

THE SILENT LOAD BEARERS: RISING WORKLOAD AMONG NON-TEACHING PERSONNEL IN DEPED SCHOOLS

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In the pursuit of improving education quality in the Philippines, recent reforms by the Department of Education (DepEd) have focused on relieving teachers of ancillary tasks—an effort that acknowledges the need for educators to concentrate on instruction and student development. However, while this policy is a step in the right direction, it has inadvertently shifted the burden onto an often-overlooked sector of the education workforce: the non-teaching personnel.

Teachers have long shouldered responsibilities beyond the classroom, including clerical work, report generation, data encoding, and logistics. To address this, DepEd has taken measures to delegate these functions to non-teaching staff. However, not all schools have the manpower to handle all of these ancillary tasks. With limited administrative personnel on site—often just one or two staff members—the volume of tasks offloaded from teachers has overwhelmed school support systems.

From procurement processing and financial documentation to records management and ICT maintenance, the roles of non-teaching personnel have expanded rapidly, with little corresponding increase in workforce or resources.

At the heart of this issue is the glaring shortage of plantilla positions for non-teaching roles in schools. Many educational institutions operate with minimal administrative staff, and in some cases, rely on job order or contractual workers with no security of tenure or access to benefits. This staffing shortfall is not only unsustainable but also detrimental to the long-term functionality of schools.

The lack of plantilla items force remaining staff to perform duties beyond their designation, often juggling multiple roles under intense pressure. This has led to significant concerns over burnout, declining morale, and delayed administrative services that ultimately affect students and teachers alike.

An overburdened support staff can lead to far-reaching consequences. Delays in procurement, compliance reporting, and record-keeping affect the efficiency of school operations. Errors increase when staff are forced to multitask beyond their training or capacity. Furthermore, when administrative personnel feel undervalued or invisible, it leads to disengagement that undermines the collaborative spirit essential in school communities.

While short-term measures like task redistribution can provide immediate relief, addressing the root causes of support staff workload requires long-term, systemic interventions. Sustainable solutions must focus on structural reforms, capacity building, and technological integration to ensure that non-teaching personnel are adequately supported and empowered in the years ahead.

Increase Plantilla Positions for Non-Teaching Staff: DepEd must advocate additional plantilla items for administrative and support roles at the school level. These roles must be classified, budgeted, and filled based on actual school needs, including size, enrollment, and administrative workload.

Enhance Workforce Planning and Resource Allocation: A workload assessment framework should be institutionalized to ensure equitable task distribution among non-teaching personnel. Positions such as Administrative Officer, Bookkeeper, Records Clerk, and ICT Support must be present in adequate numbers.

Digitize and Streamline Administrative Processes: Investing in digital tools can alleviate clerical burden. Electronic forms, automated report systems, and centralized data management can help reduce repetitive manual work.

Empower and Train Support Staff: Regular training and professional development for non-teaching personnel are essential to equip them for their expanding roles. Additionally, recognition systems can also improve motivation and job satisfaction.

Institutional Inclusion and Representation: Non-teaching personnel should have representation in policy consultations and program planning. Their insights can guide more responsive and inclusive governance within the education sector.

As DepEd continues its journey to improve educational delivery, it must ensure that no group is left behind, especially those who operate quietly behind the scenes. The well-being and capability of non-teaching staff are essential for effective school operations and achieving high-quality education. Strengthening this workforce with adequate staffing, fair workload distribution, and institutional support is not just an administrative necessity – it is an investment in the future of Philippine education.

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