THE SCHOOL HEAD SIGNIFICANT IMPACT IN TEACHERS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

by:
Edwin Riel Bermillo
ESP II - HRD, Schools Division Office

School Heads exercise significant influence on teacher professional development. There is an emerging consensus that teacher professional development is vitally important to educational reform as we approach the next millennium. In fact, it seems trite to assert that teacher professional development is critically important to school improvement focused on enhanced student learning outcomes. Nevertheless, there continues to be a need to communicate the importance of continuous learning and development for educators, individually and collectively, to people in and out of schools.

Within schools, the principal is in a unique position to influence the implementation of these guiding principles and to affect the overall quality of teacher professional development. One of the primary tasks of school principals is to create and maintain positive, and healthy teaching and learning environments for everyone in the school, including the professional staff. This article examines the ways in which school head’s influence teachers’ learning and development in their schools. Also, it describes the roles and responsibilities in teacher professional development, and their impact on the nature of principals’ work, the growth and development of teachers, and impact on the school and its environment.

There are identified four areas where school heads have the opportunity to have substantial impact on teacher learning in schools: (1) the principal as an instructional leader and learner; (2) the creation of a learning environment; (3) direct involvement in the design, delivery and content of professional development; and (4) the assessment of professional development outcomes.
The roles and tasks for school heads in the area of teacher professional is in no way meant to be a prescriptive job description. It is most helpful when used as a framework to build understanding about the important and mutually beneficial connections between leadership, teacher growth and development, and the creation of authentic, professional learning cultures in schools. School Heads are important contributors to teacher professional development. However, they should not be viewed as gatekeepers of teachers’ learning, any more than teachers are of student learning. There is always the danger that by exercising significant influence through expertise, power and resources school head can make themselves indispensable agents of teacher professional development. My view is that highly effective principals work to move teachers toward greater levels of independence and professional autonomy.

References:
