

## SCHOOL PROGRAMS TO KEEP STUDENTS IN CLASS AND PREVENT DROPOUTS

*by:*

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The issue of student dropouts remains a significant challenge in Philippine education, particularly in public schools where socio-economic factors often hinder learners from completing their studies. Family financial struggles, lack of parental support, and social issues such as bullying are common reasons students leave school. To address this, schools have implemented programs designed to keep students in class, ensure their engagement, and provide support systems that prevent dropouts.

One of the key initiatives by the Department of Education (DepEd) is the School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP), which provides free nutritious meals to undernourished students. By addressing hunger, a major factor in absenteeism, the program helps learners focus on their studies and reduces the likelihood of dropping out. Similarly, the Gulayan sa Paaralan Program complements SBFP by promoting school gardens that provide fresh produce while teaching students agricultural skills.

The Alternative Learning System (ALS) is another program aimed at helping learners who are unable to attend regular classes due to personal circumstances. ALS offers flexible schedules and modular lessons, enabling students to continue their education at their own pace. This initiative caters not only to out-of-school youth but also to adult learners, ensuring that everyone has access to basic education.

Schools also employ Child Protection Committees (CPCs) and guidance counselors to create safe and inclusive environments that discourage dropouts caused by bullying or other social pressures. Programs like Barkada Kontra Droga and Supreme

Student Government (SSG) promote camaraderie and engagement, fostering a sense of belonging that encourages students to stay in school. Teachers play a critical role by identifying at-risk students early and implementing interventions such as home visitations and parent-teacher dialogues to address the root causes of absenteeism.

While these programs have made significant strides, more comprehensive measures are necessary to ensure lasting solutions. Strengthening partnerships between schools, local government units (LGUs), and community organizations can amplify support for at-risk learners. Providing scholarships, livelihood programs for parents, and further integrating mental health services can also reduce dropout rates. By combining educational innovations with community support, schools can create environments where every learner has the opportunity to thrive and succeed.

## References:

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