

What Leadership Should Be? : A Glimpse of School Leaders Roles in Times of Pandemic

The unprecedented situation locally and globally made the educational leaders develop a basic learning continuity plan to ensure the quality of education despite distance learning. Even though different learning modalities were established, learning gaps arose because Filipino learners have never been into distance learning before. It's a huge challenge to educational leaders have never had before.

During the surge of cases due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, educational institutions adopted the new normal education wherein face-to-face classes of learners were prohibited to lessen the transmission of the virus. Different distance learning modality was proposed by the Department of Education (DepEd) to address the learning needs of the learners despite the current situation. Upon the start of the new normal in the school year 2019-2020, DepEd ensured the learning continuity of the learners by giving self-learning modules, video lessons, and launching DepEd TV.

Leadership's impact has been made very clear during the Covid-19 crisis, in which leaders have adapted and innovated alongside teachers to ensure educational continuity for children and young people (Education Development Trust, 2020).

However, regardless of how ready or how planned the system was before starting the new normal, there will always be a problem that would arise and it

is inevitable. That's why it is important as a school leader to be quick-witted in addressing problems. Training and seminars about leadership are necessary for a school leader to plan an intervention when a problem may arise. Consequently, tracing the root of the problem is also one of the important things to be able to make sure that in the future occurrence, there will be no problem in that area. In crises, strong and decisive leadership is crucial for time-critical decision-making. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the virus has struck various locations at various times and waves without any prior notice or warning. Furthermore, it is an issue that must be addressed on a national and international level.

Through the Basic Learning Continuity Plan for the school year, DepEd assured to cater to the needs of the learners despite the distance by the self-learning modules in the most convenient way. Aside from Self-learning Modules (SLMs), DepEd dredges up the different learning styles of the students from K-12 by launching remote learning strategies ensuring that there would be no learners left behind. Through the distance learning modalities which included technology as well as internet connections, DepEd made a difference to provide learning continuity for the learners.

Planning, implementing, and monitoring the progress of learning in every school year under the new normal is where we may answer whether the learners are equipped with the most essential learning competencies (MELCs) they should have. But with the effort of the teaching force and the strong leadership of school

heads, we can conclude that they have achieved the MELCs with the corresponding performance standards. The evidence of leadership's impact on learning is significant: in one study, almost a third of the changes in learning was attributed to leadership- making it second only to classroom teaching in its impact on education outcomes (Leithwood, K. and D. Jantzi, 2006)

Although the unprecedented coming of the pandemic brings hardship to leaders in every institution, it is best to bring everyone to the table in terms of listening to their vices and planning for the betterment of the situation. The leaders should involve everyone and consider the situations of their subordinates since they are the ones who grinds to work and to deal with the students and parents.

During the decision process, school leaders should not only rely to their instinct but their judgment should be based on the available data and experiences that their teachers had. In this sense, this will make a win-win solutions regarding the situations that the school has to deal with particularly in these times of pandemic.

No matter how great the plans of leaders they may be, they also need to adapt it to these new realities and together, stand tall and be the light that the younger generations need to continue their learning despite these shortcomings. Cooperation should be foster not punishments to the subordinates. The leaders should imbibe a great solution strategy that will answer the problem but at the same time making the health of their subordinates be protected and treasured.

Thus, recognizing the efforts that they have made should really be the utmost priority since without them the target deliverables of your school will not be possible to attain.

As Martin Luther King said, the ultimate measure of men is not where they stand in moments of convenience and comfort, but where they stand at times of challenge and controversy. This is a great reminder that leadership is not only for position alone instead this is how someone leads with empathy and kindness, and how they foster competency that will be well emulated by their constituents.