



# Committee Daily Bulletin

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## COMMITTEE MEETING ON HOUSE MEASURES

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Public Accounts	HR 1670	Rep. Singson	Investigation into the audit findings of the Commission on Audit (COA) on the Department of Education (DepEd), regarding various errors in its learning materials and modules, for purposes of instituting reforms, reviewing policies, and assessing DepEd's efficiency	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Jose "Bonito" Singson Jr. (Party-List, PROBINSYANO AKO), continued its deliberation on the issues raised relative to HR 1670.</p> <p>Another hearing will be called if there are other issues that the Members would like to discuss relative to the resolution. Otherwise, the Secretariat will prepare a Committee Report, which will be presented to the Committee in another meeting.</p> <p>At the outset, Rep. Singson said that the purpose of the investigation is not to cast blame on any particular person or agency, but to find out and be enlightened on how the educational system under the DepEd's present leadership can be improved to ensure the quality of education in the country.</p> <p>Rep. Adriano Ebcas (Party-List, AKO PADAYON PILIPINO) inquired whether the existing self-learning modules (SLMs) will be reused, assuming the distance learning setup will still be observed for the next schoolyear. He also inquired about the criteria or mechanisms employed by the DepEd in assessing the SLMs' reusability; and the specific actions or disciplinary measures that the DepEd will impose against those responsible for the erroneous information contained in these materials.</p> <p>DepEd Undersecretary for Curriculum and Instruction Diosdado San Antonio said that the Department is currently doing an inventory of the reusable SLMs. San Antonio said the DepEd is inclined to reuse them and to provide additional SLMs, if needed. He explained that the DepEd will not reuse SLMs destroyed or damaged by recent typhoons in certain regions; those worn-out and vandalized or marked by learners; and those found to contain errors.</p> <p>DepEd Central Luzon Regional Director May Eclar stated that despite the stringent standards set by DepEd, some SLMs in the region were found to have used words which are inappropriate and unacceptable. One of these was a learning material containing names with malicious sexual connotation that originated from a private school in Zambales which came to the attention of the DepEd in 2020. Upon validating the report, DepEd Region 3 issued a show cause order against the erring school, requiring its administrator to explain its side to avoid sanctions pursuant to Section 189 of DepEd Order 88, series of 2010. The DepEd Order provides the manual of regulations for private schools in basic education. Thereafter, the DepEd Region 3 office issued a resolution whereby the erring private school</p>

<p>Continuation... Public Accounts</p>				<p>was sternly warned that a repetition of the same or any similar act shall be dealt with more severely.</p> <p>Eclar further stated that following the controversial “aswang” SLM, which emanated from a public school in Mabalacat, Pampanga, was posted on Facebook, the DepEd has already made several actions as its response to the issue. One of these is the filing of a formal complaint for neglect of duty against the teacher-writer and the whole team that crafted the module.</p> <p>In the Committee’s previous meeting, educator Antonio Calipjo-Go, who reported the numerous errors in the learning materials used in public schools, brought to the attention of the Committee a module used by Grade 10 students in Pampanga that defined the Philippine mythical creature “aswang” using a “vulgar word.”</p> <p>DepEd Undersecretary for Legislative Affairs Tonisito Umali clarified that DepEd by law cannot impose punitive actions against the offending teachers in private schools who committed such errors in the learning materials because it has neither the power nor jurisdiction to discipline them. Nonetheless, Umali said the DepEd, if warranted, can initiate a case against them with the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) for the revocation of their PRC license. He added that the DepEd can also suspend or revoke the private school’s permit to operate.</p> <p>In reply to the query of Deputy Speaker Evelina Escudero (1<sup>st</sup> District, Sorsogon), San Antonio laid down the qualification requirements set by DepEd in the selection of its development team tasked to prepare SLMs or alternative delivery mode modules. He also mentioned that DepEd tapped academic reviewers from the Philippine Normal University as third-party evaluators to have a final look at the learning materials prior to their release to the learners.</p> <p>Nevertheless, Deputy Speaker Escudero asked why, despite DepEd’s qualification requirements and improvement in the review process, errors in the learning materials still persist.</p> <p>Rep. Sergio Dagooc (Party-List, APEC) stated that not all the processes of the DepEd in the preparation of the learning modules are followed diligently. He also noted that the members of the quality assurance team are actually overwhelmed by the volume of work and the tight deadlines set by both the regional and district offices to finish their tasks. Such rush work and the need to meet deadlines oftentimes result in some items in the learning materials not being checked thoroughly, thus the errors in books and learning modules.</p> <p>Moreover, Rep. Dagooc stated that the funds appropriated by the DepEd for the preparation of the learning materials may not be sufficient. Consequently, he proposed a wholistic approach to the problem and suggested that DepEd review its</p>
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<p>Continuation... Public Accounts</p>				<p>entire administrative processes and requirements, including the budget allocation for such activities.</p> <p>On the other hand, Rep. France Castro (Party-List, ACT-TEACHERS) sympathized with the teachers and the DepEd, and sought a little compassion for them. She made this manifestation in recognition of DepEd's acknowledgement of its shortcomings and the inherent difficulties resulting from the blended learning scheme resorted to because of the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Deputy Speaker Rodante Marcoleta (Party-List, SAGIP) averred that DepEd violates or circumvents Sections 10 and 11 of RA 8047, or the Book Publishing Industry Development Act, for continuously producing books and self-learning modules on its own. He said the law mandates DepEd to phase out its function of producing books and learning materials and to let private sector publishers do the job. The Deputy Speaker said that the errors in the learning materials could have been avoided if DepEd relinquished early on the publication of such materials to the private sector.</p> <p>National Book Development Board (NBDB) Chair Dante Francis Ang II agreed with Deputy Speaker Marcoleta, adding that textbook publishing should rightly be the function of the private sector. Ang said that since his assumption to office in 2020, the NBDB has initiated various consultations with stakeholders and the DepEd; and also brought up with DepEd the issues pertaining to its alleged violation of RA 8047. He assured the Committee that the NBDB is committed to implement RA 8047 and protect the interest of the stakeholders.</p> <p>The DepEd was asked to submit the following documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehensive report to Congress on the 2018, 2019, and 2020 audit observations of the Commission on Audit regarding the alleged errors in the DepEd learning materials;</li> <li>• Memorandum circulars relative to the issue;</li> <li>• List of winning bidders in the production and printing of learning materials and modules;</li> <li>• Breakdown of the self-learning materials procured for schoolyear 2020-2021; and</li> <li>• Update on the administrative cases filed against those involved in the production of the learning module which contained a vulgar term in the definition of "aswang."</li> </ul> <p>The NBDB was also requested to submit its proposals to the Committee which will be used by the Members in considering whether or not there is a need to amend the provisions of RA 8047.</p>
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