



Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Region III
DIVISION OF CITY SCHOOLS
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DIVISION MEMORANDUM

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To: Public Secondary School Heads/OICs

This office is pleased to inform you of the original contest pieces made by the following teachers for the Division English Olympics and Regional Integrated Competitions.

1. Oration - Rose Dinah Mesalucha (Paradise Farms National High School)
Noel Basmayor (Muzon High School)
2. Jazz Chants - Charmaine Eva Babia (San Jose del Monte High School)

Said teachers will each receive a certificate of recognition. The Division Association of Secondary School English Teachers (DASSET) will also give a token for each of the said writers.

Immediate dissemination of this memorandum is desired.


DR. AMANCIO S. VILLAMEJOR JR., CESO IV
Schools Division Superintendent

I am a Student, Listen to My Voice

by

Noel Alkuino Basmayor

Muzon High School

I am a small voice, a student's voice. I am among the hundreds of thousands of students who experienced an overloaded curriculum over the past years. I am among the directly involved whenever there are changes to the educational programs or policies of the education department of the country. Recently, another change was implemented, the K to 12 program which is a part of the First things First policy and the education for all program of the department. According to them, the K to 12 Basic education program will resolve whatever waterloo that we have by producing a globally competitive graduates, why?

The educational system of the Philippines is said to be deteriorating over time. Perusing the pages of history, foreign eyes were stunned by the astounding skills of Filipinos. We have produced learned individuals who thundered our Asian counterparts; Dr. Jose Rizal, Claro M. Recto, Cayetano Arellano, Jose Abad Santos, Jose Diokno, Juan Salcedo, Jr., to mention few and the list goes on.

What gives the nerve to these foreign eyes to epitomize that our educational system is sinking? Their judgment was based on the international indicators like: the poor quality of basic education which is reflected in low mastery of basic competencies; this low quality of education is evident in the inadequate preparation of high school students for world class skills or entrepreneurship for higher education; the test results of Trends in International Mathematics and Science (TIMSS) where we were ranked 34th out of 38 countries in High School Math and 43th out of 46 countries in High School Science; fluency of the use of the English language, passing through the skills validation exam for foreign jobs, ability to carry out task with less supervision, and the increasing statistics of unemployed Filipinos due to insufficient skills.

We the students of today are confronted with myriad of lags of school buildings, books, chairs, teachers and other school facilities and amenities. Isn't this enough reason that educational downfall is chalked to these factors? Why implement another curriculum and adding additional two years were foreseen as the answer to these problems? Why not solving first the prevalent problem and once resolved then this Kto12 be implemented?

My parents enjoined with those with apprehensions to what the Kto12 would affect them. Certainly, the additional two years would mean another painful year to their pockets. Some say that the implementation of the Kto12 program is impractical and would not resolve the problem. If the department could only provide conducive classrooms for the around 21.49 million students in over 45,000 public schools; the existing classroom backlog according to DepEd is 66, 800 and 124,286 classroom toilets for the school year 2012-2013. I am not counting the insufficient number of teacher, chairs, books and the very minimal department's budget.

Why DepEd is so averse to implement the Kto12 program? K to 12 simply means Kindergarten to Grade 12. This means that there will be a mandatory Kindergarten, six year elementary education, four years of junior high school, and two years of senior high school.

In a nutshell, the K to 12 program is a decongested and focused education system with a learner-centered curriculum producing globally competitive graduates. This answers the need for a 12-year education system which is at par with international standards such as the Washington and the Bologna Accord. Graduates of this program will be perceived with increased competency and have better global opportunities.

It is envisaged that the improved basic education curriculum equip students with more time learning the core academic areas thus ensuring better comprehension. Also, pupils from Grade 3 and below will be taught in their mother tongue to ensure better understanding of basic concepts.

Since the new curriculum is a learner-centered curriculum, students will be allowed to choose elective subjects and specialization which they really want. The students will love learning more and will grow to their full potential. Whether the students want to be professionals, businessmen, artists or athletes, their skills and talents will be honed and nurtured.

To address the apprehensions for heaving the financial predicaments of the marginal families, Grade 11 and 12 take the form of a two-year college education. In a public school, this is tuition-free. In effect, the number of year of college courses will decrease because of redundancies. Those who will pursue college will have fewer years to pay for. Graduates will also receive training certifications, which reduces the need to study a vocational course.

With the increased competence and workmanship due to TESDA-like training and college-like education included in the new curriculum, graduates will become employable, reducing the rate of unemployment. Those who are passionate about starting a business will be enabled to open more job opportunities.

I am puzzled. I must realize my stand. I have immersed myself to the idea that K to12 curriculum will only bring confusion, another array of failures. I have been too apprehensive but now I have realized. I realized that a seed must die in order to live, so that a robust and vibrant plant will grow. Yes, it is true that letting go of things we were used to is painful. But the pain of letting go gives us a new hope, a new beginning and a new head start, certainly for the best. The Kto12 program aims not only to produce better graduates but also to improve the quality of life of the country as a whole.

I am a student. This is my stand. I am standing firm to this!

JAZZ CHANTS PIECE (K to 12 program)

Where have you been?

I've been to a meeting and I've learned about the k to 12 program.

What about?

The k to 12 program...

Tell me about the k to 12 program.

What's good about the k to 12 program?

The k to 12 program gives an adequate period for learning and if the graduates work abroad...

Wait, our children working abroad..?

It's a requirement for recognition of professionals abroad.

Well, that's good, that's good.

The k to 12 program provides mastery of competencies.

And why is that?

Because the curriculum is learner centered.

Enriched?

Yes, and responsive to local needs.

So the k to 12 program is better than the current program?

Well yes, indeed!

A student who completes k to 12 will be equipped with skills and competencies.

And the certificates?

It's equivalent to a two year college degree.

So it ensures employment for our graduates? Well yes, indeed!

The k to 12 program will enable students to acquire certificate of competency and national certifications.

So now I know.

Yes we know.

And we have learned that the k to 12 program is great indeed!

K12 Education, Key To Global Competitions

Even the smallest village in the Philippines, teems with children destined to make the difference we need in order to succeed as a country.

We, Filipinos, value family greatly and the most important part where its essence becomes evident is when we put interest to the basic needs of the children. Other than food, shelter, clothing, good health comes education. When these things, including education, are well provided, the person more likely, becomes a productive citizen of the country.

The young generations are headed to a track that is unknown to the old folks of our time. It is true that they are to be the eyewitnesses of the future. They are to probe what has to come. They are to mingle with the now is yet unknown. If they are unprepared to face it, they are alike with the small motor boat that is about to sail in the vast ocean.

It is through education that our government drives over the border from poverty and illiteracy to freedom. It is passing through the needle of education that we, the young generations are compelled to value the prize of the future.

Today, not any other day, is our day to redeem.

We have a radical assignment and a role to play. Knowledge flows like free waterfalls that cascade by the boulders and refresh one's soul. Are we into bathing into its coolness?

During the early Spanish era, Tomas Pinpin, in his *Librong Pagaaralan nang manga Tagalog nang Uicang Castilla*, wrote,

"Let us therefore study, my countrymen, for although the art of learning is somewhat difficult, yet if we are persevering, we shall soon improve our knowledge."

Perseverance in education spawns to the many innovations that meet with the challenges of the changing world. Indeed it is commendable to prepare the future for the young generations but it is more profitable and wiser to implore equipping them for the unpredictable demands of the future.

Every truth, every knowledge, every learning experience is beneficial. Even the early Filipino parents recognized its gain thus, in their informal and distinct system of education, taught their young vocational skills as these things were found to be the genuine and typical elements embedded in one's gender and personality. The growing lads learned from their fathers the art of hunting, fishing and farming, while the young maidens ascertained house chores from their mothers.

Education was perceived, not as an option but as a necessity. It was about survival. It was about living.

When the Spaniards came, they have found that our folks had an overwhelming high literacy rate. Our ancestors had tribal tutors supporting the non-formal home study. It prompted the Spanish missionary teachers to advance their education and to allow them realize that education, next to faith, is the key to survive. The 1577's Franciscans apprised our folks with the knowledge about new industrial and agricultural techniques next to religious doctrines and Christian values. Moreover, when the Americans came, they established a free public school system that prepared Filipinos for citizenship. Now education in the Philippines is patterned in the United States. Basic education is compulsory. Everyone is given the access to it. Regardless of status, a person is encouraged to enroll or to be enrolled.

Education, more than a privilege, is a right. Nevertheless, with the growing population in our country, the right to education has also narrowed and in effect, brought the achievement gap. Are we committing ourselves to be statisticians of the increasing number of students who

went to elementary but did not get high school education? Are we not to dump the ideas of drop-outs, of high school and college undergraduates, of unemployed graduates and of employed graduates to the mismatched jobs?

Our government has its plight to earnestly serve its people, not only making it available to all but providing every citizen with adequate training.

The Philippine educational system has to become competitive among other countries around the world. We must be penitent and discerning to actualize the change we want. We need to discuss among ourselves the etymology of progress and invest on what is attainable rather than what is called luck, to settle not for what is temporary but for what is of long – term benefit.

We are grateful for whatever success the traditional system of education has brought us. There is no obsolete education system, neither irrelevant. We are still conservative of our values system yet are open for the need to strengthen and reform the traditional educational structure. Studies show that the improvements in the quality of education bring a positive overall impact on society as it was proven in United Kingdom, India and United States. Researches reveal that some more progressive nations implement the fourteen-year pre-college education. Other countries have twelve years. Our very own has the ten-year basic education program.

Where are we now? What have we been doing all these years? What have we seen after the program? Had the country ever exhausted the natural wealth in each of us, students? Has the great National Hero's desire been fulfilled for years? Look at us. Look to our future. What does its mirage tell us?

The vision board is now assembled with pictures of things concerning the future. Some are appealing while others torment or terrify us. Nevertheless, we have the inner fang that must

be prominently displayed - the will that never contradicts the promises of brilliant future – the will to choose education, the will to implement K12 Education.

The K12 education is a new system of education that has been initiated by the present administration headed by our President Benigno S. Aquino, Jr.

We have witnessed the nightmare of the past. As times passed by, we have only entered a contract with education and not made pact with the future. There were many graduates in our country and these people grew in a number that is disproportionate to the actual demands of employment thus produced the bystanders in the many corners of the society, who display power by their fists alone and harass the learned and professionals. The jobless citizens call life misfortune. See what we have in our time. Look after the dismal estate of our countrymen, of the young individuals whose lives are then propelled by injustices, prejudices, immorality and poverty. Others are born in riches but most of us who belong to the poverty line, would not always leap nor escape. Let us not associate ourselves with those who have for long, swarmed behind bars and there forever imprison the dreams. We must condemn the thought of "bahala na si batman" attitude and the game of chance. In everything we do, we need to have the assurance of success. We can. Young generation, arise and open your eyes.

We can know the future by letting our present steps define it. We are born to enjoy the good years of life. We are going to be somebody. As we foster to keep this dream, we need to establish a bulwark that never fails and this is it. It is now.

It is now that the proponents of the program admonish educators and stakeholders to help promote the enhanced traditional system of education and support the K12 Education which now includes the universal kindergarten, 6 years of elementary, 4 years of junior high school with an additional senior high school. In K12 Education, we are to decongest the traditional ten-year plan since it has, for years, carried with it an irony. One commentator stated

and I quote, "If ten years were adequate, how come employees do not hire fresh high school graduates?" Indeed, it is true that there is a need to reinforce the current education system and the misperception that basic education is simply a preparatory step for higher education. Why can't we, the students, be prepared even now, in our formative years?

We need this change. Our education needs the transformation.

It is true that other folks of our country confine themselves to the negative side of this program. They seem to perceive the short span of struggle and constraints. Parents complain about the additional expenses that must be favored and provided to sustain the two additional years. Likewise, it is undeniable that the government has pockets to lose and budgets to spend in order to provide additional classrooms, facilities and procure school supplies as well as to employ more qualified teachers. We can only attain our long – time aspirations if we are ready to bear the yoke of adjustment.

If we, the young generations, count ourselves among them, we lose the grace we can find in this program. A taste of this and an experience of this will make a lot of big difference meant for life-long empowerment, productivity and efficiency.

The leaders of our country, together with the parents and educators has to be ambitious and determined to set a course that will not only produce graduates but all the more support the lofty goal of eliminating illiteracy and unemployment, bringing each learner to an exceptional achievement. As we entreat the increasing unemployment rate, we are into keeping up with the global standards.

Once this program succeeds, we, the students, are foreseen to graduate under the K12 Education, as empowered individuals, rooted to sound educational principles, geared towards excellence and are capable to co-exist in the fruitful harmony with local and global communities. The curriculum is designed to advance our academic performance as we immerse to the two-

year in-depth specialization, honing our skills and competencies relevant to the job market. We, the Filipino students would become more literate, more skilled and competitive. It is not impossible that young as we are, can already contribute to our country's pride and not to its prejudice. Yes, we are young but we are never innocent at all.

Let us learn from the past. Let us reminisce how education has proven itself to possess that immeasurable and timeless wealth. Education was a lucrative demand for the indigenous population. It was and even now, remains to be a resolute precept for the change we all demand to happen in this world. This maxim reflects the credibility of learning to alleviate one's life. Education is not an option. It is rather, a necessity.

We, the youths of today, assemble ourselves before our spectators. We must not play around with fate. We must have the guts to execute beyond what is written in the learning guides prepared for us by our teachers. We must explore. We need to move from the what, when and where to the how and why. We must surf as we do and spend more time browsing in the internet. Our success is not measured by simply having our mentors validate our test scores and tell whether ours agree with our teacher's objectives or not. Our success is proven when we leave the corners of our Alma Mater and become the persons we ought to be – professionals in our chosen fields.

K12 Education is here to help us break through the educational barriers so that we enjoy the vehemence of true success.

Mark your calendar. Today, not any other day, is the day to redeem. It is now or never.

Sources: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_in_the_Philippines

<http://www.k12academics.com/education-policy/year-round-school/advantages-disadvantages>

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