BATTLE CRY

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“Isulong ang edukasyon!” This has been the battle cry of DEPED since the COVID 19 casted immeasurable effects to education. But has anyone seen the cry of the people behind the country’s educational system in this battle?

Every single day is a day that should be won by many with the already chaotic world as the battle arena. It is as if we have declared a war that has commenced months ago. The closing match, no one knows yet. It seems everyone is up to their lives’ biggest battle where the opponent is unseen, a virus that caught us big time, the Corona Virus.

Education is one of the sectors that is adversely affected by the pandemic since it broke out. Since then, nobody from DEPED has turned a blind eye into the pandemic’s possible effects to education. And lo and behold, numerous contingency plans were projected and designed to compensate for the time and opportunities that the pandemic ransacked in the country’s educational system.

In this invisible battle, the side which has incurred most losses is the students’ side, the side that should have already been polished and raked with learnings months ago. These students who were coined as the nature’s future are facing turmoil as they vie for mind enrichment and growth since they are still deprived with limitless education. But DEPED doesn’t pause on fixing the way through and strengthening the foundation of learning despite the current situation so as the country’s educational system does not collapse.

Who then is the backbone of DEPED from where all these efforts root from? These are the teachers who greatly contribute to these noble and selfless goals of the
department, teachers who pressed their backs on the walls to stay focused when tiredness gets in the way, these are the teachers who turn unconscious of day light and night time, teachers who have occupied a certain portion of their homes to set up work stations, these are the teachers who sit, eat and sleep beside laptops and papers, these are the teachers who just like our health care workers, work on the front lines.

Teachers today have a fair share of frontline workloads due to the current demand of education. The pandemic has turned the world almost upside down and the conventional way of living completely became unconventional, and this applies to education. Countless safety measures and guidelines were put in place long before and these hinder face to face interaction which eventually resulted to restrictions in the delivery of education.

The current situation brought about by the pandemic has paved way to the so-called Alternative Delivery Mode of Learning or ADM. This is an innovative and strategic work around plan designed by DEPED to continue upholding education amid the pandemic. And by alternative delivery mode, this refers to distance learning modalities wherein distance is emphasized among students and teachers to help fight the spread of virus. Among the distance learning modalities are online learning, modular learning, and television and radio-based instruction. Of the three modalities, modular learning is the highly adapted by schools wherein modules are the core learning materials. But this platform exposes teachers to threat of contracting COVID as they will be asked to go outdoors to deliver and at the same time retrieve the modules.

Modular distance learning has taken so much of teachers’ time from preparation and evaluation of modules up to printing and packing and this learning modality seems to take a toll to teachers due to the delivery and retrieval methods proposed by DEPED. This has been questioned many times but recent memorandums from DEPED have cemented the protocol that teachers will be distributing and retrieving the modules. The department reiterated that the safety of teachers is of paramount importance that is why
they are strictly implementing measures to mitigate the risks to be faced by teachers in
the conduct of modular distance learning. Among these measures are the wearing of
personal protective equipment by teachers and disinfection process of returned modules.

John Eric Mendoza of The Manila Times wrote on his article that DEPED reported
on a Senate hearing that 598 teaching and non-teaching staff have contracted Covid 19.
It is just to be hoped for that this number does not multiply. This has been the cry of the
teachers who relentlessly work hard to still deliver quality education. That in times of
uncertainty, as they take risks of acquiring an invisible virus, they should not remain
unnoticed and unfavored. That behind the passionate faces are eerie heart and minds
trying to veer away from the virus. That behind all those fears, they still choose to go out
for the students to not go out. And that aside from keeping their own home and family
safe, is the effort of keeping education accessible and steadfast.

References:
John Eric Mendoza, The Manila Times