“Ready or Not?”
“Senior High School on its first year of Implementation”
By: Mary Charlotte R. Bonus
Teacher III-Mariveles National High School-Cabcaben

Starting School Year 2012-2013, the Department of Education (DepEd) implements the enhanced K to 12 (Kindergarten to Grade 12) Basic Education Program, adding two more years to the existing 10-year basic curriculum. The mandatory kindergarten education was put in place through a law that requires all five-year-olds to enroll and finish kindergarten education before going to Grade 1. The new program seeks to cure what ails the Philippine basic and secondary education system.

But not everyone agrees that the additional years will result in better-educated, competitive, and employable graduates.

The Senior High School starts this year against a backdrop of perennial woes: lack of teachers, shortage in classrooms, school buildings, and textbooks, a curriculum that needs overhauling, and a budget that even education officials call a “survival budget.” Inadequacies of the basic education curriculum have been observed for many years. Proposals to restore Grade 7 or add an extra year to basic education have been put forward to the President Task Force on Education in 2008.

And with that, the question now is, are we ready for Grade 11, the first of the two new senior high school years that have been added to the curriculum by virtue of the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013? By the start of school year 2016-2017, millions of students across the country who would have otherwise graduated from four years of high school would make up the first batch to enroll in Grade 11. After Grade 12, when they graduate in March 2018, they would constitute the first batch of high school students to finish the K-to-12 program.
What does this mean in practical terms? It means, public schools would have to find extra classrooms, restrooms, teachers, textbooks, etc. to accommodate the new Grade 11 population that should have gone on to freshman college studies in the earlier setup, but which would now remain for another two years in the school. The old school system replaced by K-to-12 leaned for decades on the annual turnaround of graduating students to make way for incoming batches from the lower years to use existing school facilities.

This time, the first year of implementation of the added senior high school under K-to-12 gives secondary schools the problem of where to put their Grade 11 classes. The burden is even more acute in public schools, which mandated by law to carry the extra two years, even as they are more typically deprived of the resources and facilities that private schools enjoy. Private junior high schools, while required to adhere to the minimum requirements of the K-to-12 curriculum, may choose not to offer Grades 11-12, which means their students will either have to find another private schools that offers the senior high school years, or enroll in a public high school – further adding to the sudden population bulge in those campuses.

The implementation of curriculum is considered as one of the most prominent phases in developing countries, and this is greatly influenced by teachers’ readiness and competence. Ready or not we have no choice but to implement the new curriculum and as saying says there is no permanent thing in this world but change.

http://www.gov.ph/k-12/