

HEADLINES

The 'teacher factor': EDCOM to assess state of teacher education institutions

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Students and teachers endure the hot weather inside the classrooms of Rafael Palma Elementary School in San Andres Bukid, Metro Manila on April 25, 2023.

STAR / Edd Gumban

MANILA, Philippines — As part of its mandate of finding solutions to the current learning crisis, the Second Congressional Commission on Education (Edcom 2) has launched a first-of-its-kind profiling study that looks at the state of teacher education institutions (TEIs) in the Philippines.

Edcom 2, a three-year congressional body tasked with reviewing the state of the education system, has partnered with the Research Institute for Teacher Quality (RITQ) to conduct a nationwide study that will explore potential areas for research or policy interventions to improve how teachers are trained.

The study is aimed at informing Edcom 2's recommendations on how to improve the quality of pre-service teacher education in the country to "better attract the best students to the profession," according to a description of Edcom 2's priority areas on its website.

"Our teachers play the most important role in delivering quality education to our country's learners. To produce highly qualified teachers, we need to ensure that our teacher education institutions are of top quality because their graduates will join our teaching force, shape our learners' minds, and eventually reverse the education crisis we face," said Edcom 2 Co-chairperson Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian in a press release on Monday.

Edcom 2 and the RITQ, which is based in the Philippine Normal University, the country's flagship university for teacher education, will collect data on demographics, institutional characteristics, perceptions of current teacher-educator practices and the overall status of those practices within participating institutions.

Based on a study that looks at 12-year data from the Professional Regulatory Commission and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), over half, or 56%, of all TEIs have performed below average in the annual licensure exam for teachers in elementary and secondary education.

The 2023 study by education advocacy group Philippine Business for Education found that only 2% of schools offering teacher education can be classified as "high-performing" or those with passing rates of at least 75%.

PBed also flagged CHED for its criteria in awarding a Center of Excellence (COE) and Center of Development (COD) status to schools with teacher education programs, as it found that more than 81% of COEs and 91% of CODs were not achieving high passing rates in the licensure exams.

The organization said the findings should prompt the government to close down "consistently low-performing TEIs" and implement a three-strike rule for repeaters who fail to ace the test, among other recommendations.