

MAP calls on all sectors to help ease the Education Crisis

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We in the Management Association of the Philippines (MAP) believe that easing the education crisis should be one of the country's top priorities and we call on all sectors to actively participate in addressing it.

In an age where employment is transforming from traditional to digital, keeping students in school is a major challenge. The youth are increasingly enamored with social media and have discovered many ways to monetize their experiences by sharing them online.

This situation is a crisis waiting to happen and the consequence will put our competitiveness and national growth on the line. Education is critical to innovations and inventions, and absent these two, our development will stagnate and so will our progress.

Pre-pandemic, the Filipino students are already lowest in reading and second to lowest in Math and Science according to the PISA 2018 results. This worsened during the pandemic because the lockdowns stopped physical attendance, with the system shifting to online mechanism. The lack of supervision that teachers do onsite contributed to further deterioration, and this negatively impacts the quality of education and graduates produced by the educational institutions.

Republic Act 11899 or the "Second Congressional Commission on Education II Act" - which created the EDCOM II to address the education crisis, look at the entire system, and come up with targeted and measurable reforms - could not have come at an opportune time. A public-private partnership in education is an idea whose time is ripe.

We agree with what Senator Win Gatchalian cited during the June 20, 2023 BDB Law -MAP Breakfast Dialogue that basic education and Tech-Vocational Education and Training (TVET) are the most relevant to the business sector from among the 28 priority areas of EDCOM II. The vision of K to 12 to turn-out students going into the 11 and 12 grades as employment-ready, based on specialized skills that were supposed to be taught in the two added years, is far from being realized. Instead of getting better jobs, they end up taking on elementary jobs that do not pay well.

There is a need to streamline the implementation of the K to 12 system so that it can fully integrate as a TVET program to increase enterprise-based learning where the senior high school students will have more immersive experiences through certification training and exposure to actual work settings. A system for Micro-Credentialing should be created in such a way that a national certification program will qualify a student for better job opportunities and higher wages. The *Batang Magaling* Act that was filed to seek the reform of the Senior High School system in the country, embedding national certification for students under this program, can be a significant step to tackle this.


The lifespan of EDCOM II is three years but actions are already being taken through the proposal of laws, and recommendations for enabling policies and reforms. Among these is the House Bill No (HBN) 7370 which provides for independent councils that will recommend to the government the skills and jobs that are in step with the developments in the industries. Another significant one is the Senate Bill No. (SBN) 2029 and SBN 1754, both seeking to improve the early childhood care in the Philippines as child stunting is one of the causes of poorer cognitive development.

There is a need for effective and efficient management of public schools to streamline operations, remove duplications, improve the ratio of employees and administrators and be proficient in fiscal management. Likewise, the local government units (LGUs) must also actively participate in monitoring results of student performance by providing the Department of Education (DepEd) with timely information on the issues of delivering education.

The programs of Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) should be re-designed to be more future-oriented. That means being updated to the technological advancement of the industries and training the teachers and trainers to look at how they can prepare the students proactively through innovative delivery, instead of a highly structured one.

The time has come for a public-private partnership in education. After all, one of education's primary reasons for being is to ensure that its graduates are adequately prepared for gainful employment or for enterprise building. As the biggest 'consumers' of these graduates, we are all too willing to do our share in preparing them to be productive and competitive, or do business with them in the future. This collaboration is indispensable in creating a workforce that is skilled and ready to actively engage. That means transforming the Philippine education system so that it can adapt to a changed workplace in a technology-driven world.

It is imperative that the educators tackle the reforms and be unafraid of disrupting their traditional systems so that the educational system can continue to be a bastion of progress and development.



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