



**BARMM Priority Area #3 on Teacher Education:
Teacher Quality**

Contextualizing Teacher Quality in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM): An Education Governance System Study

Sarah A. Radam, MA (Econ)



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Table of Contents

About the Author	iv
List of Acronyms and Abbreviations	vi
Introduction	1
A System Analysis of Education Governance	2
Reform Agenda: Five Strategic Pillars	3
Regulatory Structures and Institutional Coherence	3
System Challenges	3
Policy Recommendations	4
Workforce Planning and Management	5
System Challenges	5
Policy Recommendations	6
Teacher Preparation and Qualifications	6
System Challenges	6
Policy Recommendations	7
Physical and Digital Infrastructure	8
System Challenges	8
Policy Recommendations	8
Professional Development	9
System Challenges	9
Policy Recommendations	9
Conclusion	11
References	12

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

BARMM	Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
BBECCF	Bangsamoro Basic Education Curriculum Contextualization Framework
BEI	Basic Education Institution
BOL	Bangsamoro Organic Law
BTA	Bangsamoro Transition Authority
BTPMD	Bangsamoro Teachers' Professional and Moral Development
CHED	Commission on Higher Education
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DEPED	Department of Education
DICT	Department of Information and Communications Technology
EDCOM II	The Second Congressional Commission on Education
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ISAL	Islamic Studies and Arabic Language
KII	Key Informant Interview
LAC	Learning Action Cell
LET	Licensure Examination for Teachers
LGU	Local Government Unit
MAPEH	Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health
MBHTE	Ministry of Basic, Higher, and Technical Education
PPST	Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers
PQF	Philippine Qualifications Framework
PRC	Professional Regulation Commission
QA	Quality Assurance
RA	Republic Act

RITQ	Research Institute for Teacher Quality
TEC	Teacher Education Council
TEI	Teacher Education Institutions
TNA	Training Needs Assessment

Introduction

The quality of teachers is consistently recognized as the most important in-school factor influencing student learning outcomes (Sinsay-Villanueva et al., 2025)¹. In the Philippines, numerous policies and programs have aimed to professionalize the teaching workforce through improved pre-service preparation, continuous professional development, and the establishment of national teaching standards. Legislation and education policies include Republic Act No. 7784 (1994) that created the *Teacher Education Council (TEC)* to strengthen teacher education through curricular reforms and scholarship programs. The *Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET)*, administered by the Professional Regulation Commission under Republic Act No. 7836 (1994), ensures baseline qualifications for teacher entry. More recently, Republic Act No. 10968 (2018) institutionalized the *Philippine Qualifications Framework (PQF)*, standardizing qualifications and competencies, including those for teachers. Continuous professional development was further mandated under Republic Act No. 10912 (2016), the *Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Act*, which requires teachers to engage in lifelong learning. Complementing these is the *Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST)*, institutionalized in the Department of Education (DepEd) Order No. 42, s. 2017, which provides a national framework for teacher quality and career progression. Yet, disparities in teacher quality remain pronounced, especially in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). BARMM faces unique challenges shaped by its complex historical, cultural, and political landscape.

As the region undergoes a transition to greater autonomy under the Bangsamoro Organic Law (R.A. 11054), its Ministry of Basic, Higher, and Technical Education (MBHTE) is tasked with managing an education system that has long been underfunded, fragmented, and underperforming. While there have been gradual improvements in education governance under the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA), the BARMM education system continues to suffer from persistent challenges in teacher quality, rooted in fragmented teacher education pathways, weak coordination across regulatory agencies, and uneven support systems for teachers at different stages of their careers.

This policy paper draws on research that utilized a qualitative-dominant, mixed-methods design anchored in a governance lens in education to examine teacher education in BARMM. It also explored how competencies, professional identities, and instructional practices are shaped by social interaction, cultural context, and institutional structures under the BOL. Data collection combined desk reviews, surveys, and extensive qualitative engagement through focus group discussions (FGD) and key informant interviews (KII) with 237 teacher educators, teachers, and Islamic Studies and Arabic Language (ISAL) teachers, as well as 30 education leaders from Teacher Education Institutions (TEI), public schools, and Madrasah. Fieldwork was conducted from February to March 2025 across all MBHTE Divisions and 12 TEIs, providing a rich, context-sensitive understanding that complements existing quantitative reports.

¹ Sinsay-Villanueva, L. M. V., Garcia, G. D. V., Lim, V. L., Tanyag, I. H., Berroya, J., Orbeta, A. C., & Rivera, J. P. R. (2025). *Quality education starting with teacher education* (PIDS Discussion Paper Series No. 2025-04). Philippine Institute for Development Studies. <https://pidswebs.pids.gov.ph/CDN/document/pidsdps2504.pdf>

The policy relevance of these issues is threefold. First, addressing teacher quality is urgent if BARMM is to improve its basic education outcomes and achieve the goals of inclusive and responsive education laid out in its education priorities. Second, ensuring that all learners, regardless of geography, socio-economic background, or type of school attended, have equal access to qualified, well-supported teachers. Third, the strategic importance of teacher reform is elevated by BARMM's unique governance structure, which grants the region the mandate to design its own education system, making this a rare opportunity to craft contextually appropriate, technically sound, and politically feasible reforms.

The overarching goal of the proposed reforms in this policy paper is to enhance the quality, relevance, and responsiveness

of teacher education and teacher workforce management in BARMM, in order to improve learning outcomes, promote equity, and support inclusive regional development. This means ensuring that all learners in the region are taught by qualified, motivated, and well-supported teachers, in line with the education priorities of the Bangsamoro Government, EDCOM II's call to fixing the foundations, and the Sustainable Development Goals (particularly SDG 4: Quality Education).

Therefore, this policy paper serves as a timely blueprint for action, grounded in evidence, shaped by BARMM's unique context, and aimed at catalyzing reforms in teacher education and workforce management that are essential to improving learning outcomes, fostering equity, and sustaining the region's peace and development gains.

A System Analysis of Education Governance

Insights from this research highlight systemic issues in teacher recruitment, qualification, deployment, and support, issues which undermine education equity, learning outcomes, and the long-term development trajectory of the region. Among the key challenges identified are the prevalence of teacher-subject mismatches, weak alignment between teacher education and actual classroom needs, and inconsistent implementation of professional development programs. These issues are further complicated by the presence of a large number of ISAL teachers whose qualification guidelines are still being finalized. Aside from yet being formally recognized in the formal education system, there is a need for further strengthening ISAL to contribute to achieving quality education in the region. Additionally, the recruitment and hiring process, which was centralized to address transparency issues, has also inadvertently caused delays

and mismatches in teacher deployment. In addition, noting that compared to its national counterpart which is trifocalized, MBHTE covers all basic, higher, technical, and madrasah education. The magnitude of these challenges becomes evident when considering the scope of those affected. The population affected includes approximately 1.2 million learners across BARMM's public schools (MBHTE, 2025), more than 20,000 teachers and educators (MBHTE, 2025), and hundreds of faculty members in TEIs. Also impacted are the institutions responsible for ensuring teacher quality, including MBHTE, DepEd, Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Professional Regulation Commission (PRC), and the Teacher Education Council (TEC), which must align and collaborate more effectively under the evolving intergovernmental arrangements within the Bangsamoro region.

Reform Agenda: Five Strategic Pillars

This section outlines a reform agenda built around five strategic pillars designed to address the systemic challenges in teacher education and workforce management in BARMM: **Regulatory Structures and Institutional Coherence; Workforce Planning and Management; Teacher Preparation and Qualifications; Physical and Digital Infrastructure; and Professional Development.** Each pillar targets a critical aspect of the teacher quality ecosystem, ensuring that reforms are comprehensive, well-coordinated, and mutually reinforcing. Together, these pillars form a practical roadmap for developing a competent, well-supported teaching workforce capable of delivering strong learning outcomes and advancing BARMM's inclusive and sustainable development goals. In addition, this section synthesizes the key findings from the research data, which underpin the proposed reforms.

Regulatory Structures and Institutional Coherence

System Challenges

The governance landscape for teacher education in BARMM is shaped by its unique autonomy under the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL)², which grants the MBHTE the authority to manage and regulate the region's education system. However, as a subsystem of the national education system, MBHTE must still align with national standards, policies, and other mechanisms, while negotiating how these are adapted to the region's cultural, linguistic, and post-conflict realities.

This dual positioning creates both opportunities for contextualized reforms and challenges in harmonizing BARMM-specific priorities with national directives. As an example, BARMM has developed the Bangsamoro Basic Education Curriculum Contextualization Framework (BBECCF) as one of the guiding documents that align the national curriculum to ensure relevance and responsiveness of education delivery in the Bangsamoro context such as inclusion of Islamic values and principles. Another one is the Bangsamoro Teachers' Professional and Moral Development (BTMPD), which contextualizes the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), to ensure improving teaching practices in areas such as moral governance, 21st century strategies, and socio-emotional learning. The study found that coordination towards coherence between MBHTE and national agencies, particularly CHED, PRC, and DepEd, remains informal, ad hoc, and unclear to many stakeholders. This lack of clarity has created confusion among TEIs regarding who sets standards, approves programs, and monitors compliance. As a result, TEIs often operate in a regulatory gray area, unsure whether they should align their curricula and faculty requirements more closely with CHED or MBHTE guidelines.

Compounding the problem is the rapid increase in private TEIs within BARMM, many of which operate with limited external oversight by relevant agencies. This trend raises significant concerns about quality assurance, especially in the absence of a well-defined, locally enforced regulatory framework.

² Section 16. Integrated System of Quality Education. – It shall be a top priority of the Bangsamoro Government to establish, maintain, and support a complete and integrated system of quality education, which shall be a subsystem of the national education system. The Bangsamoro Government shall develop an educational framework relevant and responsive to the needs, ideals, and aspirations of the Bangsamoro people. For this purpose, the Bangsamoro Government shall conform to the minimum standards set by the National Government.

While the TEC plays a crucial national role in harmonizing policies across CHED, PRC, and DepEd, BARMM's participation in TEC initiatives and processes remains minimal and largely informal, missing opportunities for strategic alignment and common standards across regions.

These findings highlight deep-rooted systemic challenges.

1. A glaring absence of formal mechanisms to harmonize policies and regulatory functions between MBHTE and national agencies such as CHED and PRC. This institutional misalignment contributes to inefficiencies, duplications, and inconsistencies in how teacher education programs are designed, delivered, and evaluated.
2. Absence of a joint roadmap for teacher education reform in BARMM that integrates both pre-service and in-service dimensions, leaving reform efforts fragmented and disconnected.
3. Lack of a clear and coordinated regulatory mechanisms and well delineated oversight responsibilities across multiple actors lead to policy gaps and confusion among TEIs, schools, and prospective teachers.

Policy Recommendations

1. MBHTE-CHED-PRC-TEC Joint Coordinating Council

Institutionalize a Joint Coordinating Council with CHED, PRC, and TEC with MBHTE taking the lead to harmonize teacher education standards, program recognition, faculty qualification benchmarks, licensing pathways, and quality assurance protocols in BARMM. Anchored in a formal terms of reference and supported by regular policy dialogue, this multi-agency body will resolve jurisdictional ambiguities, streamline regulatory processes, and foster data sharing across institutions. This

mechanism will provide clear guidance to TEIs navigating overlapping mandates while safeguarding the region's autonomy as enshrined in the Bangsamoro Organic Law.

2. Bangsamoro Teacher Education and Development Reform Code

MBHTE, in coordination with the Bangsamoro Parliament, should formulate and enact a Bangsamoro Teacher Education and Development Reform Code that sets clear policy directions for both pre-service and in-service teacher development. The Code should consolidate existing and proposed measures on teacher standards, professional development, ISAL integration, and institutional coherence into a single, comprehensive legislative framework, one that the Parliament will enact and the MBHTE will implement. It will articulate long-term outcomes for teacher quality, define reform priorities, clarify institutional mandates, and establish implementation timelines. By legislating these reforms, BARMM can ensure legal clarity, coherence across agencies, and continuity beyond political cycles, while providing a common reference for development partners and aligning regional initiatives with national education goals.

3. Institutionalize MBHTE's Participation in TEC to Align National and Regional Teacher Education Agenda

To ensure BARMM-specific realities are meaningfully integrated into national teacher education policies, MBHTE should be formally included in the TEC curriculum development processes and inter-agency policy dialogues. This participation would help contextualize national frameworks, new pre-service curricula, and CPD strategies within the socio-cultural and institutional realities of the Bangsamoro region. Institutionalizing this engagement, either

through a TEC resolution or a legislative amendment, would also strengthen regulatory coherence and support mutual recognition of teacher education standards between MBHTE, CHED, DepEd, and PRC.

Workforce Planning and Management

System Challenges

BARMM teachers across TEIs and BEIs face substantial challenges related to their working conditions and deployment. Many report workloads far beyond instructional duties, including administrative tasks, co-curricular obligations, and community responsibilities. ISAL teachers, in particular, are burdened by some of the heaviest workloads in the system. Many are required to teach up to six subjects across multiple grade levels, often in overcrowded classrooms. These responsibilities, compounded by limited institutional support and unclear career pathways, contribute to high stress levels and diminished teaching effectiveness. While some additional roles contribute positively to the learning environment, they also lead to fatigue and reduced instructional quality. Apart from these additional tasks in schools, female teachers also need to manage their respective homes. The burden of teaching and household responsibilities disproportionately affects female teachers especially those who are not well-off. This inequality stems from deeply ingrained societal norms that often place a greater emphasis on the role of women in childcare and household.

The widespread mismatch between teacher specialization and assigned teaching loads is a pervasive issue in the region. This is particularly acute in senior high schools, where Science majors are often tasked

with teaching subjects like MAPEH or Social Studies, that are outside their expertise. This misalignment not only affects teacher morale but also compromises student learning outcomes.

Another major concern is the pupil-teacher ratio, which deviates from the national standards, particularly 40:1³ benchmark for senior high school. In BARMM, the pupil-teacher ratio is estimated at 52:1, underscoring the strain on the teaching workforce, particularly in specialized subject areas. One factor contributing to this imbalance is the region's current recruitment and deployment system. The research reveals historical issues of nepotism and irregular hiring practices as raised by some of the respondents, therefore, MBHTE decided to centralize the recruitment and deployment of teachers under the MBHTE Office of the Minister. While this may have enhanced transparency, it also introduced new challenges: the hiring and deployment process became slower, less responsive to immediate school needs, and sometimes resulted in further mismatches in teacher assignments.

These findings highlight systemic challenges that undermine the region's effective workforce planning and management:

1. Although intended to address governance issues, the centralized hiring system, which is under the MBHTE Office of the Minister, has constrained the flexibility of schools to respond quickly to staffing needs.
2. The absence of real-time, disaggregated data on teacher supply and demand prevents strategic workforce planning and management.
3. Subject-Specialization Mismatches diminishes instructional quality, affects teacher morale, and can negatively impact student learning outcomes.

3 Philippine News Agency, DepEd assures adequate number of teachers for K to 12, March 15, 2018. Data based on statements from DepEd Undersecretary for Planning and Field Operations Jesus Mateo

Policy Recommendations

1. **Hybrid Hiring Scheme with Division-Level Responsiveness**

MBHTE should pilot a hybrid recruitment model that combines regional merit-based qualification standards with division-level prioritization. This system would preserve accountability through a centralized shortlist while allowing divisions to select candidates based on specific school needs such as subject specialization, local language proficiency, or cultural fit. The model addresses delays and mismatches common in centralized hiring and strengthens both equity and contextual appropriateness in teacher deployment.

2. **Let Teachers Teach**

Adopt a “Let Teachers Teach” policy that minimizes non-teaching tasks and administrative burdens on teachers, allowing them to focus on their core responsibility: teaching and institutionalizes the deployment of non-teaching administrative support personnel to schools and TEIs. These support staff can assist with records management, event coordination, report preparation, and technical logistics, thereby freeing up teachers to focus on pedagogy, mentoring, and learning assessment.

3. **Strengthen MBHTE’s Existing Teacher Workforce Database System**

Ensure real-time updates, full disaggregation (e.g., specialization, TEI origin, deployment gaps), and integration of database system with PRC, CHED, DepEd, TEC, and TEIs, and mandate its use as the primary basis for strategic workforce planning, recruitment, and deployment decisions.

Teacher Preparation and Qualifications

System Challenges

In terms of teacher qualifications and pre-service preparation, 87% of basic education institution (BEI) teachers in BARMM hold education-related degrees, suggesting a generally appropriate academic foundation. However, most of these teachers completed their studies in local Teacher Education Institutions (TEI), many of which are constrained by limited faculty qualifications and the absence of specialization in critical subject areas such as Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health (MAPEH). This misalignment is further echoed in the results of our FGDs, which revealed that mismatches occur most frequently in secondary schools, for example, teachers with a specialization in Science are often assigned to teach MAPEH, Economics, or History. Teachers explained that this happens primarily due to shortages of specialists in certain fields, which they attribute to TEIs in BARMM not offering Social Studies and MAPEH/PATFIT as areas of specialization.

Notably, only 65% of TEI faculty hold a master’s degree, lower than the 74% of basic education teachers who have achieved this level of qualification. While the proportion of licensed teachers in public schools is commendably high, ranging from 89% to 100%, these rates are not consistently tracked or reported for teacher educators in TEIs limiting accountability and quality assurance. A unique challenge also exists in the case of approximately 6,000 ISAL teachers, only 36% are licensed teachers. In addition, most of them lack formal training in general education subjects, having instead received education

abroad or through Madaris⁴ with a strong focus on Islamic studies and preaching (dawah), which are not fully monitored alongside the region's basic education standards.

These findings highlight systemic challenges in the quality of teacher qualification and pre-service preparation in BARMM:

1. Inadequate incentives, particularly in high-demand specializations such as Mathematics, Science, and MAPEH that restrain TEIs to recruit and retain qualified faculty
2. Absence of an operational framework to help integrate ISAL teachers into the formal education system, leaving a parallel track of unstandardized instruction.
3. Weak quality assurance systems, both internal to TEIs and external regulation, leading to uneven standards in teacher pre-service preparation.
4. There are two levels of misalignment observed: first, between teachers' academic backgrounds and the subjects they actually teach; and second, between the program offerings of TEIs and the pedagogical demands of BARMM classrooms.

Policy Recommendations

1. Faculty Upgrading and Specialization Incentives

Launch a targeted scholarship program for TEI faculty to pursue master's degrees, with priority given to high-need subject areas such as Math, Science, MAPEH, and Social Studies. To reinforce this effort, performance-based grants should be provided to TEIs that produce licensed graduates in shortage areas and successfully support their deployment in public schools. Together, these incentives will strengthen the quality and relevance of teacher education, align TEI offerings with BARMM's workforce needs, and

foster stronger institutional linkages between TEIs and the basic education sector.

2. Interim and Institutionalized Quality Assurance (QA) Systems

To address uneven standards across TEIs, MBHTE should first pilot an interim QA framework based on indicators such as faculty qualifications, LET pass rates, and specialization alignment. This system will guide immediate interventions, resource allocation, and policy adjustments. Over time, MBHTE should institutionalize a formal QA framework developed in partnership with CHED tailored to the BARMM context. This will regulate public and private TEIs, ensure consistency with national standards, and embed quality benchmarks in accreditation, funding, and TEI performance monitoring.

3. ISAL Bridging Framework and Career Pathway

To integrate ISAL teachers into the formal education system, an implementation of a competency-based bridging framework that provides targeted training in pedagogy, curriculum integration, and classroom assessment. This enables ISAL educators, many of whom were trained outside formal education systems, to meet teaching standards without requiring full retraining. A career pathway should also be established for ISAL teachers, with clear standards for classification, promotion, and professional growth. This includes equivalency assessments, ladderized ranking, and integration of culturally responsive competencies into teacher evaluation systems legitimizing ISAL teachers' contributions and supporting inclusive education delivery.

⁴ Madaris (plural of Madrasah) are the oldest educational institutions in Mindanao and are recognized to be the single most important factor in the preservation of the Islamic studies

Physical and Digital Infrastructure

System Challenges

The state of physical and digital infrastructure in BARMM's teacher education ecosystem reflects a persistent resource gap. Many TEIs and BEIs operate in overcrowded, outdated classrooms, with the teacher–learner ratio in senior high schools reaching 1:52 in SY 2020–2021. Facilities often lack basic features such as proper ventilation, lighting, and accessibility for persons with disabilities. Demonstration schools and CPD venues, critical for modelling effective pedagogy, are frequently under-equipped, with outdated furniture, insufficient teaching materials, and no dedicated training spaces. In geographically isolated areas such as Tawi-Tawi and Basilan, logistical constraints delay even basic repairs, further widening inequities in access to quality training environments.

Compounding the physical deficit is the region's digital infrastructure gap. Reliable internet connectivity is either unstable or completely absent in many TEIs, especially those outside town centers, limiting access to online resources, digital literacy programs, and remote learning opportunities. Few classrooms are equipped with projectors, charging ports, or digital whiteboards, and access to laptops or tablets for faculty and trainees is minimal. As one ISAL teacher noted, *"ICT training is useless without a computer or laptop."*

These findings point to deep-rooted systemic challenges:

1. Inadequate and uneven distribution of physical facilities, with many TEIs and BEIs unable to provide safe, accessible, and conducive learning environments for teacher training. Overcrowding is common, with classes of up to 50

students per section in some TEIs.

2. Weak and unreliable digital connectivity, preventing meaningful integration of technology into pre-service curricula and professional development programs. Many priority training hubs lack even baseline internet access.

Policy Recommendations

1. Classroom Modernization and Digital Connectivity

In the long term, MBHTE, working with CHED, LGUs, Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), and partners should implement a region-wide classroom modernization program targeting TEIs and select BEIs that serve as training hubs. Classrooms must support technology-enhanced, learner-centered instruction through tools like projectors, charging ports, tablets, and digital whiteboards. Priority should go to CPD venues and demonstration schools to model inclusive, culturally responsive teaching in digitally equipped environments. Over time, digital connectivity should be a standard across all TEIs in BARMM.

2. ICT Infrastructure for Integrated Systems

To support reforms in teacher tracking, workforce planning, and performance monitoring, MBHTE must invest in robust ICT infrastructure. This includes secure platforms for the CPD database, Teacher Labor Market Information System (LMIS), and regional dashboards interoperable with CHED, PRC, and DepEd. Reliable connectivity, cybersecurity, and skilled personnel are essential. These systems will drive data-informed decisions on scholarships, training, and deployment, positioning ICT as a core enabler of effective governance and teacher quality in BARMM.

Professional Development

System Challenges

In the area of professional development, the study found that teachers in basic education institutions generally have more access to in-service training at 91% compared to ISAL teachers (53%) and TEI faculty (68%). While a variety of training programs are offered, ranging from curriculum and instructional enhancement to leadership and digital literacy, these efforts are often not grounded in systematic planning because Training Needs Assessments (TNAs), when conducted, are often informal and lack rigor, leading to inconsistent alignment between training content and the actual pedagogical demands of BARMM classrooms. This problem is compounded by the absence of a centralized, region-wide database to track participation, content, and outcomes of in-service programs, limiting the Ministry's ability to evaluate program impact and recalibrate where necessary.

Furthermore, the implementation of the Learning Action Cell (LAC)⁵, intended as a collaborative, school-based professional development mechanism, is uneven across the region. The study identifies several constraints, such as limited time, inadequate funding, weak monitoring systems, and insufficient facilitation skills hinder LAC's potential to reinforce training application.

Meanwhile, for ISAL teachers, specialized training on ICT integration, lesson planning, and socio-emotional learning has been provided and was informed by TNAs conducted by agencies such as the Research Institute for Teacher Quality (RITQ). However, the benefits of such initiatives are curtailed by resource gaps; for instance, ICT integration training is rendered less effective in the

absence of basic tools such as laptops, projectors, or reliable internet access.

These findings highlight systemic challenges in BARMM's current Professional Development for teachers:

1. The lack of institutionalized TNAs results in training programs that may not match the actual needs of teachers or schools.
2. Post-training integration and classroom application are rarely monitored consistently, making it difficult to assess the effectiveness or impact of professional development investments.
3. The governance of Professional Development is fragmented across different levels of the education system—regional, division, and school—leading to uneven access to training, and inconsistent quality of implementation across the region.

Policy Recommendations

1. Institutionalized Training Needs Assessments (TNA)

Mandate the annual conduct of standardized Training Needs Assessments (TNAs) at both division and school levels. These assessments will help identify actual teacher competency gaps and ensure that Professional Development programming is evidence-based and context-sensitive. Standardized tools, coupled with skills training and capacity strengthening for school leaders, will support the use of TNAs in shaping school improvement plans, informing regional training priorities, and strengthening performance-based budgeting.

2. Region-Wide Professional Development Framework

A formal, region-wide Professional Development framework must be institutionalized to align professional

5 Learning Action Cells (LAC) are school-based professional development groups where teachers collaborate to enhance their skills and address teaching challenges.

development with teacher career progression. The framework should establish clear credit requirements, recognize training linked to subject specialization, and connect professional development participation with promotion, reclassification, and performance evaluation. Grounded in a Bangsamoro-adapted Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), this framework will help ensure that professional development is purposeful, measurable, and motivating for educators across all contexts.

3. Competency-Based Micro-credentialing System

To expand access to flexible and modular professional development,

MBHTE should introduce a competency-based micro-credentialing system for both basic education teachers and TEI faculty. This system would offer stackable certifications in key domains such as inclusive education, subject-specific pedagogy, digital literacy among others without requiring full enrollment in graduate programs. For TEI faculty, micro-credentials can supplement formal education and enhance instructional quality. This system is particularly critical in BARMM, where access to formal degree programs remains limited and where applied, targeted learning opportunities can yield immediate classroom benefits.

Conclusion

Improving teacher quality in BARMM is a transformative agenda that sits at the heart of inclusive and sustainable development in the region. At stake are the learning outcomes of over a million learners, the professional future of tens of thousands of educators, and the broader vision of a responsive, equitable, and resilient education system under the Bangsamoro government. To fix the foundations which should be the center of systems reform efforts, we must also support teaching (Gershberg et al, 2025) by establishing a system that will enable teachers to effectively teach so that learners can learn.

The findings from the study underscore that the challenges are not simply technical, but institutional and structural. Yet these challenges also present opportunities. BARMM's political autonomy allows for context-sensitive innovations that need not wait for national directives. BARMM can build a teacher education ecosystem that is not only aligned with national standards but also responsive to the unique needs of its communities.

The policy reforms proposed in this paper are designed to be comprehensive yet feasible. They promote system-wide improvements through five interconnected levers: Regulatory Structures and Institutional Coherence; Workforce Planning and Management; Teacher Preparation and Qualifications; Physical and Digital Infrastructure; and Professional Development. These must not be pursued in isolation. A professional development program without reliable TNAs or career incentives will have little impact. A hiring reform without data systems or clear career pathways will reproduce old inequities. The success of each reform hinges on how well it is integrated into a coherent, long-term strategy.

Ultimately, what is needed is a shift in paradigm, one that moves away from fragmented, reactive action toward sustained, systems-level thinking. The goal is not just to produce more teachers, but to cultivate a pool of professionals who are well-prepared, continuously supported, and recognized for their contributions especially in ensuring Bangsamoro learners learn and become responsible and productive citizens. This requires consistent investment, clear governance structures, inclusive policy and political will that values both technical quality and cultural relevance.

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About EDCOM 2

The Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM II) is a national Commission established through Republic Act No. 11899, tasked to undertake a comprehensive national assessment and evaluation of the performance of the Philippine education sector, and to propose transformative solutions, from 2023 to 2025. It is composed of lawmakers from both the Senate and the House of Representatives, and is guided by an Advisory Council, and assisted by the Technical Secretariat.



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