EMPOWERING SDO-BATAAN SCHOOL HEADS FOR ICT-DRIVEN EDUCATIONAL TRANSFORMATION

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School leaders fill the gap by taking the lead in the digital transition in school. They implement ICT strategies that work within the specific context of their school, foster a culture of digitization among staff and students, and ensure sustainability of the ICT initiatives. School heads may further espouse policies in issues of digital literacy, resource management, and adoption of teaching methodologies that incorporate information and communication technology in improving the outcomes of learning.

School heads face many challenges that limit their empowerment in leading ICT integration. The biggest constraint that such heads face is limited autonomy with the discretion to determine the distribution of budget for resources to implement ICT, less ICT training, and less access to updated educational technology tools. Extraneous pressures from administrative tasks push them away from instructional leadership and promotion of ICT.

DepEd must strengthen school heads' capacity building on strategic planning and resource allocation as well as provide them with digital pedagogy through specific ICT leadership training. Competency building programs for school heads should be designed to develop the competencies needed for effective and efficient promotion of ICT integration in schools. By providing the school heads with more space to maneuver within their budgets, they will be able to dedicate funds specifically to needs that arise concerning ICT resources at their schools. It will also position them well to make decisions critical to hardware and connectivity solutions for digital learning pursuits at their schools. Implementing mentorship programs, where the experienced ICT leaders in

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education can mentor school heads, would be extremely helpful. School heads receive periodic coaching and facilitation that allow them to learn best practices on how to incorporate ICT and innovative solutions for problems in the Filipino context. Resource constraints will be eased through partnerships with the private sector that can provide schools' access to technology and funding on how to create greater ICT infrastructure. Programs to donate remanufactured computers, set up e-learning centers, and finance internet access can help bridge the divide and facilitate the change in schools.

Such ICT initiatives are also encouraged and invested in school transformation by involved parents as well as local government units. This community engagement program also inculcates knowledge into translation into support for sustainable digital learning initiatives.

Empowering the school heads will foster effective ICT-driven educational transformation in the Philippines. This will then allow DepEd, for instance, to arm school leaders with capacity and support through training, budgetary autonomy, and partnerships that better facilitate the introduction of ICT into the teaching and learning processes. Indeed, this kind of transformation helps improve not only educational outcomes but also prepares Filipino students to thrive in a digital world.

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