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Status Of Elementary Schools In Matnog District

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ABSTRACT: *This study employed a descriptive type of research to determine the status of elementary schools in Matnog District from School Year 2013-2014 to School Year 2015-2016. It carried out a data analysis of the responses taken from the survey questionnaire of the thirty-six elementary school heads of the said district. The data were analyzed, tabulated and interpreted. The findings of the school profile of Matnog district from school year 2013-2014 to school year 2015-2016 revealed that an average of 25.33 schools has participation rates of 90% and above, an average of 31 schools achieves 0% drop-out rate, an average of about 11 or 12 schools has 1:26-30 classroom to pupil ratio, an average of 19 schools has 1:2 textbook to pupil ratio, an average of 29 schools maintains a 100% graduation rate, and an average of 20.33 schools attains NAT rating falling under the 35–74 score bracket. The researcher also deduced that the most common activity conducted by elementary schools to enhance the performance of their schools is teacher's home visitation to pupils at-risk of dropping out with a frequency of 12, while the most common problem encountered by the schools for the last three years is the poor study habit of pupils with a frequency of 14. It was recommended that school heads and classroom teachers should implement early attendance tracking and feeding programs with improved infrastructure, resource sharing, academic remediation, and targeted literacy and numeracy interventions, teachers should implement regular routine schedule for conducting home and outreach visits to pupils at-risk of dropping out to build and strengthen positive parent-teacher partnerships, teachers should establish study skills and structured homework habits in their teaching to enforce basic study skills during school hours, and the proposed Strategic Education Plan intended to enhance the performance of elementary schools in Matnog district be reviewed, implemented, and adopted.*

Keywords: profile, participation rate, drop-out rate, classroom to pupil ratio, textbook to pupil ratio, graduation rate, NAT rating, elementary school heads, activities conducted, problems encountered

Introduction

The issue of pupils' performance at schools has been of concern ever since modern education was introduced. Many countries have come to realize that pupils are the heart of educational process and that without good performance, all innovations in education are doomed to failure. There is a wide dissatisfaction with the current situation of schooling in many countries and parents come in for the share of the blame.

The United Nations' Children's fund (UNICEF) International in a 2020 education conference in Florence Italy defined quality education as outcomes that encompassed knowledge, skills and attitudes and were linked to national goals for education and positive participation in society. Therefore, if it was the outcomes then, it was reflected in proficient or above proficient students' academic performance level. This was reinforced by what Cadiz (2009) stated that student achievement or academic performance was a benchmark in developing policies for quality education. The pursuit of quality in schools was implicit in such activities as curriculum development, rather than programs for school facilities development (Hoy et.al, 2000).

Shifting the focus to the Philippine setting, the state formally recognized this global imperative. Batas Pambansa Bilang 232 (Education Act of 1982) established the national directive to achieve and sustain top-tier educational standards across the Philippines. It defined both formal and non-formal learning structures, outlining the key responsibilities, accountabilities, and rights of educational institutions, school administrators, and teaching faculty to ensure students receive high-quality learning outcomes. Furthermore, Section 3 of the aforementioned law affirmed that every individual has a fundamental right to a relevant, high-quality education, thereby obligating the State to guarantee equal access to educational opportunities and benefits for all citizens, regardless of age, sex, religion, socioeconomic standing, physical or mental ability, ethnicity, or political belief.

On the other hand, the 1987 Philippine Constitution mandated the right to quality basic education in Section 2, Article XIV of the Charter framework required the government to fund and manage a comprehensive, responsive, and unified school system that directly addressed the evolving needs of both citizens and the broader community, while ensuring that primary education remains a mandatory requirement for all school-aged children.

Additionally, the Constitution laid down the general purpose and goals of education in the Philippines. It stated that the education sector (along with other government agencies) had the task of contributing to the achievement of national development goals espoused in the country's development plan as Article 3, Section XIV stated:

"All educational institutions shall inculcate patriotism and nationalism, foster love of humanity, respect for human rights, appreciation of the role of national heroes in the historical development of the country, teach the rights and duties of citizenship, strengthen ethical and spiritual values, develop moral character and personal discipline, encourage critical and creative thinking, broaden scientific and technological knowledge and promote vocational efficiency."

Consequently, Republic Act No. 9155 otherwise known as Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001 served as the core statutory foundation for decentralized education management. It assigned authority, accountability, and responsibility to schools,

Schools Division Offices (SDOs), and Regional Offices (ROs) to develop context-specific plans. This law also mandated the establishment of accountability mechanisms to monitor and evaluate schools' performance, relying deeply on accurate school statistics and systematic performance monitoring.

To operationalize these constitutional mandates, the Department of Education (DepEd) issued DepEd Order No. 44, s. 2015 also known as the Guidelines on the Enhanced School Improvement Plan or E-SIP. This required every school head in public institution to track specific baseline metrics, such as but not limited to participation rate, graduation rate, drop – out rate, classroom to pupil ratio and textbook to pupil ratio, over a three-year period to identify localized problems, draft root-cause analyses, and implement continuous improvement projects. Similarly, it released DepEd Order No. 55, s. 2016, or the Policy Guidelines on the National Assessment of Student Learning for the K to 12 Basic Education Program, to monitor the education system for public accountability, assess the effectiveness of service delivery using learning outcomes, and guide high-level policy and institutional intervention plans.

Despite these clear mandates and policies, the Philippine basic education sector faces persistent operational challenges. According to SEAMEO-INNOTECH (2003), these challenges are divided into school-related and non-school-related factors, both of which directly affect critical school metrics such as participation, drop-out, graduation, infrastructure ratios, and NAT ratings. School-related bottlenecks include unqualified or poorly trained teachers, weak administrative leadership, inadequate facilities, and dilapidated instructional materials. Conversely, non-school factors encompass poverty, low educational attainment or illiteracy of parents, and poor student health and nutrition. Together, these variables directly depress critical school metrics, such as participation rates, drop-out rates, classroom-to-pupil ratios, textbook-to-pupil ratios, graduation rates, and school achievement rates measured via the National Achievement Test (NAT).

The study of Gillespie (2006) shows that the unique position school heads hold, as the one person in a school who is responsible for and empowered to oversee the entire school, places them in a powerful position to coordinate the entire school operation and move it forward. The research further reveals that the most effective administrators have a clear vision of how the school can serve its students; have aligned resources and priorities with the vision; and can engage other key players, within and outside the school, in achieving the goals embedded in the vision.

On the other hand, poverty is the non–school factor that greatly affects the performance of school. Poverty is both a cause and an effect of insufficient access to or completion of quality education. Children of poor families are less likely to enroll in and complete schooling because of the associated costs of attending school, even when it is provided free. The cost of uniforms, supplies, and transportation may well be beyond the means of a poor family, especially when the family has several children of school age. This means that choices have to be made, and the choice is often to drop out of school or, worse yet, to deny schooling to children, thereby contributing directly to maintaining the continuation of the poverty cycle since the income-earning potential of the child is reduced, not to mention overall productivity and capacity to improve quality of life. And as poor children who are enrolled grow older, the opportunity cost becomes greater, thus increasing the likelihood of dropping out of school. Dropping out of school because of poverty nearly guarantees continuation of the poverty cycle since the income-earning potential of the child is reduced, not to mention overall productivity and capacity to improve quality of life. Lack of education perpetuates poverty, and poverty constrains access to schooling. Eliminating poverty requires providing access to quality education.

Ultimately, teaching is about engaging and guiding students to learning (Biddle, 2001). The nature of the students in a classroom is, hence, a major preoccupation on the part of the teacher. Seen another way, the nature of student population is a major mediating variable in any connections between policy and teaching.

It is against this backdrop of institutional and socio-economic challenges that this study is positioned. While various researchers worldwide have identified factors affecting school performance, the researcher believes that localized data is required to drive meaningful interventions.

This study specifically investigates the performance profile of public schools in the District of Matnog over the past three years, evaluating trends in participation rates, drop-out rates, classroom-to-pupil ratios, textbook-to-pupil ratios, graduation rates, and NAT achievement scores. By analyzing the unique activities conducted and the specific problems encountered by these local institutions, this study aims to harness effective school leadership and stakeholder cooperation to bridge the gap between policy and practice. Ultimately, the insights gathered from this localized investigation will serve as the empirical foundation to formulate the Strategic Education Plan (SEP) tailored specifically for the District of Matnog.

Statement of the Problem

This study determined the status of elementary schools in Matnog District for the School Year 2013-2014 to School Year 2015-2016. Specifically, these were the objectives of the study:

1. Determine status of Matnog district elementary schools for three years in terms of participation rate, school drop – out rate, classroom to pupil ratio, textbook to pupil ratio, graduation rate, and National Achievement Test (NAT)rating.
2. Identify the activities conducted by schools to enhance their performance.
3. Know the problems encountered by schools for the last three years.
4. Develop a Strategic Education Plan (SEP) to Matnog district.

METHODS

This study utilized the descriptive method of research in which survey questionnaire was utilized. Specifically, this was intended to determine the status of elementary schools in Matnog district from School Year 2013-2014 to School Year 2015-2016. After retrieving the accomplished survey questionnaires from thirty-six elementary school heads of Matnog district, the data were interpreted to lay out the framework for the formulation of Strategic Education Plan as an output of this study.

The respondents involved in this study were thirty-six (36) school heads in public elementary schools of Matnog District in the Schools Division of Sorsogon. These school heads were composed of seventeen (17) Teacher – In – Charge, three (3) Head Teacher I, five (5) Head Teacher II, one (1) Head Teacher III, seven (7) Principal I and three (3) Principal II. This population has an equal chance of becoming the research participants.

The Respondents

School Head	Frequency	Percentage
Teacher-In-Charge	17	47.22%
Head Teacher I	3	8.33%
Head Teacher II	5	13.89%
Head Teacher III	1	2.78%
Principal I	7	19.44%
Principal II	3	8.33%
Total	36	100.00%

The researcher utilized a research-made survey questionnaire to gather necessary data needed in the study. The questionnaire included a cover letter ton inform the respondents regarding the research problem and the objectives of the study.
The survey questionnaire contained items in which solicited information were the school profile in terms of participation rate, drop – out rate, classroom to pupil ratio, textbook to pupil ratio, graduation rate and the national achievement test rating, the problems encountered by the schools for the last three years, and the activities conducted by schools in enhancing their performance.

A dry run of the preliminary copy of the survey questionnaire was conducted last January 8, 2017 with the school heads of San Sebastian Elementary School, Bilaoyon Elementary School and Talaonga Elementary School in Sta. Magdalena District to determine the accuracy and clarity of the instrument. The researcher intentionally selected the three school heads based on the judgment that they had similar characteristics and had met the criteria set to be the respondent of the study. After the dry run, the vague and unclear portions of the questionnaire were revised on the suggestions and recommendations of the adviser. The improved copy of the research instruments was shown to the panel members for further validation and approval before final copies were distributed for the actual survey.

Before the study was conducted, the researcher first secured a letter of permission from the Schools Division Superintendent and to the Public Schools District Supervisor of Matnog to conduct this study. After the approval of the request, the researcher prepared the survey – questionnaires for administration. The researcher himself distributed the questionnaires to the thirty – six school head respondents. The administration of the questionnaires was done on January 17, 2017. The retrieval of the questionnaires was done on January 24, 2017 with 100% retrieval rate.

The data collected from the questionnaire were arranged, compiled, and examined. Frequency was used together with average weighted mean to determine the status of Matnog district's elementary schools along participation rate, drop – out rate, classroom to pupil ratio, textbook to pupil ratio, graduation rate and the national achievement test rating. Meanwhile, frequency and ranking were adopted to determine the problems encountered by the schools for the last three years and the activities conducted by schools in enhancing their performance.

The work of the researcher was presented to the adviser for guidance in the layout of the presentation of data. Treated data was presented in tables for analysis and interpretation.

RESULTS

Based on the data gathered, the following findings were revealed:

I. Status of Elementary Schools in Matnog District for Three Years

For guidance in reading, the sequences of the discussions are as follows: a. Participation rate, b. School drop-out rate, c. Classroom to pupil ratio, d. Textbook to pupil ratio, e. Graduation rate, and f. NAT rating.

Participation Rate. Table 2a presents the participation rate of elementary schools in Matnog District across three consecutive school years, along with the computed three-year average per performance bracket.

Table 2a
Participation Rate of Elementary Schools in Matnog District

Participation Rate	S.Y. 2013-2014	S.Y. 2014-2015	S.Y. 2015-2016	Average
90 and above	28	26	22	25.33
85-89	5	6	8	6.33
80-84	1	1	2	1.33
75-79	1	0	2	1.00
74 and below	1	3	2	2.00

A comparison of three-year trends reveals that an average of 25.33 schools consistently maintain high participation rates of 90% and above. However, the highest bracket experiences a declining trend—dropping from 28 schools in S.Y. 2013–2014 to 22 schools in S.Y. 2015–2016—accompanied by a slight increase in the number of schools shifting into lower brackets. On the other hand, lower performance brackets demonstrate an upward trend across the three-year monitoring period. Specifically, participation rate in the '85–89' bracket expands from 5 to 8 schools (yielding a three-year mean of 6.33). Meanwhile, the '74 and below' bracket registers 1 school in S.Y. 2013–2014, peaks at 3 schools in S.Y. 2014–2015, and adjusts to 2 schools in S.Y. 2015–2016 (averaging 2.00 schools overall).

This overall profile implicates that while the majority of elementary schools sustain high participation levels, targeted learner-motivation strategies and structured home-visitation protocols are necessary to prevent further declines. Thus, remedial teaching to learners who are lagging behind in the lessons, home visitation to pupils at-risk of dropping out, and feeding activities to learners in need of nourishment would further enhance the participation rate of a school.

Accordingly, Turner & Patrick (2004) confirm that classroom participation is related to a combination of factors such as academic achievement, personal achievement, goals, perception of classroom goal structures, and teacher support. Also, Turner and Meyer (2004) reveals that a combination of challenging instruction and positive affective support is necessary for promoting motivation in the classrooms.

Nevertheless, Dallimore et. al. (2004), pupil participation is heavily influenced by instructional delivery, teacher support, and a conducive learning environment. Specifically, they stress that students who lack motivation to go to school and find difficulty in understanding the lesson tend to have lower level of achievement. Conversely, those students who have knowledge to the topic relate themselves and are more willing to engage in classroom discussion.

School drop-out rate. Table 2b presents the status of elementary schools in Matnog District according to drop-out rates across three school years, showing the three-year average count per percentage bracket.

Table 2b
Drop-out Rate of Elementary Schools in Matnog District

School Drop-out Rate (%)	S.Y. 2013-2014	S.Y. 2014-2015	S.Y. 2015-2016	Average
0	30	31	32	31.00
1	3	2	3	2.67
2	2	2	0	1.33
3	1	0	0	0.33
4	0	1	1	0.67

A comparison across the three school years demonstrates positive progress: schools achieving a 0% drop-out rate increases from 30 in S.Y. 2013–2014 to 32 in S.Y. 2015–2016, yielding a high three-year average of 31.00 schools.

This trend implies that elementary-aged learners (ages 5 to 12) in Matnog District face lower risks of permanent school withdrawal. This aligns with findings of Stearns & Glennie (2006) which emphasize that elementary school-aged children are less likely to drop-out at their age and that factors affecting drop-out rate vary according to the learner's age, grade, and socioeconomic group.

Although the overall drop-out rate is low, a small cluster of schools continuously reports drop-out rates between 1% and 4% for school year 2013-2014 to school year 2015-2026. This further implies that actions must be done to resolve problem related to drop-out rate. As such, National Dropout Prevention Center (2015) identifies effective strategies that have the most positive impact on reducing school dropout. These include determining learner's family engagement which has direct and positive effect to learner's

achievement and success in school, conducting mentoring and tutoring of teacher to learners which offer a significant academic support structure for high-risk learners, and attending continuous professional learning opportunities, support, and feedback to teacher handling learners at-risk of dropping out.

Classroom to pupil ratio. Table 2c outlines the classroom-to-pupil ratios across Matnog District over the three-year period.

Table 2c
Classroom-to-Pupil Ratio of Elementary Schools in Matnog District

Classroom to pupil ratio	S.Y. 2013-2014	S.Y. 2014-2015	S.Y. 2015-2016	Average
1:20-25	2	3	5	3.33
1:26-30	13	12	10	11.67
1:31-35	8	4	6	6.00
1:36-40	5	10	5	6.67
1:41-45	3	1	3	2.33
1:46-50	5	6	7	6.00

Looking across three school years, the classroom-to-pupil ratio in Matnog district's elementary schools mostly stays in the 1:26–30 range, averaging about 11 or 12 schools in this bracket each year. Even though schools in this standard tier dropped slightly from 13 down to 10 between S.Y. 2013–2014 and 2015–2016, it remains the most common setup locally. On the other hand, schools with a 1:46–50 ratio grew from 5 to 7 over the same timeframe, pointing to increasing overcrowding in parts of the district.

The data from Matnog district implies a dual reality in local public education, signaling both a stable baseline and a growing localized strain. While many elementary schools are managing to hold steady with a frequent classroom-to-pupil ratio of 1 to 26–30, a simultaneous jump in heavily crowded 1 to 46–50 brackets highlight a widening resource gap. The persistence of lower ratio (1:20-25) of classroom to that of the pupil are observed primarily in small and geographically isolated schools with smaller catchment populations. On the other hand, an average of 6 schools with congested classroom to pupil ratio (1:46-50) is directly attributed to classroom shortages and rapid local population growth in the barangays within and near the municipal proper.

According to Matthis (2017), smaller classes have positive impacts on academic achievement, graduation rates, and non-cognitive abilities of the learners. He further recommends to maintain class sizes between 15 and 18 students, allowing for adjustments based on the subject matter, and contends that although reducing class size involves upfront financial costs, it can ultimately emerge as the most cost-effective educational policy over time. Similarly, Baker et. al. (2016) highlight the different researches proving the effectiveness of class size reduction in attaining learners' better academic and non-academic achievement. Thus, addressing infrastructure bottlenecks in high-density schools must remain a priority.

On the other hand, the findings of Munoz (2001) reveal no who reports no detectable impact on student learning, measured through standardized reading and math tests, following a one-year reduction in third-grade class sizes within the Jefferson County Public Schools in Louisville, Kentucky. Also, Johnson (2000) finds little to no effect after analyzing data from the 1998 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading exam to determine how class size influences academic performance.

Textbook to pupil ratio. Table 2d presents the textbook availability across elementary schools in Matnog District from school year 2013-2014 to school year 2015-2016.

Comparing data across the three school years reveals 1:2 textbook to pupil ratio increases sharply from 13 schools in S.Y. 2013–2014 to 25 schools in S.Y. 2015–2016, having an average of 19.00 schools. Similarly, an increasing shortage of 1:1 textbook to pupil ratio - dropping from 10 schools in school year 2013-2014 to 3 schools in school year 2015-2016.

Table 2d
Textbook to Pupil Ratio of Elementary Schools in Matnog District

Textbook Ratio	S.Y. 2013-2014	S.Y. 2014-2015	S.Y. 2015-2016	Average
1:1	10	4	3	5.67

1:2	13	19	25	19.00
1:3	11	13	6	10.00
1:4	2	0	2	1.33

Analysis of results shows that majority of the pupils in Matnog district are sharing in one textbook. This means the lack of textbooks necessary in teaching and learning process is one of the underlying problems that needs to be addressed in order to improve the academic performance of the learners.

As supported by the study of World Bank (Fredriksen et. al., 2015), there is negative impact in the learning of the students when the ratio of textbook to pupils moves from 1:2 to 1:3. Thus, increasing the availability of textbooks would mean progress in terms of students' basic education (White, 2004).

Graduation rate. Table 2e presents the graduation rate distribution of elementary schools in Matnog district from school year 2013-2014 to school year 2015-2016.

Table 2e
Graduation Rate of Elementary Schools in Matnog District

Graduation Rate	S.Y. 2013-2014	S.Y. 2014-2015	S.Y. 2015-2016	Average
100%	29	29	29	29.00
98%	4	2	1	2.33
97%	3	1	1	1.67
96%	0	0	1	0.33
95% & below	0	4	4	2.67

A comparison of the school years from 2013-2014 to 2015-2016 shows an average of 29 schools maintain a 100% graduation rate. Meanwhile, a small number of schools experience slightly lower graduation rate. For the 98% graduation rate bracket, 4 schools achieve this mark in S.Y. 2013-2014, which decreases to 2 schools in S.Y. 2014-2015 and 1 school in S.Y. 2015-2016, resulting in an average of 2.33 schools. Schools recording a 97% rate stand at 3 in the first school year and drop to 1 in each of the subsequent two school years, averaging 1.67 schools. Only 1 school records a 96% graduation rate, which occurs exclusively during S.Y. 2015-2016, bringing its overall average to 0.33 schools.

This implies that majority of elementary schools in Matnog district demonstrate a predominantly high graduation efficiency throughout the three school years. This high graduation rate directly correlates with the district's consistently low drop-out rates. Nevertheless, it can be attributed to the different projects, programs and activities implemented by the schools in the district across the three school years. Among these notable initiatives that help learners to stay and continue their schooling are teacher's home visitation to pupils at-risk of dropping out, school-based feeding program to malnourished and undernourished school children, and remedial teaching to struggling learners. As identified by National Dropout Prevention Center (2015), among the strategies proven effective on reducing school dropout and thus achieving high graduation rate are mentoring and tutoring of teacher to provide academic and structural support to learners at-risk of dropping out and utilizing active learning and student engagement strategies like cooperative learning, thinking critically, creatively, and reflectively to engage and involve students in meaningful ways as partners in their own learning. reading, writing, and doing math; and systematic steps to follow when working through a task or reflecting upon their own learning. Meanwhile, conducting feeding programs align with research by Tabunda et al. (2016) for PIDS, proving that tackling hunger and malnutrition in elementary pupils is critical for improving attendance and engagement in class.

National Achievement Test (NAT) rating. table 2f provides the school achievement rate on the National Achievement Test (NAT) of elementary school in Matnog district from school year 2013-2014 to school year 2015-2016.

Table 2f
National Achievement Test (NAT) Rating of Elementary Schools in Matnog District

NAT Rating	S.Y. 2013-2014	S.Y. 2014-2015	S.Y. 2015-2016	Average
90-100	1	1	0	0.67
75-89	16	15	14	15.00
35-74	19	20	22	20.33

0-34	0	0	0	0.00

A three-year comparative analysis reveals an increasing number of schools' NAT results falling into the 35–74 score bracket - arising from 19 for the school year 2013-2014 to 22 schools in school year 2015-2016, with an average of 20.33. Consequently, majority of elementary schools in Matnog District performs below the standard 75% passing criterion as established by the Department of Education (DECS Order No. 46, s. 1983). This implies the urgent need to recover learning loss by means of conducting remediation or interventions that would directly address the underlying problems involving learners' academic performance in the identified five subjects.

As noted by National Dropout Prevention Center (2015), various research findings highlight the effectiveness of early literacy interventions to help low-achieving students improve their reading and writing skills establish the necessary foundation for effective learning in all subjects, as well as the advantages of mentoring and tutoring learners to provide supportive and academic supports to high-risk learners.

II. Activities Conducted by the Schools in Enhancing the Performance of School

Table 3 presents the specific activities conducted by school heads and key stakeholders to enhance the school performance of elementary schools in Matnog District.

The data presented in Table 3 outlines the various activities implemented by public elementary schools to enhance their overall performance and are highlighted according to their frequency and rank. Leading the initiatives is the home visitation of teachers to pupils at-risk of dropping out (PARDO), which emerges as the most frequently conducted activity with a frequency of 12 in Rank 1. This is followed by the School-based 12 in Rank 1. This is followed by the School-based Feeding Program (SBFP) with a frequency of 11 in Rank 2, and remedial teaching with a frequency of 8 in Rank 3. Other key professional and administrative measures include the monitoring and supervision of teachers with a frequency of 7 in rank 4th, teacher training programs with a frequency of 6 in rank 5, technical assistance provided to teachers with a frequency of 5 in rank 6, School-based National Achievement Test (NAT) reviews with a frequency 4 in rank 7, and "Drop Everything and Read" initiative with a frequency of 3 is placed in rank 8.

Table 3
Activities Conducted by the Schools to Enhance their Performance

Conducted Activities	Frequency	Rank
Home visitation of teachers to pupil' at-risk of dropping out (PARDO)	12	1
School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP)	11	2
Remedial teaching	8	3
Monitoring and supervision of teachers	7	4
Trainings for teachers	6	5
Technical assistance to teachers	5	6
School-based NAT review	4	7
"Drop Everything and Read" program	3	8
Instructional supervision	2	10
Brigada Eskwela classroom repairs	2	10
Monthly culminating activity	2	10
Technical assistance to pupils	1	15.5
Peer tutorial	1	15.5
Innovative teaching	1	15.5
Parents' attendance to PTA meetings	1	15.5
Multimedia and innovative mode of teaching	1	15.5
School-based intervention program	1	15.5
Math environment program	1	15.5

Physical facilities improvement	1	15.5

Further down the ranking, instructional supervision, intensified linkages with stakeholders, and monthly culminating activities tie for the 10th position, each recording a frequency of 2. Finally, several specialized initiatives shared the lowest rank (Rank 15.5), each registering with a frequency of 1 in rank 15.5. These lesser-conducted measures include providing technical assistance to pupils, peer tutoring, innovative teaching methods, parents' attendance to PTA meetings, multimedia-driven instruction, school-based intervention programs, math environment initiatives, and physical facility improvements. Overall, the findings reveals that school performance enhancement strategies prioritize direct intervention for at-risk learners, nutritional support, and academic remediation over physical infrastructure upgrades or specialized instructional programs.

The result implies that pupils at risk of dropping out (PARDO) is the activity primarily employed by schools as targeted tracking and retention mechanism to directly address absenteeism and prevent early school leaving. Prioritizing direct home visitation aligns with research by Maligalig et al. (2010), who find that school dropout risks in the Philippines mostly stem from socioeconomic and family struggles—challenges that require outreach beyond the classroom walls. As mentioned by Wales (2014), home visitation can give teachers the insight they need to help their students succeed as it is one way of establishing positive relationship with students' families. This approach also reflects Department of Education (2012) policy under the Dropout Reduction Program (DORP), which establishes home visits as a key way for teachers and families to communicate and prevent students from dropping out.

III. Problems encountered by schools for the last three years

Table 4

Problems Encountered by the Schools for the Last Three Years

Problems Encountered	Frequency	Rank
Poor study habits of learners	14	1
Unavailability of learning resources	11	2.5
Poverty / financial constraints of learners	11	2.5
No follow-up of studies at home	6	4
Tardiness of teachers	5	5
Lack of support from stakeholders	3	6.5
Learner absenteeism	3	6.5
lack of enthusiasm for remedial teaching programs	2	8
Teacher's resistance to curriculum change	1	13
Idealism of barrio people	1	13
Insufficient learning materials and teacher's guide	1	13
Poor participation of learners	1	13
Lack of knowledge and skills of teachers	1	13
Insufficient fund	1	13
Lack of teaching experience	1	13
Learner laziness	1	13
Learners engaged in agricultural labor	1	13

Table 4 presents the operational and academic challenges encountered by schools in Matnog District for the last three years, rank according to their reported frequency.

The data shows that schools face major challenges primarily driven by student discipline, financial hardship, and resource shortages. Poor study habits rank as the leading problem with frequency of 14 in rank 1, followed closely by poverty and the unavailability of learning resources both with frequency of 11 in rank 2.5. A lack of home academic support with frequency of 6 in rank 4 and teacher tardiness with frequency of 5 in rank 5 also emerges as key concerns. Moderate issues include learner absenteeism and minimal stakeholder support to learners' studies both with frequency of 3 in rank 6.5, alongside low enthusiasm for remedial teaching with frequency of 2 in rank 8. A wide range of minor constraints—including teacher's resistance to curriculum change, idealism of barrio people, insufficient learning materials and teacher's guide, poor participation of learners, insufficient fund, lack of teaching experience, learner's laziness, and learners engaged in agricultural labor for the lowest position with frequency of 1 in rank 13. Overall, institutional difficulties stem mainly from learner behavior, economic constraints, and limited support at home.

The findings of the study imply that the high prevalence of poor study habits can be attributed from the unsupportive or unguided environments outside the classroom. Without structured routines at home, students struggle to build self-regulation, placing an excessive burden on teachers to enforce basic study skills during school hours. This gap directly links to the tied issues of poverty and resource unavailability, which suggest that financial distress forces families to prioritize immediate survival over domestic academic supervision. When basic necessities are lacking, home environments rarely have dedicated spaces, time, or materials for learning.

This finding aligns with Bartolome et al. (2017), who observed that limited parental involvement among low-income families stems primarily from financial hardship, extended working hours, and low educational attainment rather than a lack of intent. Consequently, the absence of established home routines, learning resources, and adult supervision hinders students from fostering independent study habits. As a result, educators are compelled to devote valuable instructional time to instilling basic learning discipline instead of focusing on grade-level competencies.

IV. Proposed Strategic Education Plan (SEP) of Matnog District

STRATEGIC EDUCATION PLAN (SEP)
SCHOOL YEARS 2017-2020

Vision, Mission, Core Values, and Mandate

The DepEd Vision
We dream of Filipinos who passionately love their country and whose values and competencies enable them to realize their full potential and contribute meaningfully to building the nation.
As a learner-centered public institution, the Department of Education continuously improves itself to better serve its stakeholders.
The DepEd Mission
To protect and promote the right of every Filipino to quality, equitable, culture-based, and complete basic education where: Students learn in a child-friendly, gender-sensitive, safe, and motivating environment.
Teachers facilitate learning and constantly nurture every learner. Administrators and staff, as stewards of the institution, ensure an enabling and supportive environment for effective learning to happen. Family, community, and other stakeholders are actively engaged and share responsibility for developing life-long learners.

Core Values
Maka-Diyos Maka-tao Makakalikasan Makabansa

Mandate

The Department of Education was established through the Education Decree of 1863 as the Superior Commission of Primary Instruction under a Chairman. The Education agency underwent many reorganization efforts in the 20th century in order to better define its purpose vis a vis the changing administrations and charters. The present-day Department of Education was eventually mandated through Republic Act 9155, otherwise known as the Governance of Basic Education act of 2001 which establishes the mandate of this agency.

The Department of Education (DepEd) formulates, implements, and coordinates policies, plans, programs and projects in the areas of formal and non-formal basic education. It supervises all elementary and secondary education institutions, including alternative learning systems, both public and private; and provides for the establishment and maintenance of a complete, adequate, and integrated system of basic education relevant to the goals of national development.

Rationale

This Strategic Education Plan (SEP) for Matnog District addresses the next three-year period (2017-2020) in the school's development. It builds on the learning and achievements under the previous School Improvement Plans (SIP), and reflects the thoughtful contributions of the many Matnoganon community members who participated in the planning, consultation, and survey conducted as part of this effort.

This document is not intended as a management plan and therefore does not prescribe management procedures or other day-to-day aspects of operating the school in the district. It assumes the continuation of, but does not focus on, established DepEd values, practices and programs. Likewise, it assumes a continuing commitment to important achievements over the last three years, for example: improvement of the performance indicators, participation rate; school drop-out rate; classroom to pupil ratio; textbook to pupil ratio; graduation rate; and National Achievement Test (NAT) rating.

Instead, this School Strategic Education Plan focuses on the goals and key objectives for the next three years. For each of these objectives, the plan identifies strategies, measures and outcomes. The purpose of this focus and structure is to provide the Local School Board, School Governing Council, PTA members, Matnog district administrators and educators a practical document

to guide them in their program planning. It is brief enough to be accessible and includes sufficient specificity that school leaders can use it to track progress.

The plan was drafted in the 2017-2018 school year by the researcher who is a classroom teacher and a school head, at the same time. In addition to seeking public input, the researcher carefully considered the results of the survey – questionnaire, the School Improvement Plan (SIP) of all schools in the Matnog District as well as the alignment to the Municipal Development Plan (MDP) of Matnog.

Objectives:

1. To strengthen children's access to basic education, enhance governance, and ensure a learner-centered environment across all Matnog District schools.
2. To continuously improve pupil performance indicators—including participation, retention, graduation, resource ratios, and National Achievement Test (NAT) scores—through targeted, budget-aligned interventions.

Introduction

The Matnog community is strongly committed to public education from Kindergarten through 12th grade. This education includes each child's acquisition of the knowledge, skills and love of learning necessary for each stage of that child's academic development. It also includes nurturing each child's sense of self-worth, respect for others, community-mindedness, and overall emotional and physical well-being. This Schools Strategic Education Plan (SSEP) addresses the education of Matnoganon students in Kindergarten to Grade 6. The plan's purpose is to provide the Local School Board and Matnog district educators with a road map that will inform planning and governance decisions for the school during the next three years. It constitutes a key document that has critical relevance to decision makers in their discussions regarding issues such as academic priorities, allocation of resources, public communication and aspirations for the cultural tone of the school. To that end, the plan includes a concisely expressed list of goals, objectives, and strategies with measurable outcomes by means of which the Local School Board and staff can be held accountable.

Strategic Education Plan of Matnog district for School Years 2017-2020

Performance Indicators	Objectives	Strategies	Persons/Agencies Involved	Time Frame	Expected Outcome
Participation Rate	Reverse decline in participation rate in 90%+ bracket	1. Establish an early-warning attendance system to conduct proactive home visits to pupils with irregular attendance patterns 2. Expand the School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP) in low-participation barangays to tackle short-term hunger and incentivize daily attendance	School Heads Teachers School Heads Teachers LGU/BGU	Year-round	95%+ District Average Participation Rate
School Drop-out Rate	Eliminate 1%–4% dropouts in remaining cluster	1. Intensify teacher home visitations to Pupils At-Risk of Dropping Out (PARDO 2. Provide academic and socio-emotional support to PARDO through structured tutoring activities pairing high-risk learners with peer tutors and faculty mentors	School Heads Teachers Guidance Designate School Heads Teachers Guidance Designate	Year-round	0% Dropout Rate of 36 elementary schools in Matnog district

Classroom to Pupil Ratio	Reduce 1:46–50 overcrowded classrooms	1. Prioritize high-density schools for new classroom construction and physical facility repairs through local government unit (LGU) partnerships and Brigada Eskwela 2. Implement strategic double-shift scheduling or multi-grade resource sharing as temporary relief in severely congested urban-fringe schools.	SDO Facilities Unit LGU PTA Public Schools District Supervisor (PSDS) School Heads Teachers Property Custodian Designate	Year-round	1:35 classroom to pupil ratio
Textbook to Pupil Ratio	Achieve 1:1 core learning material access	1. Develop localized, printed learning modules and supplementary guides 2. Establish a centralized district-level textbook rotation pool to dynamically reallocate surplus textbooks to high-shortage schools	School Heads Teachers PSDS School Heads Property Custodian Designate	Year-round	1:1 textbook/module to pupil ratio
Graduation Rate	Maintain 100% graduation efficiency	1. Institutionalize foundational reading and math remediation programs to struggling pupils 2. Maintain health, feeding, and guidance interventions to pupils at-risk of dropping out	School Heads Teachers School Heads Feeding/Nutrition Coordinator Guidance Counselor Designate	Year-round	100% Graduation Rate District-Wide
NAT Rating	Move schools out of the 35–74 score bracket	1. Conduct intensive NAT review sessions focusing on core subject areas showing performance drops 2. Institutionalize structured daily reading and math remediations across all primary grades	School Heads Master Teachers Advisory Teachers School Heads Primary Teachers	Year-round	75%+ Passing Average in NAT Ratings

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CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. The school profile of Matnog district from school year 2013-2014 to school year 2015-2016: a. an average of 25.33 schools has participation rates of 90% and above; b. an average of 31 schools achieves 0% drop-out rate; c. an average of about 11 or 12 schools has 1:26-30 classroom to pupil ratio; d. an average of 19 schools has 1:2 textbook to pupil ratio; e. an average of 29 schools maintains a 100% graduation rate; and f. an average of 20.33 schools attains NAT rating falling under the 35–74 score bracket.
2. The most common activity conducted by elementary schools in Matnog District to enhance the performance of their schools is teacher's home visitation to pupils at-risk of dropping out with a frequency of 12.
3. The most common problem encountered by the school for the last three years is the poor study habit of pupils with a frequency of 14.
4. A proposed school strategic education plan to Matnog district to enhance the status of elementary schools along participation rate, school drop – out rate, classroom to pupil ratio, textbook to pupil ratio, graduation rate, and NAT rating is hereby proposed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based from the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are given:

1. School heads and classroom teachers are encouraged to implement early attendance tracking and feeding programs with improved infrastructure, resource sharing, academic remediation, and targeted literacy and numeracy interventions.
2. Teachers should implement regular routine schedule for conducting home and outreach visits to pupils at-risk of dropping out to build and strengthen positive parent-teacher partnerships.
3. Teachers are encouraged to establish study skills and structured homework habits in their teaching to enforce basic study skills during school hours.
4. The proposed Strategic Education Plan intended to enhance the performance of elementary schools in Matnog district be reviewed, implemented, and adopted.

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