THE SCHOOL'S BACKBONE

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Managing a school system during a regular school year, particularly coordinating, and aligning different programs, personnel, resources, and structures to promote a child's best interests, is always difficult. Though a conventional school year provides a degree of stability and regularity, COVID-19 has created a level of chaos and complication that puts every school in an undesirable situation. During this challenging moment, there is a demand for stakeholder participation.

According to UNICEF 2021, COVID-19 lockdowns have forced the closure of schools for over 168 million students around the world for nearly a year. Furthermore, 214 million children, or 14% of the world's population, have missed more than three-quarters of their in-person education. According to the data on school closures, 14 countries throughout the world remained largely closed from March 2020 to February 2021.

Education concerns have worsened in the Philippines because of the COVID19 pandemic, which has exacerbated the country's current situation. Distance learning modalities via the internet or TV broadcasts were ordered in response to the unexpected events caused by the health crisis. In addition, in October 2020, a blended learning program was launched, which includes online classes, printouts, and lessons broadcast on television and social media. However, not everyone can afford an internet connection, resulting in high demand for printed modules. School administrators cannot fix this problem on their own. To address the difficulties, the Department of Education created a Learning Continuity Plan (LCP) for each school that includes all stakeholders. It is obvious that stakeholder participation is critical for any school, particularly in these

difficult times. Stakeholders include those in positions of leadership within the school, educators, principals, counselors, administrators, and all other members of a school district with whom students may or may not interact; possibly architects and designers; undoubtedly parents and the student's extended family – grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and so on; local organizations and businesses; faith-based institutions; and more (Alomes 2020).

The school, like any other institution, sets out promising dreams for its students, which, with the support of the School Planning Team (SPT), teachers, parents, students, and other stakeholders armed with a realistic action plan, have become reality over time. Developing an action plan is critical because it guarantees that the school is on track and capable of completing the work on time by laying out all the duties in an organized and step-by-step way. It is indeed a shared responsibility.

However, the school claims that teamwork, cooperation, and camaraderie among the school's stakeholders are the real keys to attaining its objectives.

Going beyond the shared responsibilities between internal and external stakeholders, their roles widen during the limited face-to-face classes. The schools continuously long for support, not just financially but also physically and morally. As internal stakeholders ensure safety among learners, the external stakeholders serve as support in such a way that they are giving assistance to the needs of the teachers and learners. The external stakeholders are giving protective materials like face masks, face shields, gloves, etc., and other items like output trays, alcohol, alcohol spray, alcohol dispenser, footbath, paper towel, medicines, thermal scanner, thermometer, improvised lavatory and sink which ensure safety protocols. In addition, barangay and local officials ensure safety thru assistance at the entrance and exit of the school. They also managed to make traffic rules outside the school premises so that the flow of vehicles may not hinder the social distancing among pedestrians.

Every victory is celebrated by recognizing and appreciating the contributions of all stakeholders in achieving the aim of providing high-quality education.

The school was able to engage with all stakeholders in sharing the triumphs of this dynamic collaborative endeavor using current technology, notably navigating the realm of social media. One of the main goals of the school's Facebook pages was to profoundly honor the responsibilities of stakeholders in the accomplishment of the school's common purpose. In addition, certificates of appreciation are given to stakeholders to express the school's gratitude for their continuous support in all of the school's projects and activities.

Having the stakeholders as the backbone is unquestionably possible by fostering a strong school-community partnership, which includes everything from collaboration to celebrating every accomplishment while valuing stakeholders' responsibilities and contributions.

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