

PRRD signs law on advanced energy, green building tech curriculum

MANILA -- President Rodrigo Duterte has signed into law a bill requiring the creation of an advanced energy and green building technologies curriculum for both undergraduate and graduate students.

Duterte signed Republic Act No. 11393 or “Advanced Energy and Green Building Technologies Curriculum Act” on Aug. 22.

The law recognizes the importance of providing assistance to higher education institutions (HEIs) “in preparing the next wave of design and construction professionals as well as the existing pool of architects, engineers, landscape engineers, landscape architects, and planners all over the country, to become adept in the incorporation of advanced energy and green building technologies in the design and construction of

green or high performance buildings.”

Under the law, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), in consultation with the Department of Energy (DOE), and CHED-recognized higher education institutions (HEIs) will be tasked to develop a curriculum on advanced energy and green building technologies at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

The curriculum shall focus on “design resilience, natural resource conservation, and sustainable design and building practices, among others, to prepare students for future careers in advanced energy and green building technologies to enable future engineers, architects, and urban planners to incorporate advanced energy

and green building technologies in the design of high-performance buildings.”

The CHED, in consultation with the DOE, will also be “mandated to develop graduate education curriculum related to advanced energy technology research, development, demonstration, and commercial application activities pertaining to energy research and development.”

Both agencies, as well as concerned stakeholders, will be tasked to promulgate the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) necessary to ensure the efficient implementation of the act.

Also under the law, advanced energy refers to technologies and services which are delivering a secure, clean, and affordable energy system.

A green building refers

to a building which, in its design construction or operation, reduces or eliminates the negative impact on the climate and natural environment of a particular area and the country in general.

On the other hand, a

high-performance building refers to a form of green building with a singular focus on its energy performance and which integrates and optimizes all major high-performance building attributes.

The law requires that

a green or high-performance building shall use all forms of renewable energy, provides good indoor or environmental air quality, and consider environment-friendly design, construction, and operation. (PNA)

DepEd welcomes law requiring neutral desks for students

MANILA -- The Department of Education (DepEd) on Wednesday said the neutral school desk law would boost its five-year school furniture replacement program.

The DepEd said it has been allocating two left-handed armchairs per set of 45 armchairs or 4 percent of total armchairs for learners in a classroom.

“The one-table and two-chair setup is adopted to address the need for flexibility, accommodation of multiple layouts, and appropriateness of furniture to be moved and organized to encourage more collaboration among learners, such as face-to-face group arrangements inside the classrooms,” it said.

Such setup also pro-

vides a wider platform for the proper and safe usage of computer tablets and laptops in the classroom, the DepEd added.

On August 22, President Rodrigo Duterte signed Republic Act 11394 or Mandatory Provision of Neutral Desks in Educational Institutions Act.

The law mandates educational institutions -- private and public -- to provide neutral desks to all students.

A neutral desk, according to the law, is a table or an armchair suitable for left-handed or right-handed students.

The law also mandates schools to provide neutral desks equivalent to 10 percent of their student population - within a year from its

effectivity.

The DepEd, meanwhile, also reported that it has procured and delivered 1,396,614 new tables and chairs for 30,412 new classrooms since 2018.

“For 2019, about 858,950 new tables and chairs are in the process of being procured for 18,734 new classrooms in 2,605 schools nationwide, bringing a total of 2,255,564 new tables and chairs for 33,017 new classrooms,” it said.

Citing that the proposed 2020 budget for school furniture is PHP4,833,515,000, the DepEd said it would be able to purchase additional 1,943,546 tables and chairs for 42,251 new classrooms in various schools. (PNA)

AFP backs PRRD desire to end insurgency threat

MANILA -- The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) on Friday said it is one with President Rodrigo R. Duterte in his desire to end local communist armed conflict now.

Being at the forefront of the anti-insurgency campaign, AFP spokesperson Marine Brig. Gen. Edgard Arevalo, said the military is devoted to attaining that ardent desire of the President and Commander-in-Chief.

"We have articulated that to him in the past, and his recent pronouncement only underscores his firm resolve to stop the menace the CPP-NPA brings," he said in a message forwarded to reporters.

The AFP, he said, has already evaluated the gains made by the government and how to use it to its advantage, Arevalo added.

"We have assessed the remaining challenges we need to address to attain our overarching objective of setting the conditions towards secured communi-

ties that will usher peace and development especially in the countryside," he said.

He added that the AFP will also use all means available—lethal and non-lethal—to hit the enemy and hit them hard.

"We will employ the different lines of efforts with other agencies of government address or help alleviate the identified social issues that the NPA capitalizes," Arevalo said.

With the number of NPA regular member and their supporters like the Milisya ng Bayan continuously declining, along with surrenders, armed encounters, and arrest, the AFP merely has to maintain the initiative to sustain the gains being made the government in the past months.

"They die during armed encounters, surrender, or arrested. The latest among the high profile personalities arrested was Esterlita Suaybaguio a member of

the Central Committee and Secretary of the Metro Manila Regional Party Committee," he added.

But to really eliminate the threats posed by the NPA and its allies, recruitment in schools and in other parts of the country by the communist rebels must be halted.

"Together, in a whole of nation/whole of government passion, we are confident we will decisively defeat the terrorist CPP-NPA during the term of President Rodrigo Duterte. We have the upper hand we just have to maintain the initiative and sustain the gains," Arevalo said.

The CPP-NPA is listed as a terrorist organization by the United Kingdom, European Union, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, and the Philippines. (PNA)

PH's 2nd missile frigate launch set in September

MANILA -- The Philippine Navy's (PN) second missile frigate, the BRP Antonio Luna (FF-151), will be formally launched in the first week of September.

"Our second frigate will be launched (in the) first week of September. By that time, the first frigate (BRP Jose Rizal (FF-150)) will be finished (fitting its equipment)," said Navy flag-officer-in-command Vice Admiral Robert Empedrad during an interview with reporters at the PN headquarters at Naval Station Jose Andrada, Roxas Boulevard, Manila Wednesday.

The launching ceremonies will take place at the Hyundai Heavy Industries (HHI) shipyard in Ulsan, South Korea.

The BRP Jose Rizal, the country's first missile frigate, was launched at the same facility last May 23.

The first missile frigate is expected to be delivered to the PN by April 2020 while

the BRP Antonio Luna is scheduled for September of the same year.

The Philippines and HHI signed a PHP16-billion contract for two missile-armed frigates with another PHP2 billion set aside for its weapon systems and munition.

The steel-cutting for BRP Jose Rizal took place in April 1, 2018 while the same ceremony for BRP Antonio Luna transpired on November the same year. This event officially signified the start of the actual construction of the frigates.

Meanwhile, the keel-laying ceremony for BRP Jose Rizal took place in October 2018 as the formal recognition of the start of the ship's construction.

Keel-laying refers to the official start of the construction of any ship and is considered among the four highlights of any surface vessel with the other three being steel-cutting, commissioning, and decom-

missioning.

Both ships are armed with an Oto Melara 76mm Super Rapid main gun, an Aselsan SMASH 30mm remote-controlled secondary cannon, anti-submarine torpedoes, and anti-air and ship missiles.

The Jose Rizal-class frigates of the PN are also equipped with a Hanwha Systems' Naval Shield combat management system (CMS), which integrates all shipboard sensors and weapons and decides on which is ideal to deal with any incoming threats.

This system can also detect and track air, surface and sub-surface targets and is used in various configurations by the Republic of Korea Navy, Royal Malaysian Navy and the Indonesian Navy.

"It is a strategic move as (these) ship(s) will be the most powerful in the PN due to its multiple capabilities," Empedrad earlier said. (PNA)