

7. Division Supervisors in Mathematics and Science of the identified Schools Division Offices (SDOs) are requested to monitor and ensure compliance with the foregoing provision and provide the necessary technical assistance to support the smooth and effective implementation of the activity.

8. Expenses incurred relative to the conduct of the iSTEP UP orientation and baseline data collection activities shall be charged against available DOST-SEI funds and local funds of the identified schools, subject to the usual accounting and auditing rules and regulations.

9. Immediate dissemination of and strict compliance with this Memorandum are desired.

SALUSTIANO T. JIMENEZ JD, EdD, CESO III
Regional Director

Enclosure: iSTEP UP Briefer
References: Letter Request from DOST-SEI
To be indicated in the Perpetual Index under the following subjects:

MATHEMATICS
RESEARCH OR STUDIES
SCIENCE

CLMD-GBL





19 May 2025

DR. SALUSTIANO T. JIMENEZ CESO III
 Regional Director
 Department of Education Regional Office No. VIII
 Government Center, Candahug
 Palo, Leyte

ATTN: MS. GLENDALE B. LAMISERIA
 Education Program Supervisor for Mathematics
 Curriculum and Learning Management Division

Handwritten initials/signature

Dear Dr. Jimenez:

Greetings!

The Department of Science and Technology – Science Education Institute (DOST-SEI) is currently conducting the Baseline Study for the Inclusive Science & Technology Education Program for Uplifting the Performance of Filipino Learners (iSTEP UP) in Eastern Visayas. The study aims to gather data on student learning experiences, school environment, and STEM-related needs to support the development of evidence-based interventions under iSTEP UP.

In line with this, the DOST-SEI respectfully seeks the continued support and coordination of the Department of Education Regional Office VIII for the conduct of the Orientation and Survey Administration among the identified participating schools in Eastern Samar. The study activities shall be conducted in close coordination with the concerned Schools Division Offices (SDOs), school heads, advisers, and designated focal persons to ensure the smooth, orderly, and ethical implementation of all research procedures.

The activity shall consist of two (2) major components:

1. **Orientation or Consent/Assent Activity** – the initial phase wherein the study will be formally introduced to eligible Grade 7 students and their parents/guardians. During this activity, the research team will discuss the study's purpose, objectives, procedures, expected duration, potential benefits, possible risks, and ethical considerations, including data privacy and confidentiality measures. This activity also aims to secure the informed consent of parents/guardians and the assent of participating students prior to data collection.

Participant Requirements:

- Grade 7 students (required participants); and
- Parents/guardians of Grade 7 students (encouraged but not required to attend).

2. **Survey Administration or Baseline Data Collection Proper** – the actual administration of the approved survey instruments among Grade 7 students who have provided assent and whose parents/guardians have granted informed consent. The activity will be conducted in accordance with established research protocols and ethical standards.

Participant Requirements:

- Grade 7 students who have completed the assent process and whose parents/guardians have provided informed consent.

In line with this, may we respectfully request your good office to assist in coordinating with the concerned Schools Division Offices (SDOs) and participating schools regarding the following schedules:

School	Orientation	Survey Administration
Sta. Fe National High School (SDO Borongan City)	June 9, 2026, Tuesday 03:00PM – 04:00PM	June 10, 2026, Wednesday Batch 1: 03:00PM – 03:40PM
Sulat National High School (SDO Eastern Samar)	June 9, 2026, Tuesday 10:00AM – 11:00AM	June 10, 2026, Wednesday Batch 1: 10:00AM – 10:40AM Batch 2: 11:00AM – 11:40AM
Taft National High School (SDO Eastern Samar)	June 9, 2026, Tuesday 10:00AM – 11:00AM	June 10, 2026, Wednesday Batch 1: 10:00AM – 10:40AM Batch 2: 11:00AM – 11:40AM
Dolores National High School (SDO Eastern Samar)	June 10, 2026, Wednesday 03:00PM – 04:00PM	June 11, 2026, Thursday Batch 1: 11:20AM – 12:00NN Batch 2: 03:30PM – 04:10PM

In addition, we respectfully request assistance from the participating schools for the following logistical and coordination requirements:

For the Orientation or Consent/Assent Activity

1. Dissemination of orientation information to Grade 7 students and parents/guardians;
2. Provision of venue and basic logistical requirements;
3. Coordination with advisers and school focal persons; and
4. Provision of master list of Grade 7 students per section (with age).

For the Survey Administration or Baseline Data Collection Proper

1. Allow the utilization of Grade 7 classrooms for survey administration. Existing classroom arrangements may be maintained, and no rearrangement of seats shall be necessary; and
2. Assist in coordinating the orderly participation of Grade 7 students during the scheduled survey administration.

Rest assured that all activities shall be conducted in accordance with approved ethical research protocols and applicable data privacy regulations. The DOST-SEI research team shall closely coordinate with the participating schools to minimize disruption to regular school activities and ensure the proper welfare and protection of all participants throughout the conduct of the study.

Attached to this letter is the project brief for your reference.

Should you have any questions or require further details, please feel free to contact our research personnel, Mr. Byron Ray N. Balasta at bnbalasta@sei.dost.gov.ph.

We greatly appreciate your support and guidance in this endeavor and look forward to working closely with your office and the schools involved in this initiative.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,


ENGR. ALBERT G. MARIÑO
Director III and Officer-in-Charge, DOST-SEI

iSTEP UP Baseline Study Brief for Schools

Title of the Study

Baseline Study for the Inclusive Science & Technology Education Program for Uplifting the Filipino Learners (iSTEP UP) in Eastern Visayas

Implementing Agency

The study is being conducted by the Department of Science and Technology – Science Education Institute (DOST-SEI) through its research team as part of the implementation of the **Inclusive Science & Technology Education Program for Uplifting the Filipino Learners (iSTEP UP)**.

Background of the Study

The iSTEP UP Project is a supplementary intervention designed to enhance the performance of students in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), particularly by improving students' STEM readiness and strengthening teachers' STEM instructional delivery.

Prior to the implementation of the intervention, DOST-SEI shall conduct a baseline study to determine the current conditions of STEM education among selected participating schools in Eastern Visayas. The findings of the study will serve as reference for future program implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

Objectives of the Baseline Study

The study aims to:

1. Examine the current conditions of STEM education among selected Grade 7 students in participating schools;
2. Gather baseline information related to students' school experiences, emotions, academic self-efficacy, and STEM readiness;
3. Generate evidence-based inputs for the enhancement and implementation of the iSTEP UP intervention; and
4. Support the development of science and technology education strategies and student support mechanisms.

Participating Schools

The baseline study shall be conducted in the following participating schools in Eastern Visayas:

- Dolores National High School
- Sulat National High School
- Sta. Fe National High School
- Taft National High School

Target Participants

The study targets:

- Grade 7 students aged 12 years old and above; and
- Parents/guardians for purposes of informed consent.

Participation in the study is strictly voluntary. Students will only participate after:

1. Parent/guardian informed consent has been secured; and
2. Student assent has been obtained.

Study Activities

1. Orientation and Consent/Assent Activity

The Orientation Activity serves as the formal introduction of the study to Grade 7 students and their parents/guardians. During this activity, the DOST-SEI research team shall discuss:

- Purpose and objectives of the study;
- Procedures and duration of participation;
- Potential benefits and minimal risks;
- Confidentiality and data privacy measures;
- Rights of participants;
- Voluntary nature of participation; and
- Assent and consent procedures.

This activity also provides an opportunity for participants and parents/guardians to ask questions regarding the study before deciding whether to participate.

As part of the ethical requirements of the study, the following forms shall be provided and secured prior to the survey administration:

- *Informed Assent Form (for 12-15 years old)* – to be signed by the student to indicate voluntary willingness to participate in the study.
- *Parental/Guardian Consent Form* – to be signed by the parent or legal guardian to indicate permission for the student's participation in the study
- *Informed Consent Form (for 15 years old and above)* – to be signed by the student and parent to indicate voluntary willingness and consent to participate in the study.

Only students with completed and signed consent and assent forms shall be included in the baseline survey administration.

Participants: Grade 7 students (required); and parents/guardians (encouraged but not required)

2. Survey Administration or Baseline Data Collection Proper

The Survey Administration refers to the actual conduct of the baseline survey among Grade 7 students who have completed the assent process and whose parents/guardians have provided informed consent.

Students shall answer a structured questionnaire designed to collect baseline information related to STEM education and school experiences. The survey may be completed in less than 30 minutes.

Participants: Grade 7 students with completed assent and parental consent

Nature of Participation

Participation in the study is voluntary. Students may:

- Decline participation;
- Skip questions they are uncomfortable answering; or
- Withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or consequence.

Participation or non-participation shall not affect:

- Grades;
- Academic standing;
- Access to school programs; or
- Relationships with teachers and school personnel.

Risks and Safeguards

The study involves minimal risk and no physical harm. Some survey questions may cause mild psychosocial discomfort as students reflect on their school experiences, emotions, or academic confidence.

To ensure participant protection:

- Participation is voluntary;
- Teachers will not access individual responses;
- Responses will remain confidential;
- Students may stop participation anytime; and
- Appropriate support may be provided through the school guidance counselor when necessary.

Additionally:

- Recruitment and data collection will be conducted by research staff;
- Grading teachers will not be present during data collection; and
- Students who decline participation will not face academic or social consequences.

Confidentiality and Data Privacy

All collected information shall be treated with strict confidentiality and handled in accordance with the provisions of Republic Act No. 10173 or the Data Privacy Act of 2012.

Key confidentiality measures include:

- Individual responses shall not be shared with teachers, school officials, or DepEd;
- Results shall only be reported in aggregated form;
- Personal identifiers shall be replaced with code numbers; and
- Research records shall be securely stored by the DOST-SEI research team.

Timeline of Activities

The study activities shall be conducted based on the agreed schedule coordinated with the concerned Schools Division Offices and participating schools.