



Public secondary schools in SOCCSKSARGEN in dire need of more classrooms

Crowded classrooms have been a perennial problem in most public schools in the SOCCSKSARGEN Region most particularly in public secondary schools. The standard classroom to student ratio (CSR) in the Philippines is one classroom for every 45 students as prescribed by Republic Act 7880 entitled "An Act Providing For the Fair and Equitable Allocation of the Department of Education, Culture and Sports' Budget for Capital Outlay."

The prescribed classroom size for a classroom-student ratio of 1:45 is about 7m x 7m for rural areas or a 7m x 9m classroom for suburban areas. The 7m x 9m classroom shall also be the standard size for all public secondary schools, regardless of location and class size. For a class of 45 students, this classroom size is believed to provide a conducive environment for learning and where a teacher could interact freely with his/her students and exercise order and control.

Table 1. Classroom-Student Ratio in Public Secondary Schools, Region XII: SY 2006-2007 to SY 2010-2011

Province/City	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011
Region XII	1:52	1:50	1:51	1:49	1:49
Cotabato	1:50	1:48	1:49	1:47	1:47
Sarangani	1:61	1:56	1:58	1:60	1:66
South Cotabato	1:49	1:46	1:48	1:46	1:44
Sultan Kudarat	1:58	1:61	1:66	1:65	1:63
Cotabato City	1:56	1:52	1:48	1:48	1:43
Gen. Santos City	1:45	1:39	1:40	1:38	1:40
Kidapawan City	1:63	1:52	1:54	1:45	1:44
Koronadal City	1:55	1:55	1:55	1:51	1:49
Tacurong City	1:60	1:61	1:69	1:65	1:62

Note: Adjusted figures.
Source: Department of Education

In the SOCCSKSARGEN Region, the classroom to student ratio for the school years' 2006-2010 remained way above the standard of 1:45. The region's CSR averaged from 1:52 in SY 2006-2007 though it slightly improved to 1:49 in SY 2010-2011. Among the provinces and cities, worst off in terms of CSR are Sarangani at 66 students per classroom, Sultan Kudarat at 63 students per classroom, and Tacurong City at 62 students per room in SY 2010-2011.

The biggest improvement in CSRs in the five previous school years was noted in Kidapawan City at 1:63 in SY 2006-2007 to 1:44 in SY 2010-2011. A deterioration in CSRs was posted by Sarangani (1:61 to 1:66), Sultan Kudarat (1:58 to 1:63) and Tacurong City (1:60 to 1:62).

Conforming to the CSR standard as of SY 2010-2011 were General Santos City with CSR of 1:40, Cotabato City (1:43), Kidapawan City (1:44), and South Cotabato (1:44). Both Cotabato City and General Santos City, however, have adopted three shifts of classes per day which indicate that there is in fact a real shortage of classrooms in the said cities. If a single-shift was adopted to meet the 1:45 standard CSR, General Santos City needs 173 more classrooms and Cotabato City, 91 classrooms.

Other areas with wide classroom gaps are Sarangani (185), Sultan Kudarat (182), Cotabato Province (64), Tacurong City (31) and Koronadal City (21). Overall, Region XII is in need of 725 more classrooms in order to meet the standard CSR on a single shift per day as of SY 2010-2011.

The shortage in classrooms has been temporarily resolved by conducting classes in multi-shifts in areas like Cotabato City and General Santos City. However, in most parts of the region, the classroom gap is still observed to be substantially large.

Enrolment in public secondary schools in Region XII has been growing annually by 2.4 percent from 210,267 in SY 2006-2007 to 230,916 in SY 2010-2011. Instructional rooms, on the other hand, had increased by 667 classrooms in SY 2010-2011 from 3,739 in SY 2006-2007. Although this translates to an average of about 133 additional classrooms each year, the annual additions are not enough to

Table 2. Enrolment and Estimated Classroom Shortage/Surplus in Public Secondary Schools, Region XII: SY 2006-2007 to SY 2010-2011

Province/City	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011
ENROLMENT					
Region XII	210,267	214,074	224,662	227,376	230,916
Cotabato	58,238	59,257	63,817	63,998	64,891
Sarangani	20,691	21,501	22,785	24,535	26,303
South Cotabato	33,899	34,298	35,409	35,929	36,482
Sultan Kudarat	27,015	27,031	27,555	27,892	28,548
Cotabato City	13,678	13,371	12,471	13,304	13,271
Gen. Santos City	32,233	33,043	35,749	35,431	35,301
Kidapawan City	9,041	9,338	10,079	9,865	9,878
Koronadal City	10,015	10,824	11,237	10,993	11,061
Tacurong City	5,457	5,411	5,560	5,429	5,181
ESTIMATED CLASSROOM SHORTAGE/(SURPLUS)					
Region XII	934	758	941	792	725
Cotabato	126	86	124	53	64
Sarangani	120	95	111	136	185
South Cotabato	59	12	44	46	(14)
Sultan Kudarat	137	156	195	194	182
Cotabato City	140	132	111	121	91
Gen. Santos City	224	175	233	176	173
Kidapawan City	57	28	36	0	(7)
Koronadal City	40	43	44	27	21
Tacurong City	30	32	43	38	31

Note: Classroom shortage/surplus was computed using the standard classroom to student ratio of 45 students per classroom on a single-shift scenario.
Source of basic data: Department of Education

Given the limited budget allocated for school building construction, other strategies adopted by the Philippine government to further reduce the classroom shortage in the country include the expansion of the beneficiaries of the Government Assistance to Students and Teachers in Private Education (GASTPE) service contracting scheme.

According to a January 31, 2011 DepEd press release, the agency has inked a Memorandum of Agreement with the League of Municipalities of the Philippines and the Department of Budget and Management in a counter parting program where 50 percent of the school building's cost would be shouldered by the municipal government and the other half will be funded by the DepEd. The DepEd will also look into the build-operate-transfer scheme, foreign grants and corporate foundations to further close the classroom gap in the Philippines.