

STRENGTHENING SUPPORT TO PRIVATE SCHOOLS IN BATAAN

by:

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The 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines stipulates that “the State recognizes the complementary roles of public and private institutions in the educational system and shall exercise reasonable supervision and regulation of all educational institutions” (1987 Philippine Constitution, n.d. Article XIV, Section 4).

The Department of Education defines Private School as a privately owned and managed institution for teaching and learning, established and authorized by the Department to operate certain educational programs in accordance with law and the prescribed policies and rules of the Department (Department of Education, 2010). To ensure that Private Schools maintain the minimum quality standards prescribed by the government, DepEd issued DO 88, s. 2010 or the Revised Manual of Regulations for Private Schools in Basic Education. This covers all private educational institutions in basic education. Though some provisions were amended to respond to present challenges, this DepEd Order remains the primary guide in managing private schools in the Philippines. Accordingly, this has also been the guide of DepEd personnel in safeguarding the quality of education received by the learners.

However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, private schools had taken the hardest blows. Most of their students either transferred to public schools or stopped schooling. This resulted to plunge in their enrollment. Revenues were not enough to maintain the operations of the school and to provide for the salaries and benefits of their teachers eventually causing most of them to close temporarily or permanently.

With the return to in-person classes, some learners who transferred to public schools reenrolled in private schools but the numbers were not enough to at least be even with their pre-pandemic enrollment. In addition, only a few private schools which applied for temporary closure reopened.

Hence, the need to support private schools in strengthening their resilience is very urgent and important. On the part of the Schools Division Office, continuous technical assistance is provided to help them meet their needs in terms of managing the schools. They were also assisted in the preparation of their learning recovery plan and other similar matters. Collaboration between public schools and private schools is also very evident and involvement of the two are seen in some activities and endeavors. A present, the SDO continues to innovate systems and processes to ensure constant communication so that private schools can be given assistance as they need real time.

Since there are limitations to what SDO can give in terms of financial concerns, DepEd Central Office (CO) has already announced its plans of expanding the Education Service Contracting (ESC) to learners in kindergarten and elementary. DepEd has also established the Private Education Office (PEO) at the CO to provide support to private education institutions

The Department of Education (DepEd) has created the Private Education Office (PEO) at the DepEd Central Office (CO) to provide support to private education institutions and ensure that DepEd's mandate relative to private education is fulfilled by the Department in all levels of governance identified in Republic Act 9155.

Finally, at the provincial level, the Provincial School Board (PSB) through the leadership of Hon. Jose Enrique T. Garcia III, governor, and Dr. Roland M. Fronda, OIC-Schools Division Superintendent, already has plans of expanding PSB to include representatives from private schools and higher education institutions making the approach in education in the province more holistic, responsive and relevant.

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