

ON THE WAY TO RETIREMENT

by:

Nora A. Eludo

Master Teacher I, Alauli Elementary School

After years of shaping young minds and giving heart and soul to the classroom, the time eventually comes for every teacher to pause, reflect, and take a new path—retirement. Yet for many educators, this transition is not simply about leaving a job. It is about closing a chapter of deep meaning, countless memories, and a lifelong sense of purpose.

Teaching is not a career easily left behind. It becomes part of a teacher's identity—woven into how they speak, think, and care. The classroom is more than four walls; it becomes a second home. The students, though they come and go, leave permanent imprints. Each lesson taught, every story shared, and every moment of connection builds a legacy that extends far beyond the school grounds.

As retirement nears, emotions often come in waves—joy in the journey completed, sadness in parting ways, and gratitude for the relationships formed over the years. Teachers remember the early mornings, the long nights preparing lessons, the shared laughter in class, and the quiet satisfaction of helping a student finally understand. These memories become treasures, reminders of a life spent in service of something greater than oneself.

More than academic instruction, teachers give guidance, structure, and compassion. Over time, they witness the transformation of children into responsible young adults. Some of those students may later return as professionals or parents, grateful for the role their teacher once played. This full-circle moment reinforces a truth many educators quietly hold: their influence is lasting, even if their names are forgotten.

Leaving the classroom does not mean the teacher stops teaching. The desire to guide and inspire often continues beyond retirement. Some become mentors, volunteers, or community leaders. Others find joy in hobbies and passions they had set aside. Retirement becomes not an ending, but a transition into a different kind of meaningful life—one where wisdom is shared in new ways.

And while the school bell may no longer ring for them each morning, retired teachers often carry the rhythm of the classroom in their hearts. The laughter of students, the noise of learning, even the quiet moments of reflection—all remain alive within them. These sounds and sights are not forgotten; they are simply cherished from a new perspective.

As one chapter closes, another opens—one filled with freedom, rest, and time for self. Yet the teacher's heart remains full: of pride, of gratitude, and of love for a profession that, despite its challenges, gave so much more in return.

The Official Website of DepED Division of Bataan

References:

Day, C., & Gu, Q. (2007). Variations in the conditions for teachers' professional learning and development: Sustaining commitment and effectiveness over a career. *Oxford Review of Education*, 33(4), 423–443.

Palmer, P. J. (1998). *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*. Jossey-Bass.