

## BRIDGING TEACHER LEADERSHIP TO SCHOOL PRINCIPALSHIP

by:

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Being a school administrator is never an easy task. School principals are one of the significant influencers in the field of education. They are in charge of the realization of the goals, vision, mission, and objectives of the school. In order to make schools function efficiently, the role of the school principals is vital and essential. They are the administrators who are in authority in delivering leadership in the promotion and execution of all educational agenda and activities in the school and community. The success of the school governance and operation is possible through the effective leadership of a school principal.

The experiences of school principals as teacher leaders are deemed essential in the way they operate their schools. Teacher leadership, as defined by the Institute for Educational Leadership (2001), refers to teachers who extend their efforts outside their classrooms by committing themselves to additional learning opportunities and professional challenges. Teacher leaders are those who remain teaching while persuading performances of other educators in their schools.

The concept of teacher leadership originated from the professionalization discussion conducted for the last two decades. Thus, for almost two decades, teacher leadership as a concept for leadership is not new (Frost, 2008). However, the role of teachers most often centered on its traditional function to teach, facilitate and assess, and leadership tends to be neglected because there is no accord in relation to elaborated perception and in the operation of teacher leadership (Aquino, 2017)

It is a known fact that teachers have been working and engaging themselves in doing duties and responsibilities outside the borders of their particular classrooms. Their additional duties where they can foster their leadership skills as classroom-based teacher leaders include working with the community and external stakeholders, mentoring other teachers, working outside their particular learning spaces to give inputs and ideas at meetings, reporting best practices, and serving as committee members in different programs and projects of the school and the community.

A body of research recommended that the development of teachers' various roles, particularly improved leadership roles has led to school development and change. In the study directed by Crowther, et al (2002), it was revealed that successful reform in school cannot be separated from teacher leadership. It is believed to be vital for the dimensions of the school to improve its own development and progress fundamentally due to the fact that there is a need to counter the restrictions provided by the prevalent leadership in the school organization as part of its inherent potential. Research about teacher leadership has emphasized the functional need for leadership in the school community.

In the context of the Department of Education (DepEd) in the Philippines, classroom teachers are often given extra tasks and special duties. Aside from facilitating learning and monitoring and evaluating students' progress, it is listed in their official duties and responsibilities that they also need to supervise curricular and co-curricular projects and programs, support activities of government and non-governmental organizations, and do related tasks which include leadership, administrative and management functions. Some teachers are designated as subject coordinators, guidance designate, teacher-nurse, and heads of different projects such as Brigada Eskwela, Disaster Risk Reduction Management (DRRM), reading program, numeracy program, and robotics program. In the absence of non-teaching personnel, teachers are also given special tasks of being a school nurse, guidance counselor, school librarian, canteen manager, administrative clerk, and other extra functions.

Indeed, teacher leadership is not new in the Philippines but then, researches related to teacher leadership are limited in the country. International researches and inquiries are progressively becoming more fascinated and entranced with the concept of teacher leadership in educational institutions to benefit teaching and learning for the teachers as well as for the learners but this topic is considered as understudied in the Philippines and only a few researchers explored the significance of this in educational reforms.

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