **do not need** remediation and intervention, be doing from March 1 to 12, 2021? What materials will the teachers use? How can we ensure that remediation and intervention is enough for the learners to proceed with the competencies for the succeeding quarter?

Because of the intervention and remediation activities, the third quarter shall be from March 22 to May 15, 2021 instead of February 15 to April 10, 2021 as originally ordered in DepEd Order No. 30. What was being implemented between February 15 to 26, 2021? Was there an extension of the second quarter? What was the reason why the second quarter did not start on February 15? While it is logical to adjust the school calendar given the situation, it is important to go beyond the changes in dates and look into the more important matter of what happened, is happening, or will happen on dates stated in the school calendar.

According to paragraph 3 of DepEd Order No. 30, “mental health and psychosocial support activities particularly psychological first aid, discussions on the characteristics and effects of the pandemic, orientation on precautionary and preventive measures... shall be conducted from September 21 to 26, 2020.” And then “orientation/familiarization of learners on the implementation of learning delivery modalities, utilization of learning resources... shall be on September 28 to October 3, 2020.” Lastly, “physical and mental resilience of learners shall be further developed through the school year in accordance with DepEd Order No. 014, s. 2020 titled Guidelines on the Required Health Standards in Basic Education Offices and Schools”

Mr. Speaker, DepEd Order No. 12 supplanted these detailed activities in paragraph 3 of DepEd Order No. 30 with intervention and remediation activities, professional development of teachers, and the adjusted schedule of the third and fourth quarters. These amended paragraphs in DepEd Order No. 30 gave rise to even more crucial questions that need to be answered:

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(1) Did the mentioned activities, recognized for their importance, take place at all? (2) Did the amendment effectively discontinue these activities and if so why?

In the disposition of more than 200 passenger vans procured by DepEd, the Office of the Undersecretary for Administration, issued two successive memoranda that made it mandatory for Regional Directors, Schools Division Superintendent, Regional and Division Supply Officers and Drivers to attend a **Ceremonial Turn Over of Passenger Vans**. Both memoranda reminded all concerned recipients to be present in said event because "those who are absent or fail to claim the vans during the turn over will forfeit their service vehicle."

People are also asking, Mr. Speaker, why DepEd bought ₱1.2 billion worth of science equipment for Grades 1 and 2 when there is no science subject for such grade levels in public schools? What is the explanation of DepEd why the Pilipino subject is taught in Grade 1 starting with the second quarter only, or why the English subject is taught to them from the third quarter only?

Let me now go to the DepEd's Computerization Program, Mr. Speaker. Based on the COA 2017 audit report, the DepEd Computerization Program, or DCP, revealed implementation gaps showing 99% physical target deficiency for calendar years 2015 to 2017. This means that during this period, at least 77,704 schools were still waiting for their ICT packages, including the 17,016 identified schools with undelivered packages out of the more than ₱2B from the calendar year 2015 budget transferred to DBM-Procurement Service in calendar year 2016. The audit also showed that these gaps and deficiencies in the deliveries and utilization of ICT packages, including defective/ incomplete/ uninstalled delivered packages, poor after sales service by suppliers and weak financial reporting, **not only deferred the timely provision of necessary learning interventions to intended users of DCP packages but also weakened controls in proper safeguarding of public funds and property.**

DepEd's Physical Report on Operations as of December 31, 2017, showed that 78,140 schools are recipients of ICT packages under the DCP for CY 2015-2017, but only 436 schools received the packages. The DepEd's Physical Report on Accomplishment, however, showed that there is no actual delivery yet for the ₱9.9B awarded contracts. As per contract, delivery was to be made 210 calendar days from receipt of the NTP—or until December 2017 and January 2018)—hence delivery was to be completed only between July and August 2018.

DepEd's suppliers for the ₱10B DCP for FY 2015-2017 were:

1. RedDot Imaging Philippines, Inc., JV with Shenzhen Kstar Science and Technology Co., Ltd. = Contract Price: ₱3.99B
2. Columbia Technologies, Inc. = Contract Price: ₱2.69B
3. Girlteki Inc., JV with Shenzhen Hasee Computer Co., Ltd. = Contract Price: ₱2.58B
4. Allcard Plastics Philippines, Inc., JV with Silicon Valley Computer Group Phils, Inc. = Contract Price: ₱738.7M

Mr. Speaker, the slow-paced implementation of the DCP due to delays in the procurement process and failure of suppliers to completely deliver the computer packages to 39,950 targeted recipient schools from FYs 2015 up to 2018, including lapses in the deliveries and utilization of different ICT packages in NCR, Regional Offices Nos. III, IV-A, and XIII, **hindered the attainment of the programs objectives of enhancing the teaching-learning process and the ICT literacy of learners and educator beneficiaries.**

In addition, Mr. Speaker, a discrepancy was also noted in the physical target for the FY 2017 DCP Fund, K to 10, and the actual target recipients in the awarded contracts. As per the Physical Accomplishment Report, target recipients for K to 10 was 44,447 but the total number of recipients for the awarded contract with respect to the same budget was only 30,985.

Based on the 2018 COA report, Mr. Speaker, DepEd's DCP implementation for FY 2018 was delayed by a year, **affecting among others, the attainment of the project's objectives of providing the required ICT packages and e-textbooks to recipient SHS learners nationwide.** The 2018 audit also summarized the deficiencies in the deliveries and utilization of ICT packages in different ROs/ DOs, as follows:

- (a) Incomplete or absence of documents for the recognition in the books of accounts and transfer of accountability of delivered ICT equipment in the recipient District Offices and Implementing Units;
- (b) Partial/Non-utilization of ICT packages due to non-readiness of recipient schools;
- (c) Defective ICT packages and poor quality after sales assistance from suppliers;
- (d) Other negative observations include incomplete deliveries, non-delivery on installation of computer parts; some equipment were declared not functional or destroyed and some were kept in unsafe rooms causing further deterioration; some packages were not installed in e-classrooms or multi-media rooms as required; and some items were not used by students but by school heads during their meetings and conferences.

Mr. Speaker, as regards Science and Mathematics Equipment (SME), **the implementation of this program, which is aimed to improve the Basic Education in Science and Mathematics through the provision of equipment for subjects compliant with the K to 12 curriculum revealed deficiencies that could adversely affect its implementation.** These are:

- (a) undelivered 121 SME Kits in various schools depriving the students and teachers of the needed SME units to support their learning and teaching capacity for improvement;
- (b) some items delivered remained unutilized due to: excessive quantities allocated and delivered to the school as compared to the population of SHS



students; lack of knowledge and proper training of the teachers to use the equipment; and lack of storage/ laboratory rooms to safe-keep the items.

Finally, in the 2019 COA audit, per DepEd's Physical Accomplishment Report, only 8,523 out of the 14,342 targeted schools were provided with ICT packages under the DCP funded by GAAs for FYs 2015 to 2019, or a miserable 59.43% accomplishment rate. This is due to the following reasons: The ICT packages of DCP FY 2015 for unenergized Visayas, Luzon, and Mindanao were either not delivered to recipient schools or belatedly completed in 2019; the delay incurred by the suppliers from 1 to 102 calendar days allegedly caused by unforeseen circumstances for FY 2016 to 2017; partial/non-utilization of ICT packages under different batches due to unreadiness of receiving schools. **These lapses, Mr. Speaker, in the procurement of DCP for FY 2019, hindered the full attainment of the program's objectives of enhancing the teaching-learning process, including the ICT literacy of teachers and learners.**

It was also observed, Mr. Speaker, that payments made to suppliers in CY 2019 in the total amount of ₱3.25B were not adequately supported by documentary requirements, contrary to the provisions of COA Circular No. 2012-001 dated June 14, 2012 and the contracts entered into by DepEd with the suppliers.

Aside from software-related issues, the delay on the part of the DepEd to provide the suppliers with documents, such as List of Recipient Schools and Addresses, IAR template, Training Checklist, and Property Transfer Report Template, had impeded the timely implementation of the project. **It was thus evident, Mr. Speaker, that DepEd failed to efficiently plan and execute the implementation of the DCP FY 2018 and contributed to the significant delays in delivering the ICT packages to the recipient schools.**

Again, on Science and Mathematics Equipment (SME), the provisions of the Science and Mathematics Equipment intended for public schools were not fully achieved when the program registered a low budget and disbursement utilization rate of only 41.91% and 8.26%, respectively, from its allocated funds and at the same time reflected a low accomplishment rate of only 60.96% or 27,605 SME packages out of 45,286 physical targets from its FY 2015 to 2019 allocations. This is primarily due to implementation setbacks particularly in the planning, budgeting, and procurement. **Such constraints affected the realization of the timely distribution of much needed items designed to advance the learning capacity in Science and Mathematics subjects nationwide.**

But if the track record of these ICT suppliers were far from ideal, why was Girlteki Inc. awarded two DCP contracts again on December 16, 2019 worth ₱1.19 billion? And why was Columbia Technologies, Inc. again awarded three DCP contracts on the same date worth ₱1.79 billion? Or, why Silicon Valley Computer Group Phils. Inc. got another contract on the same date worth ₱501.3 million?

Now it can be told, Mr. Speaker, why in the 2018 survey of the Program for International Student Assessment, or PISA, the Philippines ranked last in Reading

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among the 79 countries; and ranked 78 in both Science and Mathematics subjects. Some 600,000 students completed the assessment, representing 32 million 15-year-olds in schools of 79 participating countries and economies. In the Philippines, 7,237 students in 187 schools completed the assessment.

In the Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics, or SEA-PLM, a survey conducted in 2019, the percentage of Grade 5 students performing at, or above minimum proficiency by end of primary school, showed that the Philippines ranked 5<sup>th</sup> among 6 ASEAN countries, getting 10% in reading, while Vietnam topped it at 82%, seconded by Malaysia at 58%. In Mathematics, the Philippines landed 4<sup>th</sup> at 17%, while Vietnam was first at 92% and Malaysia second at 64%. In Science, the Philippines was 3<sup>rd</sup> place at 2%, while Vietnam again topped it at 32%, seconded by Malaysia at 11%.

And lastly, in the 2019 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study, or TIMMS, the Filipino students, Mr. Speaker, lagged behind other countries in the international assessment for Mathematics and Science for Grade 4. The Philippines scored “significantly lower” in both subjects than any other participating countries—scoring the lowest among all 58 countries. Singapore topped both assessments in Grade 4 Mathematics and Science, including the highest score in Grade 8 for both subjects. In a statement on December 10, 2020, DepEd said it welcomes the 2019 TIMMS result and that “it values the immense data it can offer” on literacy of students on Math and Science. What does that exactly mean, Mr. Speaker?

Before the betrayal of Jesus, Mr. Speaker, Simon Peter asked him, “Lord, where are you going?” Jesus replied, “Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later.”

Mr. Speaker, if we may ask: DepEd where are you going? I hope they could answer this question with certainty because as of today it is headed to a path of quandary and wilderness, and we could hardly follow.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.