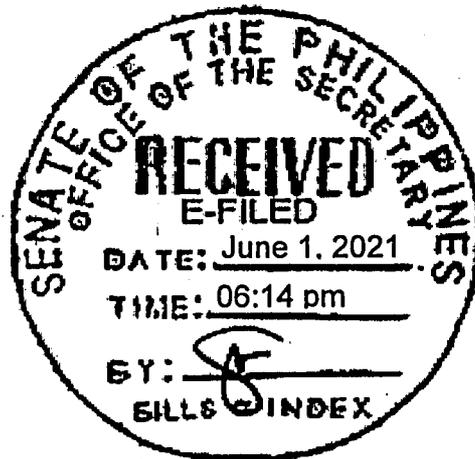


EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE]
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES]
Second Regular Session]



SENATE

P.S. Res. No. 739

Introduced by SENATOR WIN GATCHALIAN

**A RESOLUTION
DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE
TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION,
TO ASSESS THE PREPAREDNESS OF BASIC EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS
TO CONDUCT CLASSES AND TO OPEN SAFE SCHOOLS FOR SCHOOL
YEAR 2021 TO 2022, TOWARDS THE CRAFTING OF COMPLEMENTARY
OR AMENDATORY LEGISLATION TO ENSURE THE DELIVERY OF
QUALITY EDUCATION WHETHER THROUGH DISTANCE LEARNING,
FACE-TO-FACE CLASSES, OR OTHER ALTERNATIVE DELIVERY MODES**

1 **WHEREAS**, when the World Health Organization characterized the
2 coronavirus disease (COVID-19) as a pandemic,¹ more than 1.5 billion
3 students and youth around the world were affected by school and university
4 closures, which included the Philippines where schools remain fully closed
5 since President Rodrigo R. Duterte declared the suspension of classes on
6 March 10, 2020;²

7 **WHEREAS**, beginning the School Year (SY) 2020 to 2021, and as a
8 consequence of school closures, the basic education sector resorted to
9 alternative delivery modes of learning and instruction, including online

¹ WHO Director-General's opening remarks at the media briefing on COVID-19 – March 11, 2020, wherein WHO's assessment that COVID-19 can be characterized as a pandemic was announced; <https://www.who.int/director-general/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-the-media-briefing-on-covid-19---11-march-2020>; last visited on May 28, 2021.

² Rappler.com, "Duterte suspends classes in Metro Manila March 10-14 over coronavirus threat, March 9, 2020"; <https://www.rappler.com/nation/walang-pasok-duterte-declares-class-suspensions-metro-manila-coronavirus-threat-march-10-14-2020>.

1 classes, the use of self-learning modules (SLMs), and classes on broadcast *via*
2 television, radio, and social media platforms;

3 **WHEREAS**, such alternative delivery modes posed several challenges,
4 not only to the learners and their teachers, but also to the parents and
5 guardians. These challenges include lack of gadgets, electricity, and internet
6 connection; issues on the use of modules and the effect on one's health; lack
7 of appropriate learning space; lack of interaction and sufficient study to
8 establish the effectiveness of online learning; pressure leading to depression;
9 and too much screen time. The use of stress-causing modules and the issues
10 on the lack of quality assurance in their preparation were likewise identified
11 as challenges, not to mention the proliferation of the "sagot for sale" scheme;³

12 **WHEREAS**, in an Asian Development Bank (ADB) Brief, it was
13 discussed that "(t)here is substantial empirical evidence of a 'slide' effect
14 during breaks from education, in which children not only do not acquire
15 additional knowledge, but they also lose knowledge that they have already
16 acquired".⁴ The same study likewise found that "for each academic year in
17 which there is no education, students lose 2 academic years of learning,
18 compared to when schools are open";⁵

19 **WHEREAS**, on March 2, 2021, the Senate of the Philippines adopted
20 Resolution No. 92 expressing "the sense of the Senate to recommend the
21 resumption of face-to-face classes through the immediate launch of the pilot
22 testing of localized limited face-to-face classes in low-risk areas as identified
23 by the Department of Education under risk-based assessment, following
24 stringent mitigation measures, strict health protocols, and guidelines of the
25 Department of Health and of the Inter-Agency Task Force on the Management
26 of Emerging and Infectious Diseases, to enable the Department of Education

³ "Katok Tahanan, Ang Pamilyang Pinoy sa Harap ng Pandemya at Edukasyong Online", presented by Dr. Antonio Torralba of Synergeia Foundation during the Public Hearing on PS Resolution No. 391 held on February 24, 2021; Job Manahan, ABS CBN News, "DepEd says not all modules screened for quality; volunteer error spotters 'welcome'", October 8, 2020; Arra Perez, ABS CBN, "DepEd discourages students from engaging in 'sagot for sale'", April 8, 2021.

⁴ Raitzerm D.A., et al., Cost-Benefit Analysis of Face-to-Face Closure of Schools to Control Covid-19 in the Philippines. ADB Briefs No. 162, December 2020. Retrieved February 23, 2021, from <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/662321/adb-brief-162-cost-benefit-analysis-closure-schools-philippines.pdf>.

⁵ *Ibid.*

1 to gather evidence on the ground and design a framework for the safe
2 reopening of schools". To date, however, the conduct of pilot face-to-face
3 classes is yet to materialize due to the new surge of COVID-19 infections in
4 the country starting the third week of March;

5 **WHEREAS**, with the challenges encountered by the learners, parents
6 and guardians, and the teaching and non-teaching personnel, an immediate
7 assessment of both the effectiveness and the challenges in the conduct of
8 classes using alternative delivery modes for SY 2020 to 2021 is necessary, to
9 address such challenges in time for the conduct of classes for SY 2021 to
10 2022;

11 **WHEREAS**, with the roll-out of vaccination in the country and teachers
12 being on the priority list, the conduct of pilot face-to-face classes in low-risk
13 or zero-COVID areas may be authorized by the President under the most
14 stringent public health protocols, and therefore there is a need to assess the
15 readiness of both public and private basic education institutions to safely
16 open for the coming school year, regardless of the mode of teaching and
17 learning that will be adopted;

18 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE**
19 **PHILIPPINES**, to direct the appropriate Senate Committee to conduct an
20 inquiry, in aid of legislation, to assess the preparedness of basic education
21 institutions to conduct classes and to open safe schools for SY 2021 to 2022,
22 towards the crafting of complementary or amendatory legislation to ensure
23 the delivery of quality education whether through distance learning, face-to-
24 face classes, or other alternative delivery modes.

Adopted,



WIN GATCHALIAN