Why SBM?

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The Philippine educational system is constantly evolving, embracing new trends in the educational policies and practices to ensure that the output of the system will be able to adapt and respond to the needs of the changing times and eventually improve their quality of life and contribute to the progress of the economy.

Over the years, the educational system has been undergoing rehabilitation and development to keep pace with the international trends in education. Areas like quality and excellence, relevance and responsiveness, access and equity and efficiency and effectiveness in school management and administration are the main focus of assessment and evaluation and constant re-examination. As such, policies and processes as well as structures of the educational resources bring about the continuous changes of the educational systems.

However, De Guzman (2007) stated that the Philippine educational system, just like the systems of education among developing countries, are plague by restraining trends like low performance of students, recurrent shortages, myopic view of the system, unmotivated teachers and principals, low accountability level and poor monitoring and evaluation level. This led to the adoption of policy on authority and power-sharing to facilitate self-management and improved decision making processes to address these restraining trends. De Guzman further noted that one of these megatrends is decentralization of school management which came to be known as school-based management.

The road to decentralization in the Philippine educational system was started during the Marcos era. It was further strengthened by Educational Act of 1982 by giving the Department of Education the bureaucratic autonomy to formulate plan, and implement educational policies and innovations at all levels. Local Government Code of 1991 paved the way for greater decentralization as it expanded the participation of stakeholders in education.

Another significant milestone in the history of Philippine education is the passage of Republic Act No. 9155 or the Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001 and the implementation of Basic Education Reform Agenda 2006-2010. One of the targets was improving outcomes of learning by getting all schools to continuously improve through school-based management. Thus, DepEd, in 2003-2009, rolled out school-based management to all public schools.

But what is SBM? Caldwell (2005) defines SBM as “the systematic decentralization to the school level of authority and responsibility to make decisions on significant matters related to school operations within a centrally determined framework of goals, policies, curriculum, standards, and accountability. In essence, School-Based Management is based on the principles of shared-governance (De Guzman, 2007). It recognizes that every unit in the education bureaucracy has a particular role and task and responsibility inherent in the office.

In the school context, decentralization, which paved the way for school-based management practices, is a management issue at large. It may be broad or constrained depending on how school principals share and distribute authority and the extent to which they assume responsibility and accountability. Hence, in placing SBM at work, the system needs the school principals who know how to manage resources and schools, who can think strategically and who know how to support operation, backed up by the central office that is lean and can provide direction, policy, resources and standards.

Earlier studies have highlighted the importance of local decision-making being pre-eminentally concerned with learning and teaching and the support of learning and teaching, especially in building the capacity of staff to design and deliver a curriculum and pedagogy that meets the needs of students, taking account of priorities in the local setting, including a capacity to identify needs and monitor outcomes. Also evident is the importance of building the capacity of the community to support the efforts of schools. Expressed another way, the introduction of
school-based management may have no impact on learning unless these measures, broadly described as capacity building and capacity utilization, have been successful.

Aside from the leadership and administrative skills of the school heads, Gropello (2006) stated that the success of the SBM models depends to a large extent on the assets of the school—financial and material resources, capability building programs, and competent human resource—teachers.

At a macro-level, international studies of student achievement such as TIMSS and TIMSS-R and PISA and PISA+ have confirmed the importance of a balance of centralization and decentralization, with a relatively high level of school-based management being one element of decentralization, including local decision-making on matters concerned with personnel, professionalism, monitoring of outcomes, and the building of community support. These reflect the importance of intellectual capital and social capital in building a system of self-managing schools. The building of intellectual capital is an instance of capacity building. Social capital refers to the building of mutually supportive relationships among school, home, community, church, business, and industry, and other agencies in the public and private sectors (Cadwell, 2005).

With these findings, DepEd developed and distributed SBM manuals that will ensure its institutionalization, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. SBM Assessment tool based “Framework and Standards for Effective School-Based Management Practice towards Improved Learning Outcomes” which was necessary to determine the directions of improvements to attain the mature level of SBM practice. Specifically, the tool is evidence-based and provides a baseline for those who are just starting a culture of SBM or for those schools progressing toward the next level of SBM practice. In line with this, other assessment tools like the CB PAST or Competency-based Performance Appraisal for teachers and NCBTS-TSNA were also developed and used to evaluate performance of school leaders and teachers for these two key players have to take the lead to make SBM practices in the school work.

In BESRA Implementation and Accountability Plan, 2010-2012 (BIAP), KRT 1 (SBM) progressive goals can be seen: SY 2009-2010, 90% of schools shall have reached Level 1; (2010-2011, 50% of schools in Level 1 in SY 2009-2010 shall have reached Level 2; (2 011-2012, at least 50% of schools in Level 2 in previous school year shall have reached Level 3). Furthermore, results of SBM assessment in 16,158 schools as of end of March 2010 revealed that 12,253 elementary schools and 2,176 high schools are in level 1 while 1,016 elementary schools and 332 High schools are in level 2, and 260 elementary schools and 121 high schools achieved the mature level or level 3. The data shows that as to the level of practice of school-based management in public schools, the trend is progressive. The next step would be to find concrete evidence that SBM practices can actually lead to better learning outcomes.

This means that still, more studies should be done to find significant evidences whether school-based management, given the existing school condition had significant effect in different aspects of school performance focusing on finding interrelationship among the assets of the key players in education as the input—the administrators, teachers, school, and the community, the process—School-based management practices, and the output—school performance, student, flow, resources generated for school improvement and accomplishments of School Annual Implementation Plan.

References:
- DepEd Memo 286, s. 2009