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**SPEECH BY PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR. AT THE CEREMONIAL SIGNING
OF THE JOINT MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR (JMC) ALIGNING THE BOARD LICENSURE
EXAMINATION FOR PROFESSIONAL TEACHERS (BLEPT) WITH THE CHED TEACHER
EDUCATION CURRICULUM**

[Delivered at the Ceremonial Hall, Malacañan Palace | 10 April 2025]

Maraming salamat to our DOLE secretary, Secretary Benny Laguesma.

[Take your seats.]

Commission on Higher Education Commission Chairperson, Popoy De Vera; the Technical [Education] and Skills Development Authority or TESDA Director Kiko Benitez; Senator Koko Pimentel; the Representative Roman Romulo; Representative Jude Acidre; Professional Regulation Commission Chairperson Charito Zamora; all the representative from the Teacher Education Institution Centers for Excellence; fellow workers in government, other distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

Every nation that aspires to achieve lasting progress must begin with the most fundamental investment—not in towering monuments of concrete and steel, but in something far more enduring: in its people.

Education unlocks the boundless potential of every Filipino. Thus, we must also embrace this profound truth: Teachers shape our nation's future.

I'll go even further than that: Teachers shape our nation.

They lay the foundation upon which generations can stand and rise. You inspire minds, you mold character, you nurture dreams.

Today, with the signing of this Joint Memorandum Circular aligning the Board Licensure Examination for Professional Teachers, or BLEPT, with the Teacher Education Curriculum, we now put this principle into action.

The landmark reform embodies our commitment to ensuring that every Filipino teacher is equipped with the skills and tools needed to teach with depth, with clarity, and with purpose. It is a vital step towards raising the quality of education for our present and, most importantly, our future generations.

Through the close cooperation of the Professional Regulation Commission and the Commission on Higher Education, we are aligning our systems to ensure the Licensure Examination reflects the actual competencies needed in classrooms today—whether in early childhood education, special needs education, or the many subjects taught in high schools across the country.

A key feature of this reform is differentiation. From now on, the licensure examinations for aspiring teachers will be conducted separately depending upon the field that they are practicing.

This means distinct examinations for those pursuing careers in elementary education and those in secondary education.

For elementary education, the focus will now include two vital specializations: Early Childhood and Special Needs Education.

Sa ilalim ng Republic Act No. 11650, tinutugunan ng Special Needs Education ang iba't ibang pangangailangan ng mga batang may kapansanan. Kabilang dito ang mga karagdagang tulong, kagamitan, at estratehiya sa loob man o sa labas man ng silid-aralan.

As for the secondary education, the specializations include English; Filipino; Mathematics; Science; Social Studies; Values Education; Technology and Livelihood Education; Technical-Vocational Teacher Education; Physical Education; as well as Culture and Arts Education.

Marami na tayong mga bagong subject ngayon na talagang kailangan nating pag-aralan nang mabuti kung tayo man ay magiging competitive sa buong mundo. At alam naman natin na ang mga teknolohiya lalong lalo na sa digital space, alam naman natin na lahat ito ay nagiging mas mahalaga sa pagpatakbo ng kahit na anong klaseng ekonomiya sa buong mundo.

Lahat ng bansa ngayon ay naghahabol at nag-i-invest nang malaki upang matiyak na ang ating mga estudyante, ang ating workforce ay maging handa dito sa bagong sistema ng ekonomiya na napakalaking – napakalaki ang ginagawa sa digital space na tinatawag.

So, that -- this is addressed by the revised structure of the BLEPT which will now consist of three core components: professional education, general education, and the examinee's chosen field of specialization.

These changes address the long-standing gaps in the Philippine Teachers Professionalization Act of 1994.

For far too long, we have seen the numbers and they tell a difficult story. From 2014 to 2024, only an average of 36.33 percent of examinees passed the BLEPT at the elementary level. At the secondary level, it was only slightly better, with an average of 43.57 percent.

Through this Joint Circular, we are making that process more than just relevant, more responsive, more -- to every single examinee.

Alongside this, we are giving education graduates not just another shot—but we are giving them a good chance. Because what they learn should prepare them for the test that they are meant to take and the classrooms they are meant to lead.

While we await the full passage of the amendatory law, we will continue to build on this system that produces better teachers—well-equipped to teach, and in doing so, uplift countless generations of Filipino learners.

Tunay naman na napapanahon na ang repormang ito. Noong ikalawa ng Abril, ginunita natin ang World Autism Awareness Day. Isa pa ito sa [paalala] na kailangan nating siguruhin ang ating sistemang pang-edukasyon nababatay sa kakayahan ng bawat mag-aaral.

Sa pagbabagong ating -- sa pagbabagong ating ipapatupad, mas maiaangkop natin ang edukasyon sa pangangailangan ng bawat mag-aaral, lalo na sa mga mayroong tinatawag na special needs.

Hindi na si – hindi na nila kailangang sumabay sa pamantayang hindi [isinasaalang-alang ang] kanilang natatanging potensyal.

Magagabayan na sila ng mga gurong iintindi sa kanilang kalagayan at maniniwala sa kanilang taglay na galing.

And because real progress means leaving no one behind. And because the heart of a strong republic is a strong educational system built by empowered and so – and compassionate teachers.

So, simula [September 2025], ipatutupad po natin ang repormang ito nang unti-unti upang mabigyan ng sapat na panahon ang ating mga institusyon at ang ating mga guro sa kanilang paghahanda rito.

Para sa ating mga guro: Alam ko po na ang sakripisyong ginagawa ninyo araw-araw upang maihatid ang de-kalidad na edukasyon sa ating mga mag-aaral.

Kung hindi po ninyo naitatanong, pareho pong guro ang aking ina at ang aking asawa. At bilang anak at asawa ng mga guro...At pala, 'yung -- idadagdag ko iyong lola ko, primary school teacher. She -- they had a very strange situation where my lola was teaching my father in Sarrat. Apparently, she was stricter with him than with all the other students.

At bilang anak at asawa ng mga guro, saksi -- saksi po ako sa dedikasyon, sa pasensiya, at sa pusong iniaalay nila sa bawat aralin at bawat estudyante.

I have said this many times before and I will say it once more. I treat teachers as the heroes of our country. [applause]

They are the ones who hold the future in their hands. And when you see teachers, when people say, "We have to help the teachers. We have to help the teachers. And why do teachers become teachers?". And the first -- the first conclusion I come to it, "May kilala ka bang milyonaryo na teacher?"

So, no teachers enter the teaching profession for money. So, why do they do it considering the sacrifice that they have to go through? Considering the difficulties that they have to face? Not only from the actual teaching environment but for all the other things that they have to – that they have to continue to do in service of their vocation. And that's why, call it a vocation. Teachers teach because it is their vocation. Parang pari iyan eh, they have – they are -- they have received that need and that compulsion, and that commitment to make the world better. And what more heroic and noble thinking can you ever find in society?

Hangad ko pong makatulong ang repormang ito hindi lamang para sa inyo, kundi para sa bawat – lahat ng nangangarap na makatuntong sa mas mataas na edukasyon, na makatulong sa kanilang mahal sa buhay, at makagawa ng mas magandang kinabukasan.

Ngayon, unti-unti na po nating naitataguyod ang isang makabagong sistemang pang-edukasyon na tumutugon sa pangangailangan ng kasalukuyan, at sa mga hamon ng kinabukasan.

At habang inaayos din natin ang batas na magbibigay ng pangmatagalang bisa sa mga pagbabagong ito, asahan ninyo ang patuloy na suporta at malasakit ng ating pamahalaan.

Nawa'y patuloy ninyong [isabuhay] ang diwa ng Bagong Pilipino—disiplinado sa harap ng pagsubok, mahusay sa piniling larangan, at tunay na makabayan sa isip, sa salita, at sa gawa.

Patuloy na maging mabuting halimbawa sa ating mga kabataan. Magsilbing gabay lalo na sa oras ng pangangailangan. At tumayong katuwang nila sa paghubog ng isang mas maunlad, makatao, at makatarungang Pilipinas.

Driven by our efforts, let us shape a *Bagong Pilipinas* where every teacher is empowered, every learner is equipped, no Filipino is left behind.

Maraming salamat po.

Mabuhay ang ating mga guro!

Mabuhay ang Bagong Pilipinas!

[applause]

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