TRANSFORMING GOOD SCHOOLS TO BETTER SCHOOLS

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As anchored in its Vision “As a learner-centered public institution, the Department of Education continuously improves itself to better serve its stakeholders”, nowadays, DepEd is facing a lot of challenges on how to cope up with this changing world to make the educational system in the Philippines more responsive and relevant to the needs of the community particularly of the local and global market.

As Secretary Leonor Briones reiterated on her speech on Administrative Reforms in the Department of Education in her lecture series, she said that the administrative reforms will bring changes in systems that will significantly produce positive outcomes in every educational institution in the country. These are for its continuous improvement to meet the expectations of the stakeholders to quality, equitable and complete basic education.

In fulfilling its mandate, DepED introduces major changes in curriculum and approaches in teaching, one of its major reforms was the implementation of the K to 12 curriculum which strengthens early childhood education, the use of mother tongue as language of learning from Kinder to Grade 3, shifting the curriculum approach from discipline-based to spiral-progression, from the basic to complex and providing various tracks towards either further education or employment, these were all meant to uplift the educational system in general and to produce productive, responsible and well-discipline members of our society in particular.

These reforms were institutionalized 6 years ago. In general, every institution seems to be able to adopt to these changes and classified themselves as good schools. A
good school can be defined as a school that cares for its learners, studying and knowing the needs, interests and strengths of learners and motivates them to learn. Moreover, it guarantees all learners acquire basic fundamentals of literacy and numeracy and develops them holistically, in character, knowledge and critical competencies.

Despite of these reforms, there are still a bunch of challenges in the department, recently, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) which examines what students know in reading, Mathematics and Science, and what they can do with what they know revealed that Philippines ranked below the average of participating OECD countries when it comes to reading comprehension, Math and Science that raised so many questions to ponder on how can we really provide our stakeholders with quality, effective and efficient education.

Region III Director Nicolas T. Capulong on his speech during the Regional PESPA Convention crystallized that we should not be contented of having the so-called “Good School” because according to him, we should aim for the highest possible level, we should transform our schools to be a better school.

But the challenge is how to transform our school to better school? Dr. Capulong further explained that better school is characterize by the following:

1. Better School Heads

Our school heads should be committed, goal oriented and future oriented. They should be equipped with technological know-how to face the challenges of the new millennium in order for them to provide quality, responsive and relevant service to its clienteles.

Kafele (2018) on his article “Is My School a Better School BECAUSE I Lead It?” emphasized that leadership matters is an essential component of success for anybody overseeing the day-to-day operations of a school, and one who is seeking
to improve the quality of instruction in their institutions hard-won wisdom on such critical issues such as teenage pregnancy, drugs, violence, or other markers of societal dysfunction.

As School head, we should be able to define our purpose in the school to effectively and efficiently implement our administrative and supervisory plans. Setting the directions of our school by realizing the vision and mission of the Department is likewise expected of us to perform. School heads should be competent to dispense your work, through constant reading and good practice, hence, we are expected to possess and keep the dignity and our integrity which talk about our personality.

2. Better Performance Indicators

We should transform drop-out rates, poor retention rates, completion and cohort survival rates in its better performance. Though there are no standard gauge to measure the performance of our learners, but the National Achievement Test, Division Assessment Test and other sort of evaluation are the only possible parameter to measure their performance, hence, we should make them perform better.

Conduct intervention programs such as intensive home visitations, regular teacher-parent conference and scientific root cause analysis particularly for the learners who are at risk of failing and dropping-outs. Develop the culture of research to identify the underlying factors and how to implement DepED programs, projects and activities effectively and efficiently.

Focus on developing their basic skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing. Innovation is the key to make their performance better. Constantly provide technical assistance to your teachers and regularly monitor the progress charts of your learners. Religiously Implement the School Feeding Program to eradicate poor performance and attendance and find ways and solutions to make better performance indicators.
3. Better Teachers

Indeed, teachers are the most influential steward of imparting knowledge, skills and attitudes to our learners, since they are in the frontline of delivering education, they should at all times possess the highest degree of expertise and professionalism.

To ensure better teachers, it was pointed out that the school head should transform good teachers to be better teachers by setting clear standards of practice such as practice in the selection and recruitment of teachers to assure that our learners will be handled by the most qualified teachers to impart necessary knowledge to them.

Competent teachers are those who continuously learn through rigid and intensified trainings, seminars and workshops. Therefore, providing regular School Learning Action Cell or Learning and Development Program will eventually help them to be effective and efficient teachers. Share with your teachers more about their benefits, promotion systems, their duties and responsibilities, how to be transferred and Magna Carta for teachers.

Attract better candidates in the teaching profession and be fair and objective in giving performance rating and always look for their evidences and assist them to be a better version of themselves in the teaching profession.

4. Better Instructions

Having better teachers mean better instructions. There should be comprehensive and relevant motivation for our learners to learn. Teachers should revisit the art of questioning and always consider individualize teaching strategies for our diverse and unique learners. Children will be able to experience the joy and fun of learning if the instruction is interesting and enjoyable.

In better instructions, always consider the different learning styles of our learners. Many of them are modern, hence, making use of technology in education would be of
great advantage. Some are visual, aural, verbal, physical, logical, social and solitary, therefore, using varied techniques in instructions would ensure that teachers will be able to provide an avenue for each type of learners to excel and learn better in their own unique way.

For better instructions, teachers should be able to apply integration of knowledge within and across learning areas. Let teachers produce innovations that will help learners learn better.

As an adage says “If a child can’t learn the way we teach, maybe we should teach the way they learn.” Better instructions mean teachers have the full understanding of learners way of learning so they will meet at the middle, when teachers facilitate learning in a scientific way, children learn with fun and enjoyment and that would mean better outputs.

5. Better School – Community Relationship

Hughes et. al (2016) enlightened that when schools, families, and communities work together, student outcomes are better. Having harmonious community relationship focuses on the ways where family and community engagement can enhance schools' efforts to improve outcomes and highlights specific strategies schools can use to more effectively engage families and communities.

When there is an open communication between the school and community, a series of networking and linkages develops and a sense of leadership and fellowships ignite changes towards collaboration and integration of ideas and unified efforts and strategies to get things done and achieve everyone’s concern for the betterment of their children in the school. Community Relationship is thereby vital to develop better school, each member is given an equal opportunities and roles and responsibilities as agent of transforming the school’s organization where there will be sense of ownership of the program, projects and activities towards better result.
As a whole, we should always aspire to be better, through active collaborations of the key players in providing quality and complete basic education to our clienteles, we will be able to produce better schools, better learners, better teachers and better educational system.

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