School-based Management Implementation: Using the Lenses of the Schools' SBM Practices and School Leaders' Views toward Its Reinforcement

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Abstract

Aimed at obtaining substantive inputs to recommend for the possible reinforcement of the School-Based Management (SBM) system, this study used concurrent mixed methods approach where two sets of data were gathered at the same time: records (secondary data) of the most recent performances of schools in a selected schools division indicating their levels of SBM practice; and, the perspectives (primary data) on the implementation of SBM of 30 pre-selected school leaders from the 10 central and 20 non-central schools in a division composed of 198 public elementary schools. Secondary data were subjected to quantitative analyses while qualitative and primary data were content analyzed. Results of analyses were integrated to create a wider and deeper view of the implementation of the SBM system in the covered schools.

Data show that of the 198 schools in the 30 districts of the covered division, 187 central and non-central schools are in level 1, categorized as on the "moving toward progression" stage and the other 11 are on level 2 described as on the stage of "gearing up". No school has reached level 3, which is the highest expected level, to date, considering that the SBM system of governance is on its sixth year of full implementation out of the nine-year target period.

Participant-school leaders affirmed the usefulness and comprehensiveness of the SBM system in general but they stressed a number of concerns pertaining to its different aspects, foremost of which are the tedious processes required to accomplish the SBM evaluation tool, their lack of skills in documenting evidence of their achievement; hence, their limited substantiation of their respective schools' accomplishments, and the inadequate orientation, training and financial support to stakeholders to fully and productively implement SBM. Stakeholders' lack of awareness of the process resulted in their lack of ownership of the program and minimal motivation to cooperate in the evaluation activities. The study strongly proposes that the implementation of the SBM be reinforced through the provision of adequate training among stakeholders with respect to the dimensions of the SBM system and how to document evidence of accomplishments.

Key Words: implementation, reinforcement, school-based management

INTRODUCTION

One of the most significant reforms in school management all over the globe is the shift from centralization to decentralization. This is aimed at introducing new range of strategies to improve financial management and delivery of the services of education. It also gives emphasis on improving quality as well as increasing quantity in terms of enrolment rates.

A key reform program that has concretized decentralization in the basic education sector in different parts of the world is site-management or school-based management. Australia adopted the strategy in 1976; Britain in 1988; the US in 1988; New Zealand in 1989; Mexico in 1992; Hong Kong in 1991; Thailand in 1999; and, the Philippines in 2001 (Bautista, Bernardo and Ocampo,2010).

The global educational system, particularly of those developing and underdeveloped countries, is inundated with restraining trends such as low academic and co-curricular performance of students, inadequate training of teachers and school leaders, low accountability level and poor monitoring and evaluation system, among others. In the past, small and big schools alike will have to wait for circulars or mandates from the central government to deal with local needs and manage change to address specific concerns. Such process had been found to be a significant cause of the sluggish move of education to adapt to the fast changing needs of the society. With research and the initiatives of education experts all over the world, decentralization found its way to improve decision-making and facilitate self-management among local schools.

What is decentralization? How is it defined in education?

Decentralization is an approach toward educational management which advocates the downloading of authority, responsibility and accountability. The decentralization of decision-making ensures the prioritization of needs of schools based on their monitoring, assessment and evaluation. This is a venue for internal and external stakeholders to be heard and be involved in improving educational outcomes for they are more aware of the individual schools' educational condition than central-policy makers. It is considered as the key element of global institutional reorganization that empowers people from the local education area to participate in the decision-making toward the improvement of school's academic performance. However, in every decision to be made, there is a corresponding function and accountability, thus, the need for proper dissemination of proceedings on how to undertake decentralization of functions (Third International Forum on Education Reform Decentralization Revisited: SBM, 2003, p.142)

How is decentralization implemented in the Philippines?

In the Philippines, the Department of Education has shifted from centralized to decentralized system of growing public education since the promulgation of R.A. 9155 in 2001– a strategy that is projected to improve the Department's operating efficiency and upgrade education quality. Decentralized management has been a practice of some private institutions for quite some time. Studies of decentralization in the private sector suggest that actual involvement of all concerned in the decision-making process directly addresses

immediate needs and interests of institutions which are aligned with the school's vision, mission and advocacy. Management of complex situations and unexpected conflicts, which are common in every school, is readily attended and resolved at the local level. Inclusive of decentralization is the power to make decisions which can influence organizational practices, policies and directions. Instructional leaders are given the chance to contribute to organizational performance and share their managerial knowledge and field of expertise and grant rewards based on the criteria set in terms of individual contributions on the school's performance (Oswald, 1997).

In 1994, parents and local government units shouldered 52% of the total education cost in the country. Consistent with the country's budgeting practice, the Congress of the Philippines requires that proposed expenditures be very precisely specified. Once specified and embodied in the General Appropriation Act (GAA), there is a little or no room for Department of Education or local education authorities to change or redirect expenditures within the budget. For lower education, Congress provides the Department of Education with the budget for every school division, while a separate budget line is set for every school at the secondary level (Operations Manual on School Based Management and Its Support System, 2006).

The main goal of the academic improvement is to attain the expected learning outcomes by improving the conveyance of the curriculum, promoting an optimistic breeding ground for learning and facilitating people's involvement. Frequent assessment of school needs, planning and executing suitable actions and evaluating findings and output are essential to the mentioned process. The process also involves comparing existing school practices with others and obtaining information about best practices in order to raise standards and ultimately to improve own performance. Its purpose is to help school heads, teachers, parents and other stakeholders in the school community to participate in a continuous improvement cycle that identifies potential barriers and develops a way to move the school from where it is now to a condition in which students can achieve their highest potential. These make up the SIP that foremost reflects the interests and aspirations of the community it serves. It is the main vehicle through which schools will proceed down the path to improvement (Operations Manual on School Improvement and Innovation, 2002).

The Third Elementary Education Project (TEEP) is the government's multi-faceted response to the need to improve the quality of education in the public elementary schools. It operates currently in the 22 poorest provinces in the country. The project contains the fundamental guidelines towards: 1.) increasing the sufficiency, effectivity and impartiality of sub-sector funding, 2.) confirm that the fundamental materials are delivered to project schools, 3.) present systems with their steps to regionalize particular academic roles and respective funds and 4.) quantify the impact of project implementation on learning and its price. The project supports the decentralizations thrusts of the Department's ten-year Master Plan for Basic Education (1996-2005). In this project, key functions will be moved from the central and regional levels to the schools divisions, city and provincial, to stimulate initiative and creativity at the field level and bring about greater school effectiveness (Operations Manual on School Based Management and Its Support System, 2006, p.17).

Another interesting initiative of the government is the Adopt- A –School Project (R.A. 8525). This project tops the local business sector and external funding bodies for assistance such as for putting up school buildings and facilities. Establishments such as business

companies and non-government groups, and private entities work hand-in-hand with the government in solving the common difficulties of the school system such as deficiencies in school's rooms, tables and books.

Interestingly, at the dawn of 21st Century, the Department of Education initiated the Zero Collection Policy, which bans the collections of contributions and fees during the enrolment period and Non-Commercialization, which stopped all official endorsements or accreditation of goods and services as endorsement distort market forces.

Locally, the academic system was institutionalized through Act No. 74 in 1901. This led to the centralization of the school system of public and private schools and colleges. In 1975, there was restructuring based on the government's integrated reorganization. This prompted the decentralization of the Department of Education. Modifications have then taken place on organization, operations and steps in improving its efficiency and efficacy. It is then the task of the regional directors of answering the queries and satisfying the needs of schools based on decentralization. This prompts the top officials at the Main Office to concentrate on serious administrative issues and improvisation of policies (Department of Education Manual, 1992, p.7).

Moreover, the passage of Republic Act No. 7160, otherwise known as the Local Government Code of 1991, expanded the participation of stakeholders in education. Consequently, the Department of Education has gone through several organizations move toward the sharing of authority, powers, and influence in appropriate levels.

Research from government agencies paved the way for the structural delivery of the academic system in the Philippines. This results to the Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM) to give emphasis on the local three-tier system. The EDCOM functions to: 1.) improving the internal readiness to work on the academic constitutional provisions, 2.) delivering the system with building and monetary support, 3.) improving the linkages to various people as part of human resource development. These three foci were priority from the EDCOM. However, this resulted to deteriorating quality of education from the Department of Education, Culture and Sports. Following the Commission's recommendations on needed reforms in the education and training concerns of the country, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) was set up in 1994 to oversee tertiary programs. The Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), for its part, were created one year later in the same way to supervise technical and vocational degree programs. The newly established tripartite management structure allowed the Department to narrow down its focus and direct its attention exclusively to basic education (Department of Education Manual, 1992, p.47).

Decentralization of the system of education in the country is due to the desire to achieve equity and quality. Equity, as a by-product of decentralization, is gauged in terms of the student participation rate. In the Philippines, the average participation rate is already high. The challenge to education policy makers is to adopt an effective mechanism through which access to education is achieved even by the poorest sectors of society, among whom incidences of non-enrolment and early drop-out are highest. The issue of quality education, on the other hand is measured in terms of the quality of instruction and student's extent and quality of learning achievement.

Decentralized budgeting allows schools to allocate funds according to individual school's immediate needs and priorities, spend or save money for substitute teachers and utilities, and carry over unused funds to the following year. Among the problems that might be encountered in the management of school system is the perplexity of the new roles and responsibilities of the principals, teachers, students and stakeholders. Considered to be a difficulty is accountability. The academic institution's board is accountable while the school still has authority. The school-based management (SBM) is considered multifaceted in terms of decision, responsibility and accountability. A principal must utilize SBM utilizing a collective group approach. It will then be a collaborative effort from the teachers, parents, school leaders and community members.

Decentralization of educational governance is rooted in the principles of shared governance under RA 9155 which specifically pertains to shared governance, a principle which recognizes that every unit in the education bureaucracy has a particular role, task and responsibility inherent in the office and for which it is principally accountable for outcomes. Under said Act, the process of democratic consultation is observed in the decision-making process at appropriate levels. Feedback mechanisms are established to ensure coordination and open communication of the central office with the regional, division and school levels. The principles of accountability and transparency are operationalized in the performance of functions and responsibilities at all levels, and, the communication channels of field officers shall be strengthened to facilitate flow of information and expand linkages with other government units and non-government organization for effective governance (Prieto, 2006).

One of the most popular strategies that came out of the 1980s school reform movement is the School-Based Management (SBM). It is defined as the decentralization of decision-making authority to school site; an alternative to the typical pattern of school district governance that centralizes authority in the district office.

School-based Management (SBM) is the institutional expression of the decentralization of education at the grassroots level. It is based on the national policy of decentralization originally set by the Philippine Local Government Code of 1991 (RA 7160) as a response to the new challenges for sustainable human development by enabling local communities to become self-reliant and more effective partners in the attainment of national goals.

The basic element underlying the various models of SBM is a change in the formal governance and management of the school by increasing the level of involvement and participation of stakeholders.

Through the Third Elementary Education Project (TEEP) and sustained by the World Bank, SBM was executed from 2003 to 2005 in 23 districts. TEEP was able to financially support for academic institution's training programs, curriculum development, buildings and textbooks. SBM served as an incorporating structure in receiving school-level project data and forming capacity-building programs. Academic institutions utilizing SBM formulated a five year developmental plan with the help of the principal, teachers and people in the community. This School Improvement Plan (SIP) served as the springboard for annual improvement plan which is presented at the start of the academic year and an evaluation at the end of the school year.

Data from the project which originated from the SIP were important in training workshops, textbooks and even buildings. There were several seminars and trainings for principals and head teachers and these were funded in cash and not in kind. The cash fund was computed by adding a pro-rated figure to a flat rate from the sum number of teachers and teachers. If an academic institution does not have AIP or SIP, it will not receive monetary budget at all. SBM functions to increase the output of students by means of tapping the school community to recognize specific activities that need to be prioritized and fund these for maintenance. Nevertheless, SBM was not able to produce clear-cut assumptions on the time table on student productivity.

The SBM was designed to improve student outcomes through two main venues: by empowering the school community to identify education priorities and to allocate the school maintenance and operating budgets to those priorities (such as curriculum enrichment programs); and by enhancing transparency and accountability through the annual implementation plans and school report cards. However, the SBM program articulated no explicit assumptions regarding the timeframe within which improvements in student achievement were expected to take place.

School-based management decentralizes control, transferring it from district offices to individual schools as a way to give principals, teachers and community members more authority over what happens in schools. It is often adopted with the thought that empowering those who are closest to the students will produce decisions better tailored to the particular needs of the students, resulting in the improvement of school performance.

SBM entails major changes of roles. District offices no longer tell schools what to do, but instead, they help schools accomplish what they independently decide to do. Principals' and teachers' roles also change under SBM, as decision making is shared among various school constituents (Wohlstetter & Briggs, 1994).

The context of SBM suggests that the school be the key provider of education which will empower the school leaders and stakeholders in the execution and administration of the mandate of their tasks. It is believed that stakeholders and school leaders should do their share and initiatives in polishing the educational system to make the school a habitat of happy learning experiences for the learners.

It is a step by step devolution to the institution's level of power and accountability to decide on important problems on school operations given a uniform framework of objectives and rules. It is imperative that governments must be keen on the transformations of their schools. However, there must be significant change so SBM is instrumental to transformation of the schools (Caldwell, 2005). It must also train academic institutions' school heads on its basic tenets in order for them to be expert managers.

SBM aims to help school heads understand the basic tenets of School-Based Management and consequently gain greater confidence as practicing, hands-on school-based managers. It has the vision of: empowered schools; pro-active school heads; innovative teachers; engaged community stakeholders; improved student academic performance and psycho-social growth. In addition, in SBM, the school level will be given fiscal autonomy. The responsibility of the school heads or principals is so great that the success of the school

system depends to a large extent on them. The welfare of the school, children and teachers lie on their hands.

It is not enough in SBM for managers to agree but to be committed to foster change in a decentralized set-up. The main thrust of this change is to improve academic related outcomes. In order for this set-up to work, the school heads must empower their people and provide students the actualization of their rights to safety, health and leisure. For this new setup to succeed, principals and teachers need to develop their people's skills and managerial capabilities. They have to be empowered to be catalysts for change in their respective schools. This is the vision of the Department of Education for schools in the country. This is the essence of School-Based Management (SBM), a strategy which paves the way for quality education and holistic development for the school children.

For the realization of the DepEd's vision, schools' resources such as human, material or financial are very necessary for school's operation. Financial resources of schools come from the regular Maintenance and Other Operating Procedures, General Appropriation Fund, local government, Special Education Fund (SEF), community contributions and other income-generating funds. Proper maximization and utilization of school funds is essential for the improvement of schools. Thus, sourcing and managing of resources is one of the dimensions of SBM.

The agenda of SBM makes it possible for the school leaders to conduct frequent assessment and focus on instruction. It is an opportunity to enhance Key Result Areas particularly pupil development, by providing effective instruction for learners to become functionally literate and to strengthen monitoring and evaluation of instructional materials and manipulative skills utilized in teaching. It is a pavement in restructuring curriculum development through innovations and provision of comprehensive educational program. Physical facilities are given priority for the convenience and comfort of learners that bind the tie and strengthen partnership of the school and community.

A clear picture of what a school could offer a child is reflected under SBM which in turn motivates parent and other stakeholders to join school projects and programs and to have a feeling of ownership on the school's goals and objectives. Since, SBM includes a hundred percent downloading of funds, it is implicit that school heads should have an appropriate and intensive training as to the allocation and liquidation of operating expenses to specific needs.

SBM advocates say that it ensures the following: (1) SBM provides better programs because resources will be available to directly match the students' needs;(2) SBM increases better communication and linkages among stakeholders, school boards, division officials, principals, teachers, parents, and students;(3) SBM ensures higher quality decisions for they are made by groups instead of individual (Oden, 2005) isolated two additional features of effective SBM programs: use of an "instructional guidance system" (a school mission statement and goal-achievement strategy) and a facilitative style of principal leadership.

Nobbs (2006) focused his PhD dissertation on the relationship between School-Based Management (SBM), student outcomes, and school performance. The major goal of the study was to identify the conditions that exist in self-managed schools which facilitate improved student outcomes and school performance. For the purpose of the study, qualitative case

studies were conducted in four Queensland primary schools. On the basis of the qualitative data, the study indicated that the relationships between SBM, student outcomes, and school performance were dependent on the presence of several conditions within SBM schools, including: (1) comprehensive understanding of the powers available within a school-based management; (2) the capacity of the school to implement school-based management in terms of contextual issues such as the size of the school, workforce experience and competency, and geographical location; (3) the requirement of the controlling authority to delegate key powers and resources such as staffing, facilities management and total school budgeting; and (4) school-based processes for managing changes and school improvements. He then concludes that SBM is considered to be a possible means in improving student outcomes and school performance.

Student achievements are also supported by the changes to the school culture. Pritchard (2005) have investigated the relationship between school culture and student achievements. They have reported that there has been a positive relation between school culture and student achievements. The positive educational culture in their study are: (1) mutual respect and trust in teachers and students; (2) support for student learning; and (3) a collaborative learning and working environments.

Recent studies have highlighted the importance of local decision-making being pre-eminently concerned with learning and teaching and the support of learning and teaching, especially in building the capacity of staff to design and deliver a curriculum and pedagogy that meets the needs of students, taking account of priorities in the local setting, including a capacity to identify needs and monitor outcomes. Also evident is the importance of building the capacity of the community to support the efforts of schools (Caldwell, 2005).

The Assessment Framework of SBM Practices identifies and explains the elements, logical structure and interrelationship of units that comprise a system. Geared toward the improvement of education outcomes, the SBM framework describes the system for: a) securing adequate inputs and managing them efficiently and effectively; b) establishing and developing structures and mechanisms that are helpful in achieving desired goals and objectives; c) introducing and sustaining a continuous improvement process; and d) ensuring that every school produces the intended outputs that lead to the attainment of better education outcome.

Founded on the general framework and vision of SBM, this study seeks to take a closer look at the SBM implementation in one school division in the Philippines. Specifically, its primary concern is to present the level of SBM of schools in a division and the school heads' views of its implementation in order to determine its strength and possible areas needing reinforcement.

Assessment of the schools' performance is focused on the six dimensions of SBM. These dimensions are geared toward the improvement of education outcomes, which are: School Leadership, Internal Stakeholders, External stakeholders, School Improvement Process, Resource Management, and Performance Accountability. With permission from authorities, the present study used data filed in the Planning Unit of the participant-division with respect to the schools' performances.

The study looks forward to provide substantive inputs for improving the Development of the Management System shown in the performance indicators, for devising strategic means to maximize school heads' empowerment, for making schools better establish strong community linkages, for improving schools' monitoring and evaluation practices, and for identifying more effective measures in controlling and managing school funds.

Furthermore, this study covers the SBM implementation for the past six years. It is envisaged to help identify the areas for improvement and reinforcement that may be pursued in the future to effectively address the barriers to access to quality education. Straightforwardly, it seeks to contribute significant insights that the Department of Education may consider to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of SBM implementation in a school division outside Manila, that is, in the provinces. It is likewise hoped that this study would be useful for policy makers and scholars who continuously endeavor to improve the SBM implementation in the country and the quality of education in the Philippines.

Without pre-empting the findings of this study, it should be noted that this research is confined and limited to analyzing records (secondary data) of the most recent performances of schools in a selected schools division indicating their levels of SBM practice; and, the perspectives (primary data) on the implementation of SBM of 30 pre-selected school leaders from the 10 central and 20 non-central schools in the participant-division composed of 198 public elementary schools.

For a better understanding of the study, the following terms have been defined conceptually and operationally.

Assessment. The ongoing process of gathering and analyzing evidence of what stakeholders know and what they do not know in SBM Practices. It is the process of interpreting information about stakeholders in order to plan instruction and evaluation of SBM Practices (Candau, 2001). Operationally, the same definition is adopted in this study.

Accountability. It is the acknowledgement and assumption of responsibility for all actions, decisions, policies, outputs and outcomes (Basic Education Reform Agenda,2009). Operationally, the same definition is adopted in this study.

Autonomy. It means free to govern the school as mandated in R.A.9155, subject to a set of implementing rules and regulations of the Department of Education. It is also known as decentralization.

Community ownership. It means the forging of partnership among stakeholders to address the needs and concerns of the school most especially those that directly affect learners' welfare.

Curriculum. It refers to all elements of the teaching-learning process that work in convergence to help students understand the curricular goals and objectives, and to attain high standards of learning defined in the curriculum. These elements include the teacher's knowledge of subject matter and the learning process, teaching-learning approaches and activities, instructional materials and learning resources (TEC Experiential Learning Handbook, 2007). The same definition is applied in this study.

Collaboration. It is the joint effort of stakeholders in working together toward improving learning outcomes (Basic Education Reform Agenda,2009).

School councils. Conceptually and operationally, it refers to governing body type school councils operating in schools. It is independent body established to provide advice, directions and support on issues relating to personnel, facilities and equipment, and to monitor a unit of education at the school level (Education Act No. 20, 2003).

Decentralization. It means stakeholders are free to govern the school as mandated by R.A 9155, subject to a set of implementing rules and regulations of the Department of Education (Basic Education Reform Agenda,2009). The same definition is adopted in the present study.

Empowerment. This is the process of enabling organizational members to act freely within known boundaries to attain agreed results (Applegarth& Posner, 1997). In this study, empowerment refers to devolution of power and authority to school councils for decision-making.

Impact. Operationally, this refers to the range of effect brought about by the implementation of the School Based Management. This pertains to the strength of the implemented program and the change which is distinctive after (Basic Education Reform Agenda, 2009).

Performance indicators. Refer to the several key indicators that can becomputed and utilized for evaluating the educational system's performance at various levels. (DepEd order no.60, s.2005)

School leadership. This refers to the process of influencing and supporting others to work enthusiastically toward achieving school goals and objectives. It is determined by personal traits and skills that make others want to follow the direction set and is anchored on principles which define the characteristics and behavior of school leaders.

School Based Management (SBM). It is the decentralization of decision-making authority to schools. At the school level, school heads, teachers, and students work together with community leaders, and local government, officials and other stakeholders to improve school performance in the six SBM dimensions (SBM Manual, 2009). Overall, school performance is classified by level, where there are up to three levels of performance, with the level three (III) as the highest category.

SBM Dimensions by Scale of Practice are:

Level I (Standard). It is the compliance of a school with the minimum requirements for securing and managing inputs, establishing appropriate structures and mechanisms, and improving processes that

affect instruction and student achievement in order to produce the desired level of outputs that lead to improved learning outcomes.

Level II (Progressive). Intensifies mobilization of resources and maximizes efforts of school to achieve desired learning outcomes.

Level III (Mature). The practice of maximizing efforts of the school and the community/ stakeholders to achieve higher learning outcomes.

Shared governance. It is a principle which recognizes that every unit in the education bureaucracy has a particular role, task and responsibility inherent in the office and for which it is principally accountable for outcomes. (Basic Education Curriculum, 2010). In this study, the same definition is adopted.

Supervision. It is the professional activity of a school head concerned directly with activities for the improvement of instructional services in a school (Basic Education Reform Agenda, 2009).

Shared vision. It is the collective dream of the major stakeholders for the school. It is the unifying and sustaining factor that upholds the values, beliefs and culture of the school community. It is the core message and establishes the principle of high performance for learners.

Shared mission. It is the commitment to pursue necessary tasks in realizing the vision. A shared mission drives the team to undertake actions to effect planned improvements (Basic Education Reform Agenda, 2009).

Shared decision making. It means ownership of decisions by a team of stakeholders. It is an effort to transform conventional school organizations into pro-active Learning Communities (LCs) These LCs are thus empowered to make decisions that would strengthen the teaching and learning processes.

Transparency. Conceptually and operationally, it means an open presentation to stakeholders of school accountabilities such as fiscal and material resources as well as school records, among others (Basic Education Reform Agenda, 2009).

Internal stakeholders. Internal stakeholders are the school heads, teachers, students and parents of students and their associations who directly work for the improvement of school performance. Their inputs about the school's strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities are necessary in the agenda for school improvement.

External stakeholders. External stakeholders are composed of community members, people from non-governmental organizations or NGOs, and the local government officials who have a stake in the education of the children. Their participation in the strategic planning for school improvement and attainment of learning outcomes is crucial. Aside from helping generate additional resources for the formulation and implementation of the School

Improvement Plan, they should also be involved in the monitoring and evaluation of learning outcomes (Operations Manual on School-Based Management, 2006).

School Improvement Process. The School Improvement Process puts in place a continuing systematic method of upgrading the delivery of educational services at the school level. It involves analysis of school needs, planning and implementing appropriate actions. It calls for a mechanism that would ensure accessibility to quality education. It also involves comparing and analyzing one's practices with other SBM practitioners in the country (Basic Education Reform Agenda, 2009).

METHOD

To obtain pertinent data, this study used *concurrent mixed methods* approach. Two sets of data were gathered at the same time: one secondary and one primary. The secondary data consist of the results of the overall assessment of the schools' SBM practices that were derived from records housed in the Planning Unit of the Department of Education office as permitted by the concerned education authorities of the covered schools division. This division composes of 30 districts with a total of 198 public elementary schools (10 are central schools). The primary data, on the other hand, were gathered through individual interviews with 30 pre-selected school leaders that include school heads of the 10 central schools, and 20 from the non-central schools. This was undertaken to substantiate the secondary data obtained, that is, to identify the factors that could have significantly contributed to the results of the overall assessment of the SBM practices of the schools, through the description of the implementation and impact of the SBM system in their respective schools.

An interview guide was used to systematically obtain significant information from the participants. It consisted of questions that specifically inquired of the participants': (1) perceptions on the implementation and impact of the SBM program in their respective schools; (2) perceived needs/ assistance needed to reinforce the implementation of the program; and, (3) their recommendations based on the identified strengths and weaknesses of the program. Prior to its use, the researcher-designed interview guide was subjected to content analysis by three education experts (two education leaders and one official of the covered schools division).

Secondary data (composed of the schools' overall rating, corresponding level of SBM practice and the verbal interpretation of their level of practice) were subjected to quantitative and content analyses to identify trends in the overall SBM practices of the covered schools. Meanwhile, the primary data (interview data) being purely qualitative, were content analyzed where key terms were identified from transcripts/ actual statements, and themes/ categories were consequently formed to arrive at inputs that may be recommended for the achievement of the main objective of this study. Responses were coded to preserve confidentiality.

Results of analyses were integrated to create a wider and deeper view of the implementation of the SBM system in the covered schools. Conclusions and recommendations were consequently drawn as guided by the objectives of the study.

FINDINGS

This section presents the data gathered, organized based on the sequence of the objectives identified in the Introduction: (1) results of the overall assessment of the schools' SBM practice; and, 2) perceptions of school heads on the implementation and impact of SBM in their respective schools.

Results of the Overall Assessment of the Schools' SBM Practice

Records of the performance of the 198 schools in the covered division with respect to their SBM practice reveal that all schools have implemented the School-Based Management system. Overall, of the 198 schools, 187 (in which seven are central schools out of a total of 10) are assessed to fall on Level 1 of their SBM practice which is read to be on the "moving toward progression" state. Level 1 is the starting level or standard level; level 2 is the progressive level, "advancing / gearing up" and level 3, the highest possible level, is the "mature" level. The remaining 11 schools (where three are central schools) are found meeting standards on level 2 described as "gearing up". No school is found classified under the highest level.

Table 1 presents the summary of the assessment of the schools' SBM practice while Tables 2 to 9 show the performance of the individual schools in the .

Table 1
Summary Data of the Overall Assessment of the Schools' SBM Practices

		SBM ASSESSMENT LEVEL	
No. of Schools	**Average Rating**	**Level**	**Stage**
187	77.77	I	Moving toward Progression
11	57.73	II	Gearing Up

Table 2
Individual Schools' Overall Performance in their SBM Practice (District 1-4)

| | SBM LEVEL | | |
SCHOOL	Rating	Level	Stage
District 1			
School 1	85.33	1	Moving toward progression
School 2	96.00	1	Moving toward progression
School 3	74.00	1	Moving toward progression
School 4	90.67	1	Moving toward progression
School 5	74.67	1	Moving toward progression
School 6	86.00	1	Moving toward progression
District Average	**84.45**	**1**	**Moving toward progression**
District 2			
School 7	69.34	1	Moving toward progression
School 8	83.94	1	Moving toward progression
School 9	83.94	1	Moving toward progression
School 10	64.23	1	Moving toward progression
School 11	68.61	1	Moving toward progression
School 12	83.94	1	Moving toward progression
School 13	48.00	1	Starting
School 14	65.69	1	Moving toward progression
District Average	**70.96**	**1**	**Moving toward progression**
District 3			
School 15 C/S	65.69	1	Moving toward progression
School 16	70.96	1	Moving toward progression
School 17	74.00	1	Moving toward progression

School	Rating	Level	Stage
School 18	76.00	1	Moving toward progression
School 19	73.33	1	Moving toward progression
School 20	76.00	1	Moving toward progression
School 21	75.33	1	Moving toward progression
District Average	**73.04**	**1**	**Moving toward progression**
District 4			
School 22	75.33	1	Moving toward progression
School 23	68.67	1	Moving toward progression
School 24	72.00	1	Moving toward progression
School 25	53.70	1	Moving toward progression
School 26	95.33	1	Moving toward progression
School 27	62.67	1	Moving toward progression
School 28	80.67	1	Moving toward progression
School 29	81.33	1	Moving toward progression
School 30	70.00	1	Moving toward progression
School 31	67.33	1	Moving toward progression
School 32	62.67	1	Moving toward progression
School 33	74.29	1	Moving toward progression
District Average	**71.99**	**1**	**Moving toward progression**

Table 3
Individual Schools' Overall Performance in their SBM Practice (District 5-9)

		SBM LEVEL	
SCHOOL	**Rating**	**Level**	**Stage**
District 5			
School 34	74.45	1	Moving toward progression

School 35	81.33	1	Moving toward progression
School 36	74.67	1	Moving toward progression
School 37	56.00	1	Starting
School 38	74.67	1	Moving toward progression
School 39	72.22	1	Moving toward progression
School 40	99.27	2	Advancing
District Average	**76.09**	**1**	**Moving toward progression**
District 6			
School 41	86.67	1	Moving toward progression
School 42 C/S	86.00	1	Moving toward progression
School 43	79.33	1	Moving toward progression
School 44	78.00	1	Moving toward progression
School 45	81.33	1	Moving toward progression
District Average	**82.27**	**1**	**Moving toward progression**
District 7			
School 46 C/S	74.67	2	Advancing
School 47	73.33	1	Moving toward progression
School 48	82.33	1	Moving toward progression
School 49	99.27	2	Advancing
School 50	86.67	1	Moving toward progression
School 51	86.00	1	Moving toward progression
School 52	79.33	1	Moving toward progression
School 53	78.00	1	Moving toward progression
District Average	**82.45**	**1**	**Moving toward progression**
District 8			
School 54 C/S	99.27	2	Advancing

School 55	86.67	1	Moving toward progression
School 56	86.00	1	Moving toward Progression
School 57	79.33	1	Moving toward progression
School 58	78.00	1	Moving toward progression
School 59	81.33	1	Moving toward progression
School 60	74.67	1	Moving toward progression
School 61	73.33	1	Moving toward progression
School 62	72.00	1	Moving toward progression
District Average	**81.18**	**1**	**Moving toward progression**
District 9			
School 63	100.00	**1**	Standard
School 64	70.85	**1**	Moving toward progression
School 65	75.33	**1**	Moving toward progression
School 66	77.33	2	Gearing up
School 67	84.00	**1**	Moving toward progression
District Average	**81.50**	**1**	**Moving toward progression**

Table 4
Individual Schools' Overall Performance in their SBM Practice (District 10-12)

District 10			
School 68	70.67	1	Moving toward progression
School 69	63.33	1	Moving toward progression
School 70	79.33	1	Moving toward progression
School 71	79.33	1	Moving toward progression
School 72	75.62	1	Moving toward progression
School 73	66.00	1	Moving toward progression

School 74	62.00	1	Moving toward progression
District Average	**70.89**	**1**	**Moving toward progression**
District 11			
School 75	75.33	1	Moving toward progression
School 76	79.33	1	Moving toward progression
School 77	74.67	1	Moving toward progression
School 78	68.00	1	Moving toward progression
School 79	71.33	1	Moving toward progression
School 80	70.67	1	Moving toward progression
School 81	74.67	1	Moving toward progression
School 82	78.00	1	Moving toward progression
School 83	72.00	1	Moving toward progression
School 84	74.67	1	Moving toward progression
District Average	**73.87**	**1**	**Moving toward progression**
District 12			
School 85	72.67	1	Moving toward progression
School 86	74.00	1	Moving toward progression
School 87	72.00	1	Moving toward progression
School 88	74.00	1	Moving toward progression
School 89	73.33	1	Moving toward progression
School 90	75.00	1	Moving toward progression
School 91	79.00	1	Moving toward progression
School 92	48.67	1	Moving toward progression
School 93	67.33	1	Starting
School 94	63.57	1	Moving toward progression
District Average	**69.39**	**1**	**Moving toward progression**

Table 5
Individual Schools' Overall Performance in their SBM Practice (District 13-18)

SCHOOL	Rating	Level	Stage
		SBM LEVEL	
District 13			
School 95	48.67	1	Starting
School 96	100.00	1	Standard
School 97	100.00	1	Standard
School 98	100.00	1	Standard
District Average	**87.17**	**1**	**Standard**
District 14			
School 99	87.17	1	Standard
School 100	100.00	1	Moving toward progression
School 101	77.33	1	Moving toward progression
District Average	**88.17**	**1**	**Moving toward progression**
District 15			
School 102	79.33	1	Starting
School 103 C/S	100.00	1	Standard
School 104	48.67	2	Gearing up
School 105	14.62	2	Gearing up
School 106	85.55	1	Moving toward progression
District Average	**65.63**	**1**	**Moving toward progression**
District 16			
School 107	14.62	2	Gearing up
School 108	82.67	1	Moving toward progression
School 109	52.11	1	Moving toward progression

District Average	**49.80**	**1**	**Moving toward progression**
District 17			
School 110	85.33	1	Moving toward progression
School 111	82.00	1	Starting
School 112	90.00	1	Moving toward progression
District Average	**85.78**	**1**	**Moving toward progression**
District 18			
School 113	65.33	1	Moving toward progression
School 114	70.00	1	Moving toward progression
School 115	20.67	1	Starting
School 116	61.33	1	Moving toward progression
District Average	**54.33**	**1**	**Moving toward progression**

Table 6
Individual Schools' Overall Performance in their SBM Practice (District 19-21)

	SBM LEVEL		
SCHOOL	**Rating**	**Level**	**Stage**
District 19			
School 117 C/S	68.67	1	Moving toward progression
School 118	78.67	1	Moving toward progression
School 119	81.33	1	Moving toward progression
School 120	82.00	1	Moving toward progression
District Average	**77.67**	**1**	**Moving toward progression**
District 20			
School 121 C/S	61.33	1	Moving toward progression
School 122	54.33	1	Moving toward progression

School 123	68.67	1	Moving toward progression
School 124	78.67	1	Moving toward progression
School 125	81.33	1	Moving toward progression
School 126	82.00	1	Moving toward progression
District Average	**71.05**	**1**	**Moving toward progression**
District 21			
School 127	77.67	1	Moving toward progression
School 128	89.33	1	Moving toward progression
School 129	88.67	1	Moving toward progression
School 130	84.67	1	Starting
School 131	84.00	1	Moving toward progression
School 132	80.00	1	Moving toward progression
School 133	83.33	1	Moving toward progression
School 134	85.00	1	Moving toward progression
School 135	74.00	1	Moving toward progression
School 136	82.67	1	Moving toward progression
District Average	**82.93**	**1**	**Moving toward progression**

Table 7
Individual Schools' Overall Performance in their SBM Practice (District 22-24)

		SBM LEVEL	
SCHOOL	**Rating**	**Level**	**Stage**
District 22			
School 137	61.33	1	Moving Toward Progression
School 138	56.67	1	Starting
School 139	72.67	1	Moving toward progression

School 140	69.33	1	Moving toward progression
School 141	76.00	1	Starting
School 142	68.00	1	Moving toward progression
School 143	74.67	1	Moving toward progression
School 144	88.67	1	Moving toward progression
School 145	72.40	1	Moving toward progression
District Average	**71.08**	**Level 1**	**Moving toward progression**
District 23			
School 146	30.66	2	Gearing up
School 147	71.33	1	Standard
School 148	54.00	1	Standard
School 149	82.67	1	Standard
School 150	61.33	1	Moving toward progression
School 151	56.67	1	Moving toward progression
District Average	**59.44**	**2**	**Gearing up**
District 24			
School 152	69.33	1	Moving toward progression
School 153	76.00	1	Moving toward progression
School 154	68.00	1	Moving toward progression
School 155	68.00	1	Moving toward progression
School 156 C/S	30.66	2	Gearing up
School 157	100.00	1	Standard
School 158	100.00	1	Standard
District Average	**73.14**	**1**	**Moving toward progression**

Table 8
Individual Schools' Overall Performance in their SBM Practice (District 25-27)

		SBM LEVEL	
SCHOOL	**Rating**	**Level**	**Stage**
District 25			
School 159 C/S	100.00	1	Standard
School 160	97.33	1	Moving toward progression
School 161	95.33	1	Moving toward progression
School 162	87.22	1	Moving toward progression
School 163	97.33	1	Moving toward progression
School 164	96.00	1	Moving toward progression
School 165	96.00	1	Moving toward progression
District Average	**95.60**	**1**	**Moving toward progression**
District 26			
School 166	86.67	1	Moving toward progression
School 167	90.00	1	Moving toward progression
School 168	90.00	1	Moving toward progression
School 169	92.67	1	Moving toward Progression
School 170	84.00	1	Moving toward progression
School 171	84.00	1	Moving toward progression
School 172	84.00	1	Moving toward progression
School 173	90.00	1	Moving Toward Progression
District Average	**87.67**	**1**	**Moving toward progression**
District 27			
School 174	80.00	1	Moving toward progression
School 175	24.67	1	Starting

School 176	74.00	1	Moving toward progression
School 177	72.00	1	Moving toward progression
School 178	80.67	1	Moving toward progression
School 179	73.33	1	Moving toward progression
District Average	**67.45**	**Level 1**	**Moving toward progression**

Table 9
Individual Schools' Overall Performance in their SBM Practice (District 28-31)

		SBM LEVEL	
SCHOOL	**Rating**	**Level**	**Stage**
District 28			
School 180 C/S	80.00	1	Moving toward progression
School 181	24.67	2	Advancing
School 182	74.00	1	Moving toward progression
School 183	73.33	1	Moving toward progression
District Average	**63.00**	**2**	**Gearing up**
District 29			
School 184	42.00	1	Moving toward progression
School 185	90.51	2	Advancing
School 186	93.33	1	Moving toward progression
School 187	96.67	1	Moving toward progression
School 188	70.13	1	Moving toward progression
School 189	86.40	1	Moving toward progression
District Average	**77.71**	**1**	**Moving toward progression**
District 30			
School 190	68.00	1	Moving toward progression

School 191	72.99	2	Gearing up
School 192	99.33	1	Moving toward progression
School 193	66.42	2	Gearing up
District Average	**76.69**	**2**	**Gearing up**
District 31			
School 194	76.69	2	Advancing
School 195	69.34	1	Moving toward progression
School 196	70.67	1	Moving toward progression
School 197	90.00	1	Moving toward progression
School 198	68.67	1	Moving toward progression
District Average	75.07	**1**	**Moving toward progression**

School Heads' Descriptions and Perceptions on the Implementation and Impact of the SBM System in Their Respective Schools

In the interview, participant-school heads were asked to describe their experiences and perceptions on the implementation and impact of the SBM system in their respective schools. Specifically, inquiry was focused on: (1) description of their role as school heads under the SBM practice and the impact such implementation created on them and in their respective schools; (2) description of their experiences and encounters on how the internal and external stakeholders coped with the implementation of the SBM; (3) the encountered difficulties in its implementation; and (4) their perceived needs/ assistance needed to improve/ reinforce implementation of SBM.

Description of Their Role as School Heads under the SBM Practice and the Impact SBM Created

Participants were unanimous in seeing themselves getting empowered under the SBM system. This empowerment is experienced by the school heads in the form of a freedom they are given to implement desired interventions in their respective schools, to decide over the finances of the school, and to work independently toward their schools' continuous improvement. These are expressed in the following quotes:

> *"Through SBM, school heads were given freedom to implement interventions."*
>
>   P1 and P8

"Great impact, empowered us over finances of the school"
                                                        P7, P14, P17, P19 and P20
"Empowered every school to continuously improve".
                                                        P11 and P15
"Great   impact,   empowered   us   over   finances   of   the   school
                                                        P7, P14, P17, P19 and P20
"Empowered every school to continuously improve".
                                                        P11 and P15

Along with empowerment, school heads are aware of the great responsibility and accountability that they are charged with.

"Great power but with great responsibilities".
                                                        P3, P9 and P10
"…willing to assume responsibilities and face challenges".
                                                        P15

They also find the various roles they have to carry out as empowered leaders. Among these roles include "initiators of activities", leader, supervisor, facilitator, morale-booster, motivator, developer of school plans, accountant, and an accountable team member to name a few.

"All around- initiator, leader, supervisor, facilitator, endorser, morale-booster-everything".
                                                        P19

"An accountant and a purchase manager".
                                                        P18 and P11

"A motivator, to influence and support the internal and external stakeholders towards achieving the goal".
                                                        P17

"As a good developer of the school plan that would generate support from stakeholders in the execution of school's programs and projects".
                                                        P16

"A leader of innovation, willing to assume responsibilities and face challenges".   P15

"A responsible and accountable leader".
                                                        P14 and P12

"A team member, not just a leader."
                                                        P13

"A school manager, instructional leader and an accountant".
                                                        P10

"Main implementer"

P9

"Instructional leader at the same time a change agent".

P7

"A driver- led the teachers, brings pupils to quality education and encourages stakeholders to hitch donations and support to the school".

P2

Schools heads talked about the impact of the SBM system on them and among the stakeholders of the school. Eight (8) out of 30 participants remarked that it has minimal impact in terms of internal efficiencies of the schools, the rest of the participants thought otherwise. Presented below are some of the statements given by the respondents;

"Teachers were motivated to teach well".

P2

"Opportunity to shine as empowered leaders".

P4

"Increased my workload significantly."

P8

Description of Their Experiences and Encounters on How the Internal and External Stakeholders Coped With the Implementation of the SBM

Participants shared their experiences as to how the SBM has been adapted both by the internal and external stakeholders of the schools. They made mention of the initial resistance of the program until eventually, through constant conferences and orientation, they were able to adjust to the program. Stakeholders were able to cope with the new roles and challenges that the program upholds and developed positive outlook of the SBM implementation.

"Changes always come with resistances, but because of the constant meeting and orientation to teachers, pupils, parents and stakeholders, it was inculcated among them how SBM will improve the school and can promote quality education".

P1

"Some are still in the adjustment period ".

P8, P9 and P13

"To cope with the new roles and challenges one must be open minded, be more supportive and accept the fact that SBM is a trend that would improve the quality education in our school . "

P3, P5 and P6

"Good attitude, positive outlook in life and believing in the system of the department.

P14

"They took it as a challenge on their part".

P10

***"**Based on my own observation, principals and council members have accepted their new roles and challenges with high spirit and positively".*

P7

"They identify problem and responsible [sic] for the development of a long term plan to solve the problem".

P16

Participants were adamant and eager in sharing the progress of the schools achievement test. They articulated the improvement on schools' documentation process, management of school records, in-service training of teachers, remedial programs for non-readers and non-numerates and the massive involvement and participation of stakeholders in diverse school projects. Participants even noticed the fervor which has been evident among some teachers in their teaching styles and strategies thereby increasing the schools' proficiency level.

"Teachers were more motivated to further improve their learning strategies as they were informed that everything they do at school for the pupils needed proofs , evidences , documentations , and with that scenario, they work hard to achieve the targeted level of mastery hence improved the MPS scores of the school".

P1

"Achievement results of the pupils were increased, teachers were able to initiate and organize in service training, decreased number of non-readers and non-numerates and the massive involvement and participation of parents and LGU to school urban gardening ".

P1 and P3

"The teachers were more motivated to teach well and zest [sic] to increase MPS level and that motivation goes down to pupil's level. Achievement tests such as DAT, RAT and NAT remarkably increased as compared to last year and it is recorded under dimension 6 level 1 tracking of pupils' performance.

P2

 "Not all subjects. In my school there is an improvement of non-readers and no numerates. In my target 3% increase was accomplished compared to the previous years".

P5

> *"It has improved a little. Cooperation and support of all people concerned under SBM leads the slight improvement of our students, and teachers' performance".*
>
> 　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　P6

> *"Yes, there is an improvement on students' achievements. Shared governance between school and stakeholders made a lot of improvement on the performance of the pupils and teachers".*
>
> 　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　P7

> *"Yes, significant improvement. See our tests results and internal efficiency. Empowerment improves the different aspects of the school".*
>
> 　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　P8

> *"Yes, there is big improvement in the achievement of the student especially in the internal efficiency. Dimension 2 (Internal Participation)".*
>
> 　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　P9

Collaboration among stakeholders, coupled with good rapport and zealous involvement, has been the schools' armor in animating the implementation of the SBM program. Participants also observed shared governance, responsibility and accountability among stakeholders and maintained a pleasing atmosphere to continuously improve school performance and strive to obtain the desired learning outcomes.

> *"Dynamic approach will be an effective one to motivate students' increased academic performance. For the teachers' performance and stakeholders, their involvement plays vital role under SBM".*
>
> 　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　P9

> *"Yes because under SBM, teachers, school heads and stakeholders work hand in hand to attain the schools vision of giving quality education to their pupils. The good atmosphere or climate within the school inspires everyone and makes the school conducive for learning. Shared governance and responsibility and accountability of the people concerned towards the achievement of common educational goal".*
>
> 　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　P10

> *"Yes, there is slight improvement on the achievement of our pupils. It empowered every school to continuously improve its performance both in attaining desired learning outcomes; lead staff and stakeholders in identifying and addressing school issues and concerns that affect students' outcome and create support network of community- based stakeholders that will mobilize social, political, cultural and economic resources".*
>
> 　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　P11

"Shared governance with the entire concerned individual. Transparency of funds or school resources serves as springboard to know the real status of each school and what action to be undertaken to improve the performance of the school".

<div align="right">P12</div>

"Decisions made at school level through collaboration and support of all the concerned people".

<div align="right">P13</div>

"Shared leadership and responsibilities and accountabilities among the people involved in the SBM".

<div align="right">P14</div>

The rationale of SBM that the closer a decision is made to student served by the decision, the better it is likely to serve the student. With the adequate authority at the school level, many important decisions affecting personnel, curriculum and the use of resources can be made by the people who are in the best position to make them".

<div align="right">P15</div>

"Yes, based on the NAT results.

<div align="right">P16</div>

Cooperation/ collaboration and shared governance and responsibilities among the concerned people under SBM".

<div align="right">P18</div>

"Yes, in some ways. In targeting results of performance".

<div align="right">P19</div>

"The school ranked 2nd highest MPS and NAT 2010 in the Division. SBM helps on the teaching/learning environment. Teachers are also empowered to use innovation technique".

<div align="right">P2</div>

"SGC members are oriented and trained on SBM and school governance. They are made aware of their duties and responsibilities".

<div align="right">P21</div>

"Seeking assistance from external stakeholders".

<div align="right">P24</div>

"Open communication line of both parties (school and community) made them aware of the needs of the learners in particular"

<div align="right">P27</div>

***"Empowerment improves the different aspects of the school".*

<div align="right">P8</div>

"Empowerment. It empowered every school to".

<div align="right">P11</div>

"Transparency of funds or school resources serves as springboard to know the real status of each school and what action to be undertaken to improve the performance of the school".

P12

"School introduces transparency and accountability mechanism".

P21

"Good attitudes and positive outlook in life and believing in the system of the Department have been the tools of the principals and councils in accepting new roles and challenges under SBM".

P14

"The rationale of SBM that the closer as decision is made to student served by the decision, the better is likely to serve the students. With the adequate authority at the school level, many important decisions affecting personnel, curriculum and the use of resources can be made by the people who are in the best position to make them".

P15

"Reporting of the school performance and evaluation".

P20

"For stakeholders, continuous assembly, good communication and reporting valid results in managing the school".

P16

"Students, teachers and parents understand their respective roles and responsibilities on SBM and are organized for participation in SBM process.

P18

"Monitoring of pupils' academic progress through the conduct of diagnostic and assessment tests.

P25

"Intensive and regular supervision and observation of classes with post conferences to make teachers aware of their strengths and weaknesses".

P26

Other school front liners, the teachers and school heads, openly expressed that they only have a little knowledge in the implementation of the program. Limited participation was contributed for they do not know yet what is expected of them to accomplish out of the program.

"Stakeholders, teachers and school heads involved in this have little knowledge about their new roles".

P11 and P12

"They don't participate much on the program".

P18

"They are still at a lost. They have not totally adapted to the roles and challenges of SBM".

P19

The Encountered Difficulties on the SBM Implementation

Participants were very keen in sharing their encountered difficulties on the SBM implementation. Just like any other program launched for the first time, SBM also has its "birth pains" which were openly stated by the participants. The lack of cooperation of stakeholders, inadequate parental support, weak monitoring and evaluation system of the program, reticent acceptance of ancillary services among teachers who reasoned that there are already a lot of paper works and an additional load could not further be accommodated, were just a few among those mentioned as difficulties encountered by school head participant-school heads during the implementation of the program.

"Other stakeholders' attitude and degree of participation they extended to school ".

P19

"They don't participate much on the programs but we are inspiring/motivating them to help/support the program".

P18, P15, P29 and P30

"Inadequate parental support".

P6

"Weak system support".

P3

"SBM engaged stakeholders in shared decision-making but if the community people will not be certain in supporting the school, decentralization will be far from the reality".

P2

"The system support to the newly decentralized authorities may [sic] even not exist".

P1

"Weak/incompetent use of monitoring and evaluation tool".

P19

"Stakeholders involved in the SBM had a little knowledge in the administering the Assessment tool for they were lack of trainings on School-Based Management Practices".

P14

"Difficult in the process of administering the instrument, is what I think one major problem encountered in the implementation of SBM".

P11

"This requires more effort, time, etc. Plenty of recording/ record keeping both in soft and hard copy".

P17

"Cash advances and liquidation process are additional work for the principals".

<div align="right">P9</div>

Insufficient facilities and equipment of the school were also brought up and considered as contributory factors in impeding the fast realization of the goals and targets of SBM. Insufficient budget was the clamor of each and every participant which they believe should be properly addressed by the Department to augment the immediate needs of the schools.

"One of the major problems confronting the implementation of SBM is the technology using ICT wherein computers in every school are needed. Results were being delivered and translated into action which may or may not be necessary in the transfer of services, thus, making enormous changes for the completion of data were being shaken in meeting deadlines."

<div align="right">P16</div>

Lack of funds, since MOOE is the only budget component that has been somewhat decentralized, this result supports the continuing decentralization process".

<div align="right">P14</div>

"Lack of funds/facilities since MOOE is the only sources that are visible under the implementation of SBM".

<div align="right">P10</div>

"Inadequate finances on the implementation of SBM."

<div align="right">P7</div>

"Lack of school facilities due to lack of funds".

<div align="right">P6</div>

"Lack of funds, lack of facilities and unavailability of computer rooms".

<div align="right">P5</div>

"Insufficient funding".

<div align="right">P3</div>

Any program or project which has not been vividly and comprehensively explained would not produce a hundred percent efficacy. Participants confessed their lack of knowledge of and competence in the implementation of the program and even added that they did not fully understand the SBM and its dimensions. Others simply stated that it was difficult to please everybody:

"Lack of competence on the part of the school heads".

<div align="right">P13</div>

"Lack of competence of school heads due to lack of knowledge on the implementation of SBM and its dimension. And the lack of support of the stakeholders is two major problems confronting the implementation of SBM".

P12

"School heads do not fully understand SBM, particularly the six dimensions under it; this is because of lack of training, and for the school heads that were just newly promoted and new in the system facing the new roles".

P10

"Lack of clarity of the roles between school, council and principals".

P8

"Inadequately trained teachers on the implementation of SBM".

P7

"In practice, weak management capacity".

P3

"Inadequately-trained teachers".

P3

"It's difficult to please everybody"

P9

"Lack of knowledge on SBM due to lack of trainings".

P6

"For me, SBM is not a contributing factor prior to the improvement of students' academic performance. Thus, to achieve this quality we have to revisit the love values that we want to instill among our students. Therefore the accumulation of knowledge and the empirical skills that we have learned manifested in the virtues or core values that we incorporated".

P4

"Cooperation and support of all people concerned under SBM leads the slight improvement of our students and teachers' performance".

P6

"For stakeholders, continuous assembly, good communication and reporting valid results in managing the school".

P16

"Teachers-trainings; students improvement of curriculum; stakeholders- non so far

P19

Perceived Needs/ Assistance Needed To Improve/ Reinforce Implementation of SBM

Having a thorough review on the ups and downs of the program for the past six years of its implementation, participants suggested a reinforcement of the program which particularly focuses on massive reorientation, wide dissemination, comprehensive trainings and conferences and strengthened monitoring and evaluation tool to gauge the efficacy of the program and the extent of its implementation. Specifically, for example, ten (10) participant-school heads were one in stating that orientation, trainings, workshops and massive dissemination can help teachers, pupils and stakeholders on how SBM will achieve quality education. Others emphasized on the financial support and technical assistance needed to sustain implementation of the program.

"They need financial support and provide them seminars and trainings about SBM".

P15 and P16

"Wide dissemination and orientation should be given to teachers, parents, pupils and other stakeholders so as to ensure support and cooperation"

P3

"Meeting to discuss every Dimension of the SBM Practices. Collaborative participation is necessary to come up with good/better/best results".

P17

"We are inspiring/motivating them to help/support the program".

P18

"They still needed technical assistance".

P19

"*Approaches initiated are: 1) monthly meeting with parents HRPTA and MPTA. 2.) Conducting NCBTS seminars to teachers to determine their needs. 3.) Conducting DISLAC, SLAC and INSET to update teachers' knowledge in teaching".*

P5

"SBM orientation and reporting of the school performance and evaluation. Conduct trainings."

P20 and P29

"Insets of teachers, SGC meet them quarterly".

P22

"Establishment of rapport and harmonious relationship with the stakeholders".

P25

"Application of knowledge, skills and insights gained from the school based in service trainings".

P25

"Trainings/seminars/conferences/ meetings and monitoring and evaluation".
P26

DISCUSSION

It is noteworthy to highlight that the School-Based Management (SBM) system of governance is implemented in all of the 198 public elementary schools in the participant-division, of which 10 are central schools. These data point out the schools' solid effort of supporting the Philippine government's projects with respect to educational reforms. Such is a manifestation of the school leaders' willingness to embrace innovations introduced by educational authorities. In the school leadership arena, it is recognized that to sustain educational reform, there has to be ownership of the reform (Bishop, 2011). Relating this to the findings, the participation of all the covered public schools in the implementation of SBM for the duration of the period of more than five years is an indication of a developed ownership of the project among the school leaders and their respective constituents. The government, through the Department of Education, may capitalize on this as it endeavors to further strengthen the SBM system to maximize result—which is better quality education.

Meanwhile, looking back at the performances of the schools, while it can be well appreciated that within the six to seven-year period of implementation, there were at least 11 schools that emerged achieving level II (advancing stage), it is noted that the majority of the schools are still on the basic level—level one (starting/ moving toward progression), and that not one of the covered schools had, so far, reached the highest level (level III). Such performance may be attributed to a number of factors that were freely expressed by the interviewed school heads when asked to identify needs. Foremost of these identified needs is the school heads' lack of competency in the full implementation of the SBM which they themselves discerned to have been a result of the lack of orientation and comprehensive training on the entire SBM program, and thus they have limited working knowledge to apply in various emerging situations while implementing the SBM system.

In any business or operation to be successful, experts on leadership contend that it is always basic to ask 'what needs to be done', that is, leaders should first 'get the knowledge that they need' (Drucker, 2011) in order to be able to proceed to succeeding steps smoothly and achieve desired preset goals. Banking on the same principle, the principals' or school heads' thorough orientation and training on the SBM system appears to be a real basic need that should be prioritized. With adequate orientation and education on SBM, school heads would be able to respond appropriately to other emerging problems particularly those that pertain to encouraging and empowering teachers, students, and community members to cooperate in any SBM implementation-related activity. 'Leaders working all by themselves' is definitely not of SBM because SBM is all about stakeholders working together harmoniously to achieve school goals and objectives.

Equally noted is the achievement of the 11 schools in reaching level II, verbally interpreted as *advancing stage,* in which classification are the seven (7) central schools out of 10. One who knows the advantages and privileges that central schools enjoy over the non-central schools may opine that central schools are indeed expected to perform better than their non-central counterparts. What makes them classified as "on the advantage" or "privileged" is their better access to needed resources and facilities such as highly qualified

teachers and staff, instructional materials like books, journals, other teaching aids, technology and funding, and their "more urbanized" culture being central schools.

On funding, allocation of school funds in the public schools varies in accordance with the number of enrollees. The higher the number of enrollees, the larger is the allocated funds for the school. As to how these allocated funds get managed is an essential and a very critical part of SBM. Finances are the lifeblood of an organization that allows it to thrive and develop. SBM will not be complete if it does not include fiscal autonomy of schools in the management of funds. The SBM fund is the total budget allocated by the division office to a school for a given school year for its operating expenses.

School heads' autonomy over school funds dictates that along with the authority to make decisions over financial resources are the responsibility and accountability for the legal and optimal utilization of such funds to achieve planned outputs and outcomes. It is therefore very important to equip the school heads with adequate knowledge about the concepts, methods and procedures of a simplified fund management system. Along with this, government support, may it be in the form of funding or materials or equipment must be provided even to those hard-to-reach schools. Participants revealed in the interview that the foremost need, apart from training on SBM, is the provision of adequate financial support.

Apart from the SBM level of practices, this study also gathered data on the "Performance Indicators" of schools declaring full implementation of the SBM. The promotion rate is 97.95%, failure rate is 1.01%, repetition rate is 1.32%, drop-out rate is 0.97% and achievement rate is 69.88 %. Performance indicators are considered parameters on the overall performance of every school. Some school heads claimed that the SBM implementation contributed a great deal on the positive effect and increase of said indicators, but not all school heads conformed to this view, based on the reflected answers from the conducted interview.

The implementation of SBM is an evolutionary process. As schools and communities mature and become more able to manage their resources, the effectiveness of SBM in the overall improvement of education approaches the grassroots. To effectively implement SBM, plans are needed not only to include transfer of real authority to the school but also control over information, knowledge and rewards. Such change management strategies could include drafting of the School Improvement Plan (SIP). Schools embarking on SBM should be very clear about the need for change and the ultimate purpose of the change process, which is to improve the quality of education and the learning achievement of students. School heads need to know how to design change in the school and how to manage the dynamics of change, including the natural stages of transition and the resistance associated with it. Among the key resources are time and money for the extensive skills-development process required to support the new way of governance and management (Operations Manual on SBM and Its Support System, 2006, p. 5).

The responsibility of the school heads or principals is so great that the success of the school system depends to a large extent on them. The welfare of the school, children and teachers lie on their hands. They play important roles under SBM. All changes that would be instituted in the schools, whether these are results of direct mandates or are offshoots of earlier changes made, would only lead to their real purposes—improvement in student

learning and continuing growth of students, if and only if the school leaders or the principals take full and conscious effort to lead their respective schools to the best they can. But principals could do much more when empowered—and this is exactly why SBM is designed. Hence, the Government, being cognizant of the aforementioned condition enacted Republic Act 9155 on August 11, 2001, an act instituting a framework of governance for Basic Education and for other purposes. This is the legal mandate for decentralization of governance in basic education as stipulated in the Act. Its declaration of policy under Section 2 sets the direction of basic education in the Philippines, to wit:

> *It is hereby declared the policy of the State to protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality basic education and to make such education accessible to all by providing all Filipino children a free and compulsory education at the elementary level and free education at the high school level. Such education shall include alternative learning systems for out of school youth and adult learners. It shall be the goal of basic education to provide them with the skills, knowledge, and values they need to become caring, self-reliant, productive and patriotic citizens.*

> *The school shall be the heart of the formal education system. It is where children learn. Schools shall have a single aim of providing the best possible basic education for all learners.*

> *Governance of basic education shall begin at the national level. It is at the regions, divisions, schools and learning centers-herein referred to as the field offices- where the policy and principle for the governance of basic education shall be translated into programs, projects and services developed, adapted, and offered to fit local needs (RA 9155 of 2001,Section 2).*

It is clear from this Declaration of Policy that the most important change in the governance of basic education must occur at the level of the school, "the heart of the formal education system". School-based management (SBM) is the institutional expression of such change.

Most of the stakeholders believe that inadequate and insufficient knowledge of the program would make its realization ill. As remedial measures for this, trainings, workshops and seminars on the six dimensions of SBM are necessary to be conducted for the concerned individuals.

After a methodical analysis of the findings, in the education arena, SBM has been viewed largely as an educational reform that hands power (authority) over budget, personnel and curriculum to individual schools. The main focus of school-based management has been the decentralization of power. The idea of using SBM as a vehicle for giving more authority to school heads is often seen as synonymous with empowering internal and external stakeholders. School heads are encouraged to include artifacts and reflections from all of the dimensions of the program implemented in their portfolios. This structure provides administrators and teachers with access to a comprehensive evaluation model that captures

many aspects of the complexities of teaching and the process of teachers developing expertise. Given these expectations among school leaders along the line of implementing SBM, it is not over-emphasizing to re-stress the value of adequate preparation for the beginning principals and retooling for those who had been into the service of leading schools. Monitoring and evaluation skills, apart from good relational skills needed for coaching, promoting harmony and encouraging cooperation, among others, are other necessary abilities that educational leaders should possess. Literature supports this claim. Bishop (2011) stated that "effective leaders develop the capacity of people and systems to identify, gather, and use evidence" (p. 35). This implies the need for the school leaders to develop their skills on the conduct of formative and summative evaluation along with reflection of their practices. They should also be able to encourage their fellow teachers to participate in constantly gathering evidence of student achievement for proper documentation and do the scrutiny of these pieces of evidence as a team. In such a process, the principals and the teachers are engaged in doing joint evaluation where decisions are collaboratively arrived at. Such collaboration could be a gateway to enhanced ownership of the implementation of any project. Encouraging collaboration among stakeholders in carrying-out any activity is in itself a manifestation of empowerment.

School heads' empowerment is more like of an open-ended essay examination. They do lead people to accomplish the important work of schools. Like the best teachers, they adapt to changes without losing sight of what really matters. If all schools have leaders who are best and unique principals, the students who walk their doors each day would face the global community with so much confidence knowing that they are well-equipped with knowledge, skills and great attitude (Maplanas, 1999).

Decentralized management has a longer history in the private sector. For several decades, organizations have been implementing "high-involvement management" - a practice, which like SBM, decreases centralized control to encourage self-management by employees. Studies of decentralization in the private sector suggest that high-involvement management is most appropriate in organizations where the work (like teaching in schools) is complex; is best done collegially or in teams; involves uncertainty in its day-to-day tasks; and exists in a rapidly changing environment. This particular literature points out an essential part that may be incorporated in the principals' training on SBM implementation—that of creating teams among the teachers, parents and students under their leadership, as they work together in making desired changes happen in their respective schools.

For many years, division offices are the ones allocating funds and distributing facilities and resources to every school, where there is a minimal consideration on the utmost need of each. Upon the SBM implementation, downloading of operating expenses or funds among schools has been made possible thereby realizing prioritization of needs, rendering immediate action on priority concerns, and proper allocation of resources (particularly funding) on the most urgent and important concerns. Liquidation of the downloaded funds has also been a major task given to school heads. The transition to SBM has entailed a colossal change among school heads, especially the word "decentralization". This downloads transfer of responsibility and decision-making over school operations to principals. This is specifically perceived as a challenge to administrators and stakeholders alike into thriving on challenges brought about by the program.

Documentation has always been a part of School Information System. Incidentally in this study, documentation appeared to be among the weaknesses of most schools. Hence, documentation and substantiation of schools' achievement can be another skill for enhancement among the principals. Many other greater achievements of the schools could have been recorded where if not for the lack of substantive evidence to support these achievements. Documentation of school achievement such as forming portfolios could be encouraged. These portfolios could contain pieces of evidence that point to the progress of students and of the school in general, accompanied by narrative of experiences and reflection of such experiences. It may be considered or required that along with implementation is the proper documentation of procedures, practices and achievements or non-achievement of targets.

The SBM tool provides schools with sufficient checklists on the 'what's and how's' of proper documentation pertaining school pertinent papers. School heads as Lead Implementer are given new roles, functions and competencies.

As the lead implementer of SBM, the scope of the school head is defined by Section 7E of RA 9155 as follows:

> *School heads shall have authority, accountability and responsibility for the following:*
>
> *a. Set the mission, goals and targets of schools-develop School Improvement Plan (SIP).*
>
> *b. Be accountable for higher learning outcomes-implement the curriculum and develop the school educational program, create an environment conducive to higher learning and introduce new and innovative modes of instruction to achieve higher learning outcomes.*
>
> *c. Administer and manage personnel, physical and fiscal resources of the school-recommend staff complement, encourage staff development and accept donations.*
>
> *d. Establish school-community networks in support of school targets and contribute to community development.*

Thus, SBM implementation should strengthen instruction and supervision among implementing schools.

It is reiterated, at this point, that advocates of SBM must push for the improvement of educational outcomes for a number of reasons. First, it improves accountability of principals and teachers to students, parents and teachers. Accountability mechanisms that put people at the center of service provision can go a long way in making services work and improving outcomes by facilitating participation in service delivery. Second, it allows local decision-makers to determine the appropriate mix of inputs and education policies adapted to local realities and needs.

Meanwhile, the identified need for re-orientation of the principals on the SBM process is likewise understood in the study as pointing out the necessity of proper dissemination of accurate and timely information to all schools. Oftentimes, problems that arise are simply products of miscommunication or communication of wrong information to the target receivers. In SBM schools, effective principals used various strategies to distribute information liberally

and frequently to participants both inside and outside the school. Principals work with staff to develop a clear vision for the school and then to ensure the vision is communicated to all SBM constituents. Principals disseminate information about school activities and student performance through circular letters to the whole community including local businesses. The Principal's role in SBM is evolving from direct instructional leadership to the broader one of orchestrating decision making through teams of teachers, and interacting with a wider-range of people, including community members. In pursuing four strategies for a successful transition to school-based management-empowering, training, informing and rewarding-principals started on these emerging new roles: 1) Designer of Involvement Structures. Principals help to develop decision-making teams and provide them with opportunities for involvement in school specific issues. They invest SBM team with real authority by carving out discrete areas of jurisdiction; 2) Motivator/coach. Principals work to create a supportive SBM environment by communicating trust, encouraging risk-taking, sharing information and facilitating information, and facilitating participation; 3) Facilitator of Change. Principals encourage staff development as an ongoing school wide activity, providing staff with both tangible (money, equipment, materials) and intangible (time and opportunities) resources;4) Liaison to the outside world. Principals bring into their schools new ideas and research about teaching and learning. They also solicit donations of funds and materials, encourage staff to apply for grants to supplement school resources, and free up teachers to focus on teaching and learning by filtering out unnecessary distractions (Wohlstetter & Briggs, 1994).

SBM, as a governance framework of the DepEd, offers an opportunity to improve the quality of basic education. Various countries have so far tested the SBM framework and though it has rightly delivered its promise, but education leaders have also raised their words of caution and hindsight. In the Philippines, The TEPP and BEAM pilot projects have proven their impact, thus the national cascading of SBM is a decision and policy in the right direction. Virtually, the Deped, together with other reform minded leaders and organizations, is challenged to document and measure the milestones in the grassroots schools- a task it pursues vigorously (Abulencia, 2007).

The implementation of SBM has surfaced as a transitional tool, connecting the teaching-learning endeavors of the teachers as learner, teacher as expert, and teacher as scholar. Dimensions were greatly specified to address and strengthen school academic and non-academic performances to come up with a reflective supervision to achieve Teacher Commitment. The ultimate goal of reflective supervision is to open the doors for teacher inquiry, a teacher-administrator-driven form of professional growth which will inculcate both professional and personal growth. This study commends the superiority and appropriateness of the SBM tool for it ultimately addresses supervisory and managerial skills of school leaders, but the qualitative and quantitative findings presented that school heads are not yet ready and equipped with skills to fully adopt and institutionalize SBM in the educational system.

The decentralization through SBM implementation should have surfaced as a transformational tool empowering school heads to strengthen partnerships, engage education stakeholders and produce learners who are fully equipped and competitive; however, from the lenses of school leaders, as evident in the findings, the SBM has not yet been fully understood by many, thus the study suggests interventions to revisit and enhance the program, thereby resulting in its reinforcement.

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