

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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DepEd pushes for decentralization

The Department of Education (DepEd) now goes full throttle in its effort to decentralize education management – a strategy that is expected to improve the department’s operating efficiency and upgrade education quality.

In line with this effort, DepEd is pushing for the implementation of the School-Based Management, a key component of the department’s Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda (BESRA). BESRA is a widely-accepted reform initiative which recognizes that schools, as the key providers of education, should be able to continuously improve by being empowered to make informed and localized decisions based on their own unique needs.

SBM gives school heads and their teachers a wide berth to create linkage with the local government and the private sector and be able to tap them for the improvement of the local school.

“The underlying principle in SBM is that the people directly involved and affected by school operations are the best persons to plan, manage and improve the school,” Education Secretary Jesli A. Lapus said.

According to Lapus it is very important to create an environment where all the people involved in the decentralization process not only agree but also commit to make that change happen.

“Together with correct decentralization policies, we must be able to strengthen all the stakeholders’ capacity to perform their task under a decentralized set-up.

DepEd has already wrapped up a series of workshops participated in by key DepEd officials from the regions and the central office where the roles and functions at different levels were fleshed out in detail. The competencies necessary to perform these functions were likewise identified. “These competencies will have to be developed professionally since decentralization is a change management initiative,” Lapus added.

Lapus also stressed that it is the role of the national, regional and division offices to make sure that all the necessary support structures are in place to aid the local stakeholders in managing their schools.

DepEd has the biggest manpower complement in the entire government bureaucracy with more than 500, 000 teaching and non-teaching personnel in 2,384 districts, 180 divisions in the country’s 16 regions.

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DepEd's foreign-assisted projects have paved the way for experimentation and study of different decentralization models. The Third -Elementary Education Project (TEEP) and the Secondary Education Development and Improvement Project (SEDIP) have piloted various initiatives in 23 provinces towards improving DepEd's readiness for SBM.

Currently, only public secondary schools enjoy fiscal autonomy. This leaves elementary schools, which constitute the majority of public schools, dependent on mostly centralized management set-up.

Based on DepEd experience, TEEP has proven that given the correct policies and conditions, elementary schools can effectively implement and benefit from SBM.

SEDIP teamed up with the Regional Center for Educational Innovation and Technology of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO-INNOTECH) to implement the Decentralized Management Development Program (DMDP), a six month program that aims specifically to address the issues hindering the full roll-out of decentralization in DepEd. The DMDP will approach decentralization from a broader perspective, thus rounding out the preparations for a wide-scale SBM roll-out.

Undersecretary for Finance and Administration Teodoro Sangil said that the inputs gathered from BESRA, TEEP, SEDIP, other FAPs, and most recently, SEAMEO-INNOTECH will propel complete decentralization.

Sangil enthused, " Successful decentralization and SBM will not only make us more effective, they will produce the best results for the basic education sector in terms of learning and management."

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