

## PRINCIPAL AS A SCHOOL LEADER

*by:*

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The role of a school principal has changed in this dynamic educational landscape of the Philippines from routine administrative duties earlier performed. The role that has emerged is that of a dynamic leader who molds the academic and social elements of their institutions.

A 2018 study by the Philippine Normal University revealed changing expectations about the kind of school principal that should be. Additionally, it said that principals were then expected not only to be administrators but also instructional leaders, mentors, and advocates for their respective schools (PNU, 2018). These changes have been influenced by increased pressure on 21st-century skills, student-centered learning, and flexible and forward-looking leadership.

As such, one of the major roles of a school principal then is to ensure that quality instruction is implemented in his or her school. A 2019 study by DepEd revealed that effective school principals are described as those who do regular classroom supervision with follow-up lessons, have a history of providing constructive feedback to staff and teachers, and create a collegial environment for professional learning (DepEd, 2019). Principals can bring about an improvement in students' learning outcomes and the school's academic performance by attending to instructional quality.

Principal in our country extends beyond mere administration, for they are expected to be mentors and builders of capacity among their faculty and staff. According to a 2017 study by the University of the Philippines, good principals are those who invest in professional growth and education opportunities for their teachers to further develop

their skills (UP, 2017). In enhancing the capabilities within their ranks, principals can create a culture of excellence and nurture a sense of shared responsibility for student success.

This ranges from the internal dynamics within the institution's role of a school principal in the Philippines to establishing a good relationship with the outside community. One 2020 study from Ateneo de Manila University suggested that principals should be more in touch with parents and community-based organizations, which include the local government, for it helps in catering to particular needs for their students (ADMU, 2020). It is in building these relationships that the principal can mobilize resources, engage stakeholders, and build a supporting environment for the holistic development of students and teachers as well.

While that is the evolving role of the principal, this is not without its challenges as well. Some of the pressing concerns raised by school principals nationwide, according to a 2019 study by the Philippine Business for Education, are: heavy administrative workload, meager resources, and the need for more robust leadership training programs (PBE, 2019). Addressing this would help empower the principals to be better leaders of their schools and support meaningful change within the system of education.

The role of the principal has undergone a very radical change in the Philippines, where principals are now called upon to take on instructional leadership, mentoring, and advocacy in the community. By staying focused on these core responsibilities, principals have opportunities to make a positive impact in the learning taught to students, developing a culture of excellence and building strong stakeholder ties. Solutions to the heavy administrative burdens most principals face and to their needs for deeper professional development, however, will be critical if these essential school leaders are to provide nuclei for successful urban reform efforts.

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