



A Proactive System

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Direct Beneficiary

PAGASA – Strategic Planning

Before being assigned to H. Bautista Elementary School, I had already been teaching for 16 years. I began my career in Bacolod City in 1994 but moved to Manila in 1996, after which I taught grade school students for 14 years. In 2010, I was assigned to Kalumpang to become principal. H. Bautista is actually the second school I am handling in this capacity.

As principal, my major responsibilities revolve around instructional supervision: guiding the teachers, making sure that their daily tasks are performed in line with our curriculum and that we are always geared towards the goal of achieving higher learning outcomes in all areas. I am tasked with mentoring my teachers—training them so that they can deliver the highest quality of education possible. Aside from these, I am focused on managing resources: human, financial, and material alike. I have to make sure that everything is well accounted for, and that everything is used in accordance with our school’s improvement plans. This involves maintaining the upkeep of the school even in severe conditions.

Going into this job, I was already very much aware of the extreme weather conditions that Marikina can experience. I credit this to the city government’s Disaster Risk, Reduction, and Management Office (DRRMO), which is assigned to orient all key people—principals, management coordinators, and other personnel—who, in one way or another, are responsible for many people, especially during evacuation efforts. In Concepcion, my school is always the first to open its gates to evacuees during times of calamity. As principal, I assume the role of camp manager during evacuation. This is why it is so important for us to be very well-trained in management. Accordingly, the DRRMO, our division office, and the Department of Education (DepEd) Marikina are always guiding us about how to deliver efficient services to the people in our locality.

In turn, we in the school hold regular orientations for pupils and their parents. Going by the colour-coded PAGASA weather system, we remind co-teachers, students, and their families to monitor weather conditions by tuning in to official PAGASA reports. These reports help me inform everybody about how to stay safe during floods and typhoons. Our pupils are also very much aware of the possibility of these calamities occurring. After dire encounters with Ondoy, Glenda, Ruby, and other super typhoons, Marikina is very good at this by now. Our mayor is very creative and his people are efficient in giving orientations and raising public awareness.

I think the PAGASA weather system is very effective because even when there are no direct announcements from the school, from myself as its principal, or from any of our teachers, my students and their families already know how to act upon seeing the coded warnings announced on TV networks like GMA. For instance, at the announcement of a yellow warning,

they already know: No classes for kindergarten pupils! At the sight of a red warning: We should head to the school for evacuation! My students and their families know these signals well, and we are very lucky that this system has been put in place by PAGASA. Without this, everyone would be very confused! Since it was put to use, my students have been able to easily understand this colour-coded system, leading them to also understand the steps that they have to take for safety. In fact, I am even planning to have a tarpaulin banner of these colour warnings printed and posted along our corridors so that everybody is constantly reminded of what they mean.

The world today is just at our fingertips so even via the Internet or via their phones, everyone can access these warnings. My students and their families appreciate this accessibility along with the clarity of how the system works. I am glad to say that many of them can share success stories brought about by these advancements in PAGASA's technologies. These advancements warn them quickly not just about the weather but also about what to do and where to go in different weather conditions. This prevents loss of lives and serious damage to property. It enables our stakeholders to become proactive.

Awareness really matters, especially to the families living along the river. This new PAGASA weather scheme very systematically disseminates information to the people so that they can be safe, ready, and aware of everything.