FACING THE BACKLASH: HAS CHANGE COME?

by:
Delson C. Perez

With two years left as the highest ranking official in the Philippines, Rodrigo Duterte’s commitment to provide quality education to the Filipinos, particularly the poor, remains in question.

The latest results of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) which measured the reading comprehension, scientific ability and mathematical ability of students exposed the status of Philippine education which is far below the global standards. The country registered below the average of participating Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and worst, ranked last among the 79 participating countries. This is an irony with what the government claims of providing quality life-long education to the students responsive to the needs and demands of higher education and competitive working environment.

In her speech at UP Diliman two years ago, Department of Education Secretary Leonor Magtolis Briones discussed the administrative reforms in the Department of Education.

Briones put the word “Reforms” alongside administration as to indicate a dynamic process. It is a process intended to bring about positive change in methods, systems and outcomes of public institutions.

Briones stressed that the push to undertake administrative reforms is driven by one or a combination of several factors. Foremost of these is the mandate that the institution is obligated to deliver, and its concomitant public expectations. Another driver is the continuing pursuit of greater effectiveness and efficiency, to which many theories
and approaches of administrative reforms are directed. Finally, changing conditions, both internal and external, are also a constant driver of administrative reforms.

Two years after the delivery of the speech, the envisioned reforms in the county’s “lagging” educational system focused on meeting the global standards of education. The continuously evolving curriculum of the country shifted from mastery the skills and competencies to developing lifelong 21st century learners equipped with social and economic aspects. The concerns and issues of constant changes in the curriculum, incompetent teachers, insufficiency of learning materials, overloaded work task of teachers, mismatch in strands being offered and the needs of the industry and low salary of teachers still haunt the education department. The problems of yesterday continue to hamper positive and favorable changes in education today.

The “Sulong Edukalidad” Program of the government rallies for a macro-effort involvement of the government, community, stakeholders, and different institutions for quality basic education. The basic components of the program are: K to 12 curriculum review and update, improving the learning environment, teacher’s upskilling and reskilling, and engagement of stakeholders for support and collaboration.

To address the problem is to know the problem first. The 2019 PISA results evidently showed the backlogs and lapses in the current status of Philippine education as compared to the countries of the world. It rang an alarm to the government to analyze and to assess the programs of one of the most budgeted departments of the government. Baby steps for globalizing the Philippine education are still considered steps. At least, we have tasted the problem; the concern now is how to digest it.

Sense of urgency is waving.
References:

https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1199963/briones-dismisses-claims-k-12-program-a-failure-amid-low-pisa-ph-results


https://www.deped.gov.ph/2019/12/04/sulong-edukalidad/