

TEACHING WITH DIGNITY: A CALL FOR COMPETITIVE COMPENSATION FOR FILIPINO EDUCATORS

by:

ROGELIO M. OLEGARIO

Teacher II, Mariveles Senior High School – Sitio Mabuhay

The cornerstone of a prosperous nation is a robust education system, and at its heart are the Filipino educators who selflessly mold future generations. Yet, this critical profession is persistently undermined by inadequate compensation that fails to meet the rising cost of living across the archipelago. An entry-level Teacher I in the public sector, despite recent salary adjustments, still earns a basic pay that struggles to keep pace with the estimated monthly cost of living for a single person in major Philippine cities, let alone support a family. This significant gap forces many talented teachers to seek greener pastures abroad or take on multiple side hustles, such as private tutoring, drastically reducing their energy and focus in the classroom. When the compensation for a vital, highly skilled public servant is barely a survival wage, the dignity of the entire profession is eroded, leading to a constant struggle to attract and retain the nation's best minds in teaching.

The issue of low salaries is compounded by an overwhelming workload that stretches teachers far beyond their core function of instruction. While the Magna Carta for Public School Teachers (R.A. 4670) mandates that classroom teaching should not exceed six hours a day, the reality includes an array of non-teaching and administrative tasks that consume the remaining two hours of official work – and often much more. Although the Department of Education (DepEd) recently issued DepEd Order No. 002, s. 2024 ("Immediate Removal of Administrative Tasks of Public School Teachers") to address this "overburdened workload," the actual implementation on the ground remains a challenge, as schools often lack the necessary non-teaching support staff. This heavy,

uncompensated administrative load directly detracts from a teacher's ability to plan quality lessons, provide meaningful student remediation, and engage in professional development, ultimately hindering the quality of learning in the classroom.

To truly transform the state of Philippine education, the call for competitive compensation must be answered with decisive legislative and executive action. A genuinely life-changing salary increase is necessary not merely as a reward but as an investment in the nation's human capital, one that ensures teaching is a primary, viable, and respected career choice. Furthermore, the efforts outlined in DepEd orders to streamline workloads must be fully supported with a corresponding, non-negotiable provision of administrative personnel. Until Filipino educators are afforded the financial dignity and professional space to focus solely on teaching, the aspirational goal of quality education for all will remain elusive. Granting teachers a salary that reflects their sacrifice and national importance is the clearest path to raising both the status of the profession and the performance of our students on the global stage.

The Official Website of DepED Division of Bataan

References:

Republic Act No. 4670 (Magna Carta for Public School Teachers)

DepEd Order No. 002, s. 2024

Executive Order (EO) No. 174, s. 2022

Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS)

DepEd Memorandum No. 048, s. 2025