



# Capitol: No Bulacan trucks hauling garbage in Porac



**CITY OF SAN FERNANDO** —The hauling passes of garbage trucks coming from Bulacan have been suspended for 15 days, following reports of unauthorized waste transport to the Eco Protect Management Corporation Sanitary Landfill in Barangay Mancatian, Porac.

The decision came after the Office of the Governor of Pampanga received complaints regarding the illegal dumping activities being carried out without proper permits. The Quarry Operators Association and Haulers and Truckers Association confirmed the report in a meeting held Tuesday, June 10. The Joint Composite Team has begun a thorough inspection and investigation of the matter. In the meantime, the suspension is immediately enforceable to ensure compliance with existing laws and to maintain order in landfill operations.

## 37K cops deployed for school opening

**CITY OF SAN FERNANDO** — The Philippine National Police (PNP) will deploy 37,000 police officers across the country to ensure safety and order during the opening of classes on June 16.

In a radio interview, PNP spokesperson Brig. Gen. Jean Fajardo said the deployment aims to strengthen police visibility and beat patrols, particularly in areas surrounding schools and along key routes used by students.

“We are ready. Over 37,000 police officers will be deployed,” Fajardo said, noting that police assistance desks, as well as mobile and foot patrol units, will be stationed to assist students, parents, and school staff.

The class opening will also serve as a test of the quick response policy committed by PNP Chief Gen. Nicolas Torre III.

Torre announced plans to close all police boxes and community precincts to maximize the visibility of police officers on roads and in public areas. He said this strategy is part of a broader effort to intensify crime prevention and eliminate threats within communities.

The initiative also aligns with President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.’s directive to go beyond improving crime statistics and ensure that the public genuinely feels safe.

**OATH-TAKING.** Hon. Mario Victor F. Leonen, Senior Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the Philippines, administered the Oath of Office to Elected Officials of Pampanga, led by Governor-Elect Lilia ‘Nanay’ Pineda, Vice Governor-elect Delta “Dennis” Pineda, 2nd District Rep. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, 4th District Rep. Dr. Anna York Bondoc and the Provincial Board.



# Cong Pogi takes oath as 1st District Rep



## MAGALANG, Pampanga

—Outgoing Angeles City Mayor Carmelo “Pogi” Lazatin Jr. formally took his oath of office as the newly elected Representative of Pampanga’s First District on June 10, 2025, before Barangay Escaler Captain Alfredo Soriano Jr. of Magalang town.

The oath-taking ceremony was held in Barangay Escaler, where Lazatin posted his highest barangay victory margin — earning 70.31% of the total votes cast in the area. Lazatin said his decision to take his oath in Escaler is a tribute to the overwhelming support he received there.

This marks the continuation of a political legacy left by his father, the

late Cong. Carmelo “Tarzan” Lazatin, who also served as Angeles City Mayor and First District Representative.

Lazatin’s win was officially proclaimed on May 13, 2025, making history as the first-ever Pampanga First District Representative to breach the 260,000-vote mark, garnering a total of 262,517 votes across the district.

In Angeles City alone, Lazatin recorded 122,431 votes, surpassing his own 2022 mayoral record of over 112,000 votes — the highest ever for a city mayor. He also secured 88,707 votes in Mabalacat City and 51,379 votes in Magalang.

SEE PAGE 4

CONG POGI

## AC ranked 488th in 2025 Global Cities Index

Angeles City continues its upward momentum on the global stage, rising to the 488th spot in the 2025 Oxford Economics Global Cities Index, up from 502nd in 2024.

The city, under the leadership of Mayor Carmelo “Pogi” Lazatin Jr., remains one of only nine cities in the Philippines to make it to the index, which assesses 1,000 urban areas across the

globe. Cities are ranked based on five core pillars: Economics, Human Capital, Quality of Life, Environment, and Governance.

This year, Angeles landed third among Philippine cities, following Manila (206th) and Cebu (470th), and ahead of Bacolod, Davao, Cagayan de Oro, Dagupan, and General Santos.

SEE PAGE 4

AC RANKED

## Lim appointed as SEC Chairman

Converge ICT Solutions Inc. has officially accepted the resignation of Atty. Francis Ed. Lim from its Board of Directors, following his recent appointment as Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) by President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.

Atty. Lim, who joined the Converge Board in 2020 during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, played a pivotal role in guiding the company through its early years as a publicly listed entity.

Chairman Jose de Jesus expressed his gratitude to Lim, stating, “We are truly grateful to Director Francis for his steadfast guidance over the past five years. His deep expertise in commercial and corporate law helped shape a strong governance framework, particularly during our formative years as a listed company.”

President and Co-Founder Maria Grace Uy commended Lim’s influence in uplifting the company’s governance standards. “His contributions in the Corporate Governance, Risk Oversight, Related Party Transactions, and Remuneration Committees were instrumental in boosting transparency, managing risk, and attracting top-tier talent to the organization,” she said.

CEO and Co-Founder Dennis Anthony Uy highlighted Lim’s invaluable counsel during a critical period in the company’s growth. “His legal insight helped us navigate a challenging landscape marked by a global health crisis and public market pressures. While we will miss his presence on our Board, we are proud that he will now serve the nation through the SEC. His leadership will no doubt elevate regulatory standards and encourage investor confidence in the capital markets,” he said.

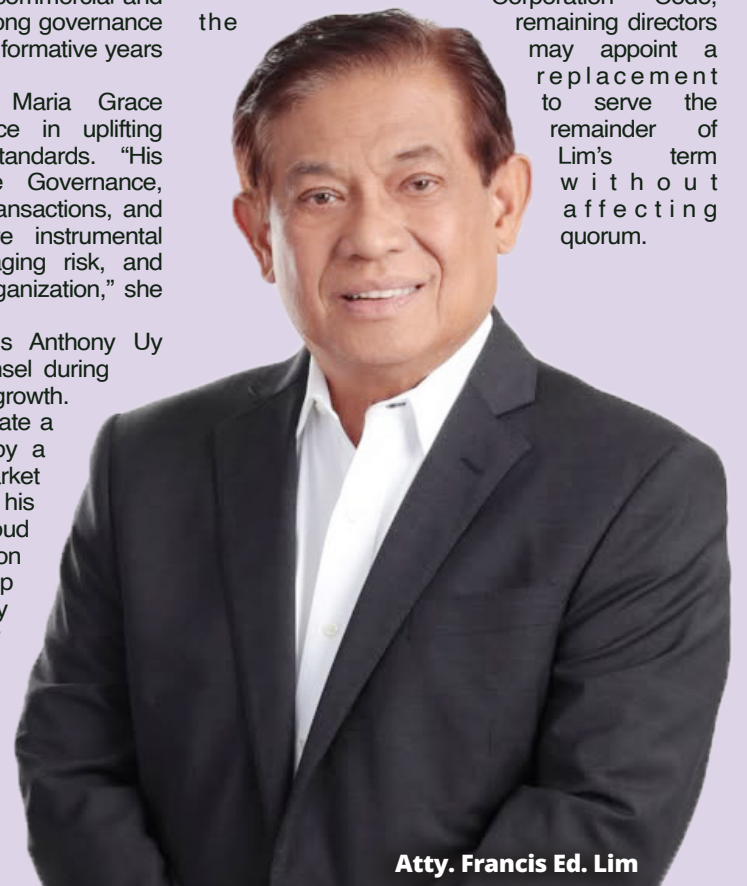
In his letter of resignation, Atty. Lim extended his appreciation to the Converge community. “It has been a distinct honor and privilege to serve Converge. I sincerely thank the stockholders, my fellow Directors, and the

Management Team for their trust, support, and camaraderie throughout my tenure.”

A respected figure in the corporate and legal landscape, Lim previously served as President and CEO of the Philippine Stock Exchange (2004–2010) and held leadership roles in multiple capital market institutions. He also served on various Supreme Court committees, contributing to the development of commercial rules and corporate restructuring policies.

The Converge Board Nominations Committee is currently evaluating candidates to fill the vacancy. In accordance with Section 28 of the Revised

Corporation Code, the remaining directors may appoint a replacement to serve the remainder of Lim’s term without affecting quorum.



Atty. Francis Ed. Lim

## BOC Port of Clark gears up for e-commerce reforms

**THE BUREAU OF CUSTOMS** — Port of Clark is taking the lead in pushing digital reforms in support of the country’s expanding e-commerce sector.

In a strategic meeting held at the Port, Deputy Commissioner Ronnel B. Hombre of the Management Information Systems and Technology Group (MISTG) met with frontline personnel to address operational challenges brought about by the surge in online trade.

The discussion focused on the upcoming implementation of Customs Administrative Order (CAO) No. 01-2025, a major policy initiative that aims to simplify and speed up the clearance process for e-commerce shipments. Key provisions of the CAO include accrediting digital traders and logistics partners, and developing a

dedicated ICT-based system to automate and integrate e-commerce procedures.

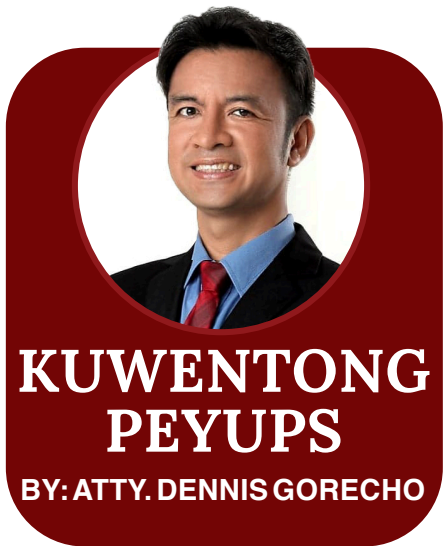
District Collector Jairus Reyes reaffirmed the Port’s full support for the digitalization efforts led by Finance Secretary Ralph G. Recto and Customs Commissioner Bienvenido Y. Rubio, noting that modernizing the customs system is vital to ensuring efficient and secure cross-border transactions.

The Port of Clark has been selected as the pilot site for this reform initiative. The E-Commerce System Technical Working Group will spearhead system testing, with oversight from Deputy Commissioner Hombre. This trial phase will play a key role in shaping a unified, responsive, and transparent e-commerce clearance system to be adopted across all ports nationwide.



Deputy Commissioner Ronnel B. Hombre of the Management Information Systems and Technology Group (MISTG) meets with BOC Port of Clark District Collector Jairus Reyes to address operational challenges brought about by the surge in online trade.





## Two Decades of Virgin Lab Fest



## Vevo 3's Viral Vibe: A Game-Changer or a Deepfake Disaster in the Philippines?

### “MAY ASIM PA”

is an appreciative Tagalog phrase often heard in storytelling involving middle-aged women that acquired its double meaning: sourness and sweet.

Literally translated in English, it means “sourness retained” or “sour still”. Paradoxically the free translation is the exact opposite, as it describes a person, despite her age, still retaining a modicum of sexual appeal.

“May Asim Pa” is the term used in Set D of the “VIRGIN LABFEST (VLF) XX: HINOG” that featured three middle-aged veteran stage actresses: Bibeth Orteza in “Anniversary”, Peewee O’Hara in “Don’t Meow for Me, Catriona” and Sherry Lara in “Mommy G”.

VLF marks the 20th anniversary of the country’s premier festival for “untried, untested, and unstaged” one-act plays.

The festival is known for showcasing new works by emerging and established playwrights, directors, actors, and designers.

It was in 2005 when VLF began with eight new one-act works of Filipino playwrights.

Running from June 11 to 29, 2025, at the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) Black Box Theater, this year’s festival features 12 new works from eight first-time playwrights and four returning ones.

The plays are grouped into four thematic sets labeled A, B, C, D (Bubot, Manibalang, Kinalburo, and May Asim Pa) with each set featuring three new plays, plus set E (Panghimagas) which revisits standout plays from previous years.

In “Anniversary” by Nelsito Gomez, May (Bibeth Orteza) is a lesbian who, while visiting her partner’s grave, met a heartbroken man Rob (Jamie Wilson) who recently lost his wife. The visit sparks unexpected conversation on buried grief, unspoken regrets, and deep-seated beliefs.

In “Mommy G” by Jobert Grey Landeza, the widow (Sherry Lara) introduces a new family member during their dinner on her 65th birthday. It stirred their beliefs, tested their relationships, and confronted their tolerance in accepting a new “member”.

In “Don’t Meow For Me, Catriona” by Ryan Machado, a daughter (Angelica Panganiban) finally pursues her dreams to marry and live abroad. While waiting for the bus with her mother (Peewee O’Hara), she reflects on the complex familial love that binds and breaks families. She confronts the emotional tug-of-war between love and sacrifice, as well as the demand to have the courage to choose her own path.

Both O’Hara and Orteza acted as the leading role in “Nana Rosa,” a 2019 play in UP Diliman, based on the life of Maria Rosa Luna Henson, the “first Filipino to publicly

come out as a comfort woman”.

One of Panganiban’s memorable movies is the 2014 Filipino romantic comedy film “That Thing Called Tadhana” with JM de Guzman.

A dialogue that resonated among UP students was De Guzman’s litany in the Baguio museum scene: “Nung high school, sobrang galing ko. Lahat ng competitions na sinalihan ko, panalo ako. Tangina! Nu’ng pagdating ko ng UP, ang gagaling ng mga kaklase ko! May mga Malang, may Abueva. Akala ko magaling na ‘ko e. Marunong lang pala.”

Set A (Bubot) includes “Takbo, Batang Tondo” by YOJ (directed by Chic San Agustin-De Guzman), about kids’ conflict over theft; “Ang Bata Kag Ang Ilaga” by Liane Carlo Suelan (directed by siglo), following an orphan boy’s moral dilemma about a lost baby rat; and “Polar Coordinates” by Ade Valenzona (directed by Paolo O’Hara), about a student struggling with exams, family issues and identity.

Set B (Manibalang) includes “Unang Araw” by Ivan Villacorta Gentolizo (directed by Cholo Ledesma), about two men on a tense highway journey for political power; “Presidential Suite #2” by Siege Malvar (directed by Johnnie Moran), focusing on a senator accused of corruption and her family facing scandal: “Minating Ni Mariah Ang Manto Ng Mommy Ni Mama Mary” by Eljay Castro Deldoc (directed by Dexter M. Santos), about a reformed scammer seeking redemption while guarding a holy relic.

Set C (Kinalburo) includes “Mga Magindara sa Siyudad” by Chris Joseph Junio (directed by Riki Benedicto), about two women performers at a peryahan facing the decline of their craft; “Ang Problema sa Trolley” by Imuthis (directed by Adrienne Vergara), which follows three people confronting personal crises on a bridge at night; and “The Late Mister Real” by Rolin Migyuel Obina (directed by Maynard Manansala), about a divorced couple facing their past while sending their son abroad during the pandemic.

Set E (Panghimagas) includes “Identité” by Jhudiel Claire Sosa (directed by Meann Espinosa), about a mother and daughter forced to confront a family secret; “Pagkapit sa Hangin” by Joshua Lim So (directed by José Estrella), about healthcare workers making life-or-death decisions at the height of the Covid-19 delta wave; and “Sa Babaeng Lahat” by Elise Santos (directed by Caisa Borromeo), about three Catholic schoolgirls grappling with faith, identity, and young love during Bible Week.

\*\*\*  
(Peyups is the moniker of the University of the Philippines. Atty. Dennis R. Gorecho heads the Seafarers’ Division of the Sapalo Velez Bundang Bulilan Law Offices. For comments, e-mail [info@sapalovelez.com](mailto:info@sapalovelez.com), or call 09175025808 or 09088665786.)

YOUTUBE, Tiktok and Reels are buzzing like a wet market on a Sunday, and the culprit? Google’s Vevo 3, an AI video generator that’s spitting out hyper-realistic clips so funny, so wild, they’re going viral faster than my Mitsubishi Lancer Evo on NLEX. From a “man-on-the-street” skit where a guy rants about Manila traffic to a fake ad for a “singing adobo” dish, these eight-second Vevo 3 videos are lighting up TikTok and YouTube. Here in the Philippines, where we love a good laugh, it’s tempting to join the fun. But this tech, unveiled at Google’s I/O in May 2025, is a double-edged sword. What does it mean for Pinoy filmmakers, content creators, and the dangers of deepfakes? Let’s dive into this digital fiesta and figure out how to keep the party from turning into a nightmare.

The viral wave hit hard. One clip, a Vevo 3-generated “stand-up comic” cracking a joke about Bicol Express spice levels, racked up 2 million views on TikTok in a week. Another, a fake “ASMR lechon” video with sizzling sound effects, had netizens drooling before they realized it was AI. A post on social media from @maymayzapanta31 captures the awe: “Parang balang araw, mgamit ang AI vevo 3... makakagawa ka na kahit fake news... kapani-paniwala na.” These clips, powered by Vevo 3’s ability to create cinematic visuals, lip-synced dialogue, and sound effects from text prompts, look so real they’d fool your lola. But behind the laughs lies a revolution—and a risk.

For Pinoy filmmakers, Vevo 3 is a game-changer. Imagine indie directors in Quezon City crafting festival-ready shorts without a P10-million budget. Vevo 3, available for \$249.99/month via Google’s Gemini AI Ultra plan, lets you conjure scenes—like a Quiapo market chase or a Vigan heritage drama—with just a keyboard. No need for pricey cameras or crews. Local brands, like a Pampanga sisig joint, can whip up slick ads rivaling Jollibee’s tearjerkers. The pros? It’s democratization—talent, not cash, rules. A teenager in Tarlac can now compete with ABS-CBN. But the cons sting: big studios might lean on AI to cut jobs, and the flood of “AI slop” could drown out original voices, as Gizmodo warned. Our 2023-24 film industry strikes echoed Hollywood’s fears—AI could automate creativity, leaving actors and writers jobless.

Content creators are riding the wave but facing choppy waters. TikTokers like RedondoKid, faking Vevo 3 basketball trick shots, are grabbing attention with “Real or Vevo” stunts. It’s fun, but the grind to stand out is brutal. Vevo 3’s polish means creators must either master AI or risk being outshined by algorithm-friendly fakes. The pros: rapid prototyping—vloggers can test skits in minutes. The cons: authenticity is at risk. Pinoy influencers thrive on raw, relatable vibes—think Aling Marie’s cooking vlogs. If fans suspect AI, trust erodes. Plus, copyright’s a mess. Vevo 3’s training data, likely scraped from YouTube, raises questions: who owns an AI clip mimicking Erik Santos’ style?

Now, the dark side: deepfakes. Vevo 3’s realism is terrifying. TIME tested it, creating fake clips of election fraud and riots that could spark unrest if mislabeled. In the Philippines, where fake news spreads like wildfire, a deepfake of Marcos or Sara Duterte could ignite chaos, especially with 2028 elections looming. Social media is

already a minefield. Remember the 2022 polls’ disinformation flood? A Vevo 3 clip of a politician “confessing” to corruption could sway voters before it’s debunked. Scams are another worry. Cybercriminals could fake a mayor’s Zoom call to swindle funds, as a \$25 million deepfake scam did elsewhere. The “liar’s dividend” is real—politicians can dodge real scandals by crying “AI!”

So, how do we use Vevo 3 productively? First, embrace it for education. Schools in Pampanga can create history reenactments—like the 1898 Malolos Republic—for pennies, making lessons pop. Second, boost local storytelling. Local filmmakers can craft viral tourism ads, like a Vevo 3 clip of Kapampangan festivals, to draw crowds. Third, fight fire with fire. Use AI to train detection tools—Google’s SynthID watermarking is a start, but we need Pinoy techies building open-source detectors. Finally, teach media literacy. Workshops can show kids how to spot deepfakes—check for odd physics or eight-second limits—and use fact-checking sites like Rappler’s.

The stakes are high. Vevo 3 could empower Pinoy creativity or flood our feeds with fakes, eroding trust. Our history of fighting disinformation—from martial law propaganda to today’s trolls—teaches us resilience. The lesson? Innovation demands vigilance. To cope with deepfake fears, let’s lean on community to spread awareness. Marcos’ government must act, too: fund AI ethics research, enforce watermarking, and protect creators’ rights. Vevo 3’s viral laughs are fun, but without guardrails, we’re one fake clip from chaos. Let’s keep the fiesta real, not a digital mirage.



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THEVOICENEWSWEEKLY



# CIAC inks MOU with Korean firm for Dolores Park development

**CITY OF SAN FERNANDO** — The Clark International Airport Corporation (CIAC) recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Seoul-based Kyong-Ho Engineering & Architects, a renowned South Korean firm specializing in comprehensive construction engineering services including planning, feasibility studies, design, maintenance, and project management.

The MOU establishes a strategic partnership in support of CIAC's Seven Flagship Projects, with a primary focus on the Dolores River Park and the Clark Aviation Park — two major components of CIAC's broader Urban Renewal and Heritage Conservation Program.

These projects are designed to address the looming water crisis in Pampanga by integrating sustainable water management solutions, restoring natural ecosystems, enhancing climate resilience, and fostering inclusive economic and community development through thoughtful urban design.

"This partnership with Kyong-Ho Engineering & Architects is a significant step under CIAC's Urban Renewal and Heritage Conservation Program," CIAC President and CEO Jojit Alcazar said.

"The Dolores River Park project exemplifies our commitment to transforming Clark into a model of sustainable urban development that drives both regional and national growth," he added.

Alcazar explained the plan envisions nature-centric public spaces surrounding the Dolores River, which will serve as both recreational and tourism destinations.

The project will feature green landscapes,

biodiversity enhancements, sustainable mobility infrastructure, and innovative urban design — drawing inspiration from international benchmarks such as Singapore's Clarke Quay.

Key features of the development will include water catchment systems, integration of commercial and natural elements, and a strong emphasis on sustainability.

The project will contribute to mitigating the depletion of water resources through advanced water management techniques while enhancing the area's ecological and recreational value.

The Dolores River Park spans 3.9 kilometers along Clark's Creekside Road and runs parallel to the Sacobia River, which separates the provinces of Pampanga and Tarlac.

Meanwhile, the Clark Aviation Park is envisioned as a dynamic community center equipped with a rainwater harvesting and filtration system to support park operations and demonstrate sustainable development.

The areas of collaboration outlined in the MOU include joint research and development, technology transfer, technical training, knowledge exchange sessions, and capacity-building programs which are aligned with Kyong-Ho's expertise in sustainable infrastructure, large-scale urban planning, and climate-responsive engineering solutions.

The initiatives are integral to the development of the Clark Aviation Capital, which is envisioned as the country's premier aviation-centric business and logistics hub by Clark's strategic location at the heart of Luzon.



CIAC signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Seoul-based Kyong-Ho Engineering & Architects for the development of the Dolores River Park in Clark. (L-R) CIAC President Jojit Alcazar, Kyong-Ho Managing Director Park Sagun; BCDA President and CEO Joshua Bingang; Kyong-Ho Project Coordinator Yong Jo Lee; and Yeoman Kim Lim Kyong-Ho Director. (CIAC-PAD)



The Dolores Riverpark is envisioned as a sustainable river esplanade grounded on rainwater and wastewater recycling management systems, effectively fostering sustainability and biodiversity in the area while creating a more aesthetically pleasing and welcoming space.

# Converge is finalist for Privacy Initiative Award

Fiber broadband and technology provider Converge ICT Solutions Inc. has been recognized as a finalist for the 2025 Privacy Initiative of the Year at the National Privacy Commission's (NPC) Privacy Awareness Week (PAW) Awards for its innovative Project PIGLET (Privacy Integration through Guided Learning of Emerging Technologies).

Project PIGLET is aimed at strengthening digital literacy and privacy awareness among primary school students, emphasizing the importance of protecting personal data in an increasingly digital environment.

"In a world where people are always online, Project PIGLET is important for teaching kids about privacy and data protection. We are proud that the NPC sees our work in helping build a safer and smarter digital community from the ground up," said Atty. Laurice Esteban-Tuason, Converge Corporate Compliance and Data Protection Officer. "We remain committed to continuing this movement so that protecting privacy becomes a lifelong habit for all."

The NPC's annual PAW Awards honor organizations that exemplify strong compliance with

the Data Privacy Act of 2012 and encourage continued advocacy for data protection.

As part of Project PIGLET, the Converge Corporate Governance and Data Privacy (CGDP) Group conducts interactive storytelling sessions in schools. Students, parents, and teachers are introduced to the adventures of the "Astro Kids" in the "Internet Universe," which highlight the risks of sharing personal information with suspicious online characters. The lessons encourage vigilance and the importance of reporting any concerns to trusted adults, guided by the character Captain Conrad.

Project PIGLET has already reached students from Francisco Legaspi Memorial School in Pasig and Anunas Elementary School in Angeles, Pampanga, engaging Grades 2 to 6 students in age-appropriate discussions on digital literacy and responsible online behavior.

Converge plans to expand the initiative, adopting new approaches to reach more students across different academic levels and broaden the campaign's impact nationwide.



Converge was listed among the finalists for NPC Privacy Initiative of the Year award for its program, Project PIGLET. (From left): NPC Deputy Privacy Commissioner Atty. Nerissa N. De Jesus, NPC Privacy Commissioner and Chairman Atty. John Henry D. Naga, Converge AVP and Head of Data Privacy Eumir Espiritu, Converge Data Privacy Manager Atty. Janine Villabeto - Solete, NPC Deputy Privacy Commissioner Atty. Jose Amelito S. Belarmino, and NPC Executive Director Atty. Ivin Ronald D.M. Alzona.

# Pampanga PDRRMS on alert as rainy season begins

With the onset of the rainy season and the potential entry of storms that may trigger flooding in the province, the Pampanga Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (PDRRMC) assures the public of its full preparedness.

Search and rescue equipment,

personal protective gear, response vehicles, and trained responders are on standby to ensure immediate action during emergencies and to keep Kapampangans safe.

Residents are also urged to stay vigilant and prepared throughout the rainy season.



## CONG POGI... FROM PAGE 2

"Ginulis tamu pu keng kasaysayan uli na pu ning kekayung alang patugut a suporta. Dacal a dacal pung salamat. Puryan taya pu ing Guinu," said Lazatin, thanking his supporters for their unwavering trust.

Even before taking his oath, Lazatin was spotted visiting various schools in Mabalacat City and Magalang as part of his annual Brigada Eskwela tradition — a practice he began during his early days as an Angeles City councilor in 2013.

He personally donated 580 sacks of cement, 116 liters of paint, and 232 paint brushes to each of the 58 public schools in Mabalacat City and 58 in Magalang, reinforcing his commitment to public education — all out of his personal funds.

As the district's new representative, Lazatin outlined a legislative agenda focused on seven key areas: Health, Economy and Livelihood, Vulnerable and Marginalized Sectors (children, youth, women, senior citizens,

PWDs, solo parents, LGBTQ+), Environment, Education, Transportation and Barangay Empowerment

"Sa ating panunungkulan, wala pong maiwan. No one will be left behind," Lazatin emphasized. "Ito po ang aking binitawang pangako noong kampanya na tutuparin po natin pag-upo natin. Lahat ng sektor ng ating lipunan ay mararamdaman ang ating sinserong paninilbihan. Alang malalakwan king Primeru Distrito ning Pampanga."

## AC RANKED... FROM PAGE 2

Mayor Lazatin welcomed the recognition, citing it as a reflection of the city's commitment to sustainable growth and effective public service.

"This shows that our programs are making a real impact — not just in attracting economic activity, but

more importantly, in improving the everyday lives of our constituents," Mayor Lazatin said.

In the 2024 index, Angeles ranked 5th among Philippine cities, with notable marks in Environment and Economics, including generating nearly ₱3

billion in local revenue even during the height of the pandemic.

The city's consistent presence in the Global Cities Index highlights Angeles' ongoing transformation into a more progressive, livable, and resilient urban hub.



## DTI: Prices of school supplies remain affordable

**CITY OF SAN FERNANDO** —With the opening of classes set on June 16, the Department of Trade Industry (DTI) assured consumers that the prices of school supplies remain stable and affordable.

According to DTI Pampanga Consumer Protection Division Chief Nathaniel Samson, out of 195 school supply items monitored by the agency, only 17 increased in price, 25 went down, while 101 items retained their prices from last year.

He said that their price monitoring began two months before the school opening to ensure that consumers are protected from overpricing.

“Our price monitors are in the market daily. Based on their reports, most school supplies still follow the price guide released by the DTI-Bureau of Philippine Standards,” Samson said.

The DTI regularly monitors eight basic school supply items including notebooks, writing pads, pens, rulers, crayons, and other essential items commonly used by students.

Samson said price movements ranged only from P5 to P15, with minor increases attributed to the transition back to full face-to-face classes after years of hybrid learning during the pandemic.

“During the pandemic, many items were on promotional sales. Now that schools are fully reopening, only minimal price increases were recorded,” he explained.

Samson also clarified that school uniforms, bags, and shoes are not covered by their official price monitoring, following a memorandum issued by the Philippine Accreditation for Procurement.

On product quality and safety, especially for children’s use, he noted that the DTI checks product standards, such as the number of sheets in a notebook and binding type, while the Department of Health monitors items for hazardous contents, particularly in crayons, which are often colorful and attractive to children.

Department of Trade and Industry Pampanga Consumer Protection Division Chief Nathaniel Samson



## SEC, SCAD partner to enhance investor protection in Subic-Clark Corridor

**CLARK FREEPORT ZONE** —The Securities and Exchange Commission-Tarlac Extension Office (SEC-TAREO) and the Subic-Clark Alliance for Development (SCAD) are joining forces to strengthen investor protection and advance capital market development in the Subic-Clark Corridor.

This partnership was formalized through a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signed on May 29 at the Clark Freeport Zone, paving the way for the implementation of the SEC Communication, Advocacy, and Network (SEC-CAN) initiative within the corridor.

SEC-TAREO Director Richard Laus and SCAD Executive Director Carminda Fabros led the ceremonial signing, along with SEC Information Officer Mark Catacutan and SCAD Legal Counsel Aliw Del Rosario.

“This collaboration is a vital step toward building a culture of responsible investing in Central Luzon. Through our collaboration with SCAD, we aim to protect investors, educate the public, and foster a regulatory environment that supports business growth and transparency in the major economic zones in the region,” Laus emphasized.

The partnership is anchored on a shared commitment to promoting financial literacy, investor

protection, and capital market awareness, particularly in the fast-growing Subic Bay and Clark Freeport Zones.

It also supports national efforts to prevent investment scams and encourage compliance with SEC regulations.

Fabros, for her part, highlighted the importance of joint initiatives in empowering both investors and business owners.

“We are excited to collaborate with SEC-TAREO to empower investors and business owners through joint programs and activities to promote financial literacy, investor protection, and sustainable economic growth in our community,” she said.

Additionally, Fabros underscored that the MOA signing strengthens their commitment to fostering inclusive economic growth, anti-scam awareness, and compliance.

“Together with SEC-TAREO, we are dedicated to creating a more informed and secure investment environment,” she added.

With SCAD’s mandate to transform the Subic-Clark Corridor into a world-class mega logistics hub, this initiative plays a critical role in advancing ease of doing business, investor confidence, and socio-economic development in the region.



Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) Tarlac Extension Office Director Richard Laus (third from left) and Subic-Clark Alliance for Development (SCAD) Executive Director Carminda Fabros (second from left), along with SEC Information Officer Mark Catacutan (fourth from left) and SCAD Legal Counsel Aliw Del Rosario (first from left), sign a Memorandum of Agreement at the Clark Freeport Zone. This formalizes their partnership to strengthen investor protection and advance capital market development in the Subic-Clark Corridor. (SEC)

## PBBM pushes for more smart schools with digitally empowered teachers

**SAN MIGUEL, Bulacan** —President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. is pushing to transform traditional set-up schools into smart and climate-resilient learning facilities with digitally empowered teachers.

This was emphasized by the Chief Executive as he led the kick-off ceremony of Brigada Eskwela 2025 at Tibagan Elementary School in San Miguel, Bulacan.

Here, he witnessed the installation of a brand-new smart television by the Department of Education (DepEd) and Khan Academy Philippines which aims to equip Filipino students with foundational skills through interactive courses with fun that align with the DepEd’s curriculum.

To complement this, the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) has also installed a satellite-powered internet service by Starlink to give all-weather and uninterrupted internet access for students while in school.

Beside the school is a newly constructed passive telecommunications tower infrastructure to support the provision of efficient resource utilization and expansion of wireless network coverage.

This is for the purpose of regular internet connectivity by various service providers under the common tower policy of the DICT.

Tibagan Elementary School was chosen by the

President to visit due to the urgency to replace old dilapidated classrooms that were eaten by massive termites.

School Principal Casimiro Reyes Jr. said the Office of the President has informed him that an amount of P9 million was allocated for the immediate repair of their classrooms.

The rehabilitation will be implemented by the Department of Public Works and Highways.

Meanwhile, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority has also extended its services in this northern part of Bulacan by helping complete all the necessary motorist and pedestrian road signages outside the school facilities to ensure the safety of students, teachers, and parents.

Apart from the usual refurbishing and sprucing up of the various old and existing facilities, President Marcos has ordered DepEd Secretary Sonny Angara to fast-track the proposed construction plans for flood-prone schools including Barihan Elementary School in Malolos City, Bulacan which he also visited as part of Brigada Eskwela 2025.

Brigada Eskwela is annual shoulder-to-shoulder tasks and cooperation between the government, private sector, school, academe, parents and students to prepare for the opening of classes.



President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. leads the kick-off ceremony of Brigada Eskwela 2025 at Tibagan Elementary School in San Miguel, Bulacan. (PIA 3)

Republic of the Philippines  
**THIRD JUDICIAL REGION**  
REGIONAL TRIAL COURT  
**OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF COURT**  
Angeles City  
rtc1angocc@judiciary.gov.ph

ERIKA V. PIGAO,  
Mortgagee-Petitioner,  
-versus-  
MARVIN R. TEBADA and  
MICHAEL R. TEBADA,  
Mortgagors-Respondents.

EXTRA JUDICIAL  
FORECLOSURE  
OF REAL ESTATE MORTGAGE  
UNDER ACT 3135 as Amended  
FC Case No. 2025-0047

### NOTICE OF SHERIFF’S SALE

Upon extrajudicial petition for sale under Act 3135, as Amended filed by the Mortgagee-Petitioner, **ERIKA V. PAGAO**, with residence and postal address at Block 11 Lot 5 Waterstone Villa, Alexandra Drive, Balibago, Angeles City, Pampanga, against **MARVIN R. TEBADA and MICHAEL R. TEBADA** (Mortgagors-Respondents), both with residence and postal address at **315-A Flora St., Josefa Subd., Malabanias, Angeles City, Pampanga** and/or Block 2, Lot 2. Verde Royale, Gumamela St., Sapang Biabas, Mabalacat City, Pampanga, in order to satisfy the mortgage debt therein which as of 30 March 2025, amounts to **Three Million Seventy-Six Thousand Thirteen Pesos and Sixteen Centavos (Php3,076,013.16)**, Philippine Currency, excluding interests, penalties and additional daily interest and penalties up to the date of sale, in addition attorney’s fees and other charges all secured by this Mortgage, the undersigned Sheriff IV hereby gives notice and announces that on **15th July 2025 at 10:00 o’clock in the morning at the Mabalacat Municipal Trial Court in Cities. Branch 1. Mabalacat City located at Building 2 Unit 32-35, Great Mall of Central Luzon, Xevera. Tabun, Mabalacat City, Pampanga**, will sell at public auction to the highest bidder for **cash or manager’s check and in Philippine Currency**, the following parcel of land with all the improvement existing thereon:

#### TCT NO. 045-2023007308

A parcel of land (Lot 2, Block 2 of the subdivision plan PSD-03-157692, being a portion of Lot 140-B-1A-2, PSD-03-089433 L.R.C.REC. NO.), situated in the Barrio of Sapang Bayabas, Municipality of Mabalacat, Province of Pampanga, Island of Luzon. Bounded on the NW., along line 1-2 by Lot 1 Block 2; on the NE., along line 2-3 by Road Lot 1; on the SE., along line 3-4 by Lot 3; on the SW., along line 4-1 by Lot 6 both Block 2 all of the subdivision plan, xxxx containing an area of ONE HUNDRED (100) SQUARE METERS more or less. xxxx

Prospective buyers/bidder may investigate for themselves the above-mentioned parcel of land for their information and protection.

In the event that the scheduled public auction should not take place, the same will be conducted on **19th August 2025** at the same time and place without further notice.

Angeles City, May 9, 2025.

GARRY M. PANGILINAN  
Sheriff IV  
Contact no. 09503207109



# Implementing the MATATAG Curriculum: Crossing Challenges in the Absence of Ready-Made Teaching Resources

by JANETH C. PALOMAR

The MATATAG curriculum, introduced by the Department of Education (DepEd) in the Philippines, aims to enhance the educational experience by focusing on a more holistic and integrated approach to learning. This new curriculum aspires to build critical thinking skills, promote relevant competencies, and foster a love for lifelong learning among students. However, its implementation faces significant challenges, particularly in the absence of ready-made teaching guides and resources for teachers. One of the biggest hurdles in implementing the MATATAG curriculum is the lack of comprehensive teaching materials. Teachers often rely on pre-existing lesson plans and resources to guide their instruction, and without these tools for the new curriculum, teachers may struggle to create effective lesson plans that align with the curriculum's goals. The absence of structured teaching guides can lead to inconsistencies in the delivery of lessons and varying interpretations of the

curriculum's objectives among teachers. Moreover, the lack of ready-made resources can result in increased workload for teachers. They must invest considerable time and effort to develop their own instructional materials, which can detract from their ability to focus on other critical aspects of teaching, such as student engagement and assessment. This situation may also create feelings of uncertainty and stress among teachers, who may not feel adequately equipped to implement the new curriculum effectively. Another challenge involves the professional development of teachers. In the absence of comprehensive teaching guides, ongoing training and workshops become essential for teachers to understand the new curriculum's philosophy and objectives. However, access to professional development opportunities can be limited. Therefore, ensuring all teachers receive adequate training and support is crucial for a successful transition to the MATATAG

curriculum. Additionally, the implementation of the MATATAG curriculum calls for collaboration and sharing of best practices among teachers. When teaching resources are scarce, teachers may benefit from connecting with colleagues to exchange ideas, strategies, and materials. Creating a supportive community among educators could help bridge the gap during this transitional phase, allowing them to refine their teaching practices and enhance their students' learning experiences. Furthermore, the involvement of stakeholders, including parents and local communities, plays a pivotal role in the successful implementation of the MATATAG curriculum. Engaging families in the educational process can provide valuable insights and support for teachers. Collaborative initiatives, such as workshops or informational sessions, can help parents understand the goals of the MATATAG curriculum and how they can contribute to

their children's learning at home. The implementation of the MATATAG curriculum in the absence of ready-made teaching guides and resources presents several challenges for teachers in the Philippines. However, through collaboration, professional development, and community involvement, stakeholders can work together to navigate these obstacles. As the education sector adapts to the new curriculum, it is essential to remain focused on its overarching goal of fostering holistic and meaningful learning experiences for all students. With perseverance and innovative approaches, the MATATAG curriculum holds the potential to transform the educational landscape and prepare learners for the demands of the 21st century.

The author is Teacher III at San Vicente Elementary School Annex, Sablayan North District, Schools Division of Occidental Mindoro, MIMAROPA Region

## The Importance of Effective Communication Between Teachers and School Principals in DepEd Public Schools

by JANETH C. PALOMAR

Effective communication is fundamental to the success of any educational institution, particularly within the framework of the Department of Education (DepEd) public schools in the Philippines. The relationship between teachers and school principals is pivotal, as it shapes the school's overall environment, influences teaching practices, and directly impacts student outcomes. Establishing proper communication channels enables collaboration, enhances decision-making, and contributes to creating a positive school culture. One of the primary roles of a school principal is to provide leadership and support to teachers. Clear and open communication is essential in this regard. When principals communicate their vision, expectations, and policies effectively, teachers are more likely to align their strategies with the goals of the school. Regular meetings, updates, and transparent discussions about school policies foster an atmosphere of trust and respect. This foundation encourages teachers to express their ideas, concerns, and suggestions, thereby promoting a collaborative approach to governance. Moreover, effective communication assists in addressing challenges within the

school. Teachers often encounter obstacles that can affect their teaching and students' learning experiences. When teachers feel comfortable sharing their issues with the principal, it allows for timely interventions and support. Principals who prioritize open lines of communication can better understand the specific needs of their staff, enabling them to develop targeted professional development programs, allocate resources effectively, and implement necessary changes that benefit both teachers and students. Feedback is a crucial element of communication between teachers and principals. Constructive feedback from school leaders can guide teachers in refining their instructional methods, while teachers, too, can provide valuable insights on the practical implications of administrative decisions. Establishing a culture that values feedback, where both parties feel respected and heard, strengthens the professional relationship. By allowing for two-way communication, schools can cultivate an environment of continuous improvement. Additionally, proper communication helps in building a sense of community within the school. When principals communicate openly with

their staff, it fosters a feeling of belonging among teachers, which can result in higher morale and job satisfaction. Teachers who feel supported and valued are more likely to be motivated and engaged in their work, ultimately benefiting students. School-wide initiatives or changes can be more successfully implemented when teachers are involved in the conversation and their opinions are considered. Effective communication between teachers and school principals in DepEd public schools is essential for a thriving educational environment. It facilitates collaboration, enhances problem-solving, and fosters a sense of community. By prioritizing open and respectful communication, school leaders can create a supportive atmosphere that empowers teachers. Ultimately, this partnership leads to improved educational outcomes for students, reinforcing the core mission of public schools to provide quality education for all. Ensuring that communication is prioritized and nurtured within the educational framework will yield long-lasting benefits for the entire school community. The author is Teacher III at San Vicente Elementary School Annex, Sablayan North District, Schools Division of Occidental Mindoro, MIMAROPA Region

## The Role of Teacher-Student Relationships: A Love Like Family

by JANETH C. PALOMAR

In education, the relationship between a teacher and their students can significantly influence the learning experience. When a teacher approaches their role with a love and care that resembles that of a parent, the educational environment shifts dramatically, fostering growth, emotional well-being, and intellectual curiosity. Such a relationship is not only beneficial for academic achievement but also for the overall development of the child. A teacher who views their students as their own children invests in their well-being beyond merely imparting knowledge. This form of love is characterized by empathy, understanding, and support, which creates a safe space where students feel valued and respected. When children perceive their teachers as figures who genuinely care about them, they are more likely to engage actively in the learning process. This emotional connection can lead to increased motivation, as students feel a sense of accountability not just to themselves but also to a mentor who believes in their potential. Teachers who cultivate a familial bond with their students tend to recognize individual needs and learning styles. Just as a parent would strive to understand their child's unique strengths and weaknesses, a dedicated teacher personalizes instruction to meet diverse needs. This attention helps students navigate challenges more effectively, boosting their confidence and encouraging resilience. Such supportive relationships can promote an environment of trust, enabling students to feel comfortable sharing their difficulties, asking questions, and seeking assistance without fear of judgment. Moreover, the impact of a loving teacher extends beyond academic performance. Teachers often play pivotal roles in the social

and emotional development of their students. When educators demonstrate compassion and patience, they model positive interpersonal behaviors. This nurturing approach teaches students essential life skills, such as empathy, cooperation, and respect for others. In many cases, the emotional bond established with a caring teacher can provide vital support for students facing personal challenges, thus playing a crucial role in their overall well-being. The resemblance of a teacher's love to a parent's care also reinforces the idea of community within the classroom. A supportive and family-like atmosphere encourages collaboration among students, fostering a sense of belonging. This communal bond not only enhances the educational experience but also prepares students for future social interactions and teamwork. By building a classroom culture rooted in love and mutual respect, teachers empower students to thrive not only academically but also as responsible, caring members of society. The dynamic between teachers and students can flourish when teachers embrace a love that resonates with parental affection. Such relationships enhance the educational experience, support emotional and social development, and create an inclusive environment where students can feel safe to learn and grow. Ultimately, the commitment of educators to treat their students as their own cultivates not only better learners but also compassionate individuals ready to navigate the complexities of the world beyond the classroom.

The author is Teacher III at San Vicente Elementary School Annex, Sablayan North District, Schools Division of Occidental Mindoro, MIMAROPA Region

## The Grant of Medical Allowance to DepEd Personnel

by JANETH C. PALOMAR

In a recent development, the Department of Education (DepEd) announced the grant of medical allowances to its personnel, marking a significant step towards enhancing the welfare of teaches and non-teaching staff across the country. This initiative has sparked discussions about its implications and the broader context of employee benefits within the educational sector. The introduction of a medical allowance for DepEd personnel is a response to the growing recognition of the challenges faced by teachers. Teachers and staff have navigated unprecedented stressors, not only to modes of instruction but also dealing with the mental and physical toll of the COVID-19 crisis. Providing financial support for medical needs acknowledges these challenges and serves as a proactive measure to promote

the well-being of those who are entrusted with the education of future generations. From a financial perspective, the allocation of medical allowances can be seen as an investment in human capital. Teachers play a crucial role in shaping the minds of learners, and ensuring their health and well-being is vital for maintaining educational standards. A healthy workforce can lead to increased productivity and morale, ultimately benefiting the learners they serve. By alleviating some of the financial burdens associated with healthcare, DepEd is likely to see positive outcomes in the long run. However, the implementation of this medical allowance must be approached with careful consideration. It is essential for the government to ensure that the allocation is adequate and accessible, allowing all eligible

personnel to benefit. Moreover, clarity on eligibility criteria, application processes, and the scope of coverage is vital to avoid confusion and potential disparities. Transparent communication will be key in managing expectations and empowering personnel to take full advantage of this benefit. Additionally, it is important to place this policy within the larger context of benefits for public sector employees. The educational sector has historically faced challenges related to compensation and support. The grant of medical allowances is a step in the right direction, but it also highlights the need for a comprehensive review of the overall remuneration and benefits structure for teachers. Ensuring that teachers receive competitive salaries and additional benefits is crucial for attracting and retaining talent within the teaching profession.

The grant of a medical allowance to DepEd personnel is a commendable initiative that reflects a growing awareness of the importance of employee welfare in the educational sector. It highlights the need for continued investment in the health and well-being of teachers, which ultimately contributes to the quality of education in the Philippines. Moving forward, it will be essential

for the government to build upon this initiative with further measures that ensure teachers are adequately supported, both in terms of their health and overall job satisfaction.

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## The Focus on Reading and Literacy in the DepEd's Return to School Initiative

by JANETH C. PALOMAR

As the Philippines prepares for the full return of students to school settings, the Department of Education (DepEd) places a critical emphasis on reading and literacy as fundamental components of education. This focus is particularly relevant in ensuring that students develop foundational skills that are essential for academic success and personal development.

Reading and literacy are crucial not only for effective learning but also for fostering critical thinking and analytical skills. The ability to read with comprehension allows students to engage with diverse subjects and materials, enabling them to connect knowledge across various disciplines. In this regard, ensuring that students possess strong reading skills should be a priority for educators and policymakers.

The DepEd's initiatives to promote reading and literacy involve various strategies aimed at addressing the needs of students across all grade levels. One key component of this focus is the implementation of targeted literacy programs designed to enhance reading proficiency among students, particularly in the early years of education. Research consistently shows that early literacy is foundational for later academic success, and interventions at this stage can have a profound impact on a child's overall educational trajectory.

In addition to structured literacy programs, the DepEd advocates for the integration of reading materials into the curriculum that reflect diverse cultures and experiences. This inclusion aims to make reading more relatable and engaging for students, ultimately fostering a love for reading and learning. Utilizing local literature and resources can help cultivate a sense of identity and connection among students, enhancing their motivation to read.

Teacher training and professional development also play a vital role in the DepEd's emphasis on literacy. Teachers equipped with effective teaching strategies and resources are better prepared to address the

diverse needs of their students. Ongoing support and training for teachers will ensure that they can implement literacy programs effectively and adapt their teaching methods to meet the varying abilities within their classrooms.

Moreover, parental and community involvement are essential in promoting reading and literacy. The DepEd encourages schools to engage families in literacy initiatives, recognizing that parents play a crucial role in fostering a reading culture at home. Collaborating with local communities and organizations can also enhance access to reading resources and programs, further bolstering literacy efforts.

However, the focus on reading and literacy must be accompanied by a recognition of the challenges faced by students, particularly those from marginalized communities who may have limited access to educational resources. To achieve effective literacy outcomes, it is essential to consider the economic and social factors that impact students' learning environments. Targeted support and interventions are necessary to ensure that all students, regardless of their background, have equitable opportunities to develop their literacy skills.

The DepEd's focus on reading and literacy as schools reopen reflects a comprehensive approach to education that prioritizes foundational skills essential for student success. By implementing targeted literacy programs, enhancing teacher training, and engaging the community, the Department aims to address the diverse learning needs of students. As the nation embarks on this new academic year, fostering a culture of reading and learning will benefit individual students and contribute to a more educated and literate society as a whole.

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## Upholding Work Ethics and Professionalism: Cornerstones of Effective Teaching

by JANETH C. PALOMAR

Work ethics and professionalism are critical components of any successful teaching environment. They establish the foundation upon which teachers can build positive relationships with their students, colleagues, and the community at large. In DepEd setting, these elements contribute to a culture of respect, accountability, and excellence, essential for fostering an effective learning atmosphere.

Work ethics encompass the moral principles that guide an individual's behavior in the workplace. In the context of teaching, this includes aspects such as integrity, responsibility, discipline, and a commitment to the professional development of self and others. Professionalism, on the other hand, refers to the conduct, aims, and qualities that characterize a profession, including adherence to codes of conduct, maintaining appropriate boundaries in teacher-student relationships, and engaging in continuous improvement strategies.

Teachers with strong work ethics set a standard for their students. They model behaviors such as punctuality, dependability, and a willingness to go above and beyond in their duties. Such behaviors not only enhance the teacher's credibility but also instill similar values in students. When teachers prioritize preparation, lesson planning, and assessment, they demonstrate a commitment to ensuring that students receive the best possible education, fostering

a sense of trust in the educational process.

Moreover, teachers with solid work ethics contribute to a collaborative environment among colleagues. When teachers approach their responsibilities with dedication, they encourage teamwork and mutual support, which are vital for creating an effective educational system. This collaboration can enhance instructional practices, as teachers share resources, strategies, and insights that lead to improved student outcomes.

Professionalism in the teaching workplace extends to the relationship teacher maintain with their students. Establishing appropriate boundaries is crucial. Teachers must navigate the delicate balance between being approachable and maintaining the authority necessary for effective classroom management. Professionalism also involves being aware of cultural sensitivities and individual needs, enabling teachers to create inclusive learning environments that respect diversity.

Additionally, professionalism fosters a safe and respectful environment where students feel valued and heard. Teachers who demonstrate empathy and understanding, coupled with a commitment to fairness and equity, are better positioned to engage students and motivate them to achieve their academic goals.

Commitment to ongoing professional development is an

integral aspect of professionalism for teachers. The teaching is continuously evolving, with new methodologies, technologies, and educational standards emerging. Teachers who engage in lifelong learning not only improve their own practice but also bring fresh perspectives and innovative approaches into the classroom. This commitment reflects a dedication to self-improvement that ultimately benefits students and the educational institution as a whole.

Work ethics and professionalism are essential components of the teaching workplace, significantly influencing the efficacy of educational systems. Teachers who embody these principles not only enhance their own practice but also positively affect their students, colleagues, and the broader community. By fostering a culture rooted in ethical behavior and professional standards, DepEd schools can create environments conducive to learning, growth, and mutual respect, ultimately serving the community and society effectively. As the role of teachers continues to evolve, maintaining a strong commitment to work ethics and professionalism will remain vital to the integrity and effectiveness of the teaching profession.

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## Brigada Eskwela 2025: Partnering with LGUs and Volunteers for DepEd Schools

by JANETH C. PALOMAR

As the new school year approaches, schools across the Philippines gear up for Brigada Eskwela, an initiative focused on preparing public educational facilities for learners. This annual event invites various stakeholders—especially Local Government Units (LGUs) and community volunteers—to contribute to the improvement and maintenance of public schools, fostering a spirit of collective responsibility for education.

Brigada Eskwela, initiated by the Department of Education (DepEd), aims to engage parents, alumni, local businesses, and civil society organizations in cleaning, repairing, and enhancing school facilities. Schools often rely on dedicated community support to ensure that classrooms are safe, functional, and conducive to learning at the start of the academic year.

The role of LGUs in this initiative cannot be overstated. Local government officials can facilitate the mobilization of resources and volunteers, helping to create a comprehensive plan that aligns with the specific needs of schools in their jurisdictions. This partnership often includes providing financial assistance

or logistical support, such as transportation for materials and tools needed for repairs or renovations.

In addition to support from LGUs, community volunteers play a vital role in the success of Brigada Eskwela. Individuals from various sectors, including local businesses, civic organizations often step up to lend their time and effort. Their involvement not only helps with physical tasks such as painting and cleaning but also promotes a shared commitment to the educational well-being of the community.

To effectively establish these partnerships, schools are encouraged to communicate clearly and openly with potential collaborators. Organizing community meetings allows stakeholders to discuss how they can contribute and identify specific needs within the school. This inclusiveness fosters a sense of ownership among community members, encouraging them to invest in the local educational system.

Furthermore, successful Brigada Eskwela initiatives often see the involvement of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which can bring additional

resources, expertise, and capacity-building opportunities for both schools and communities. By working together, schools and NGOs can create sustainable projects that address not only immediate physical needs but also long-term educational goals.

While Brigada Eskwela focuses primarily on the physical aspects of school readiness, it also highlights the importance of community engagement in education. By reinforcing partnerships with LGUs and volunteers, schools can create a more supportive environment for learners and teachers alike.

As the country prepares for this year's Brigada Eskwela, the challenge and opportunity lie in unifying efforts among all stakeholders. A collaborative approach ensures that public schools are not only ready for the start of classes but also become a focal point for community spirit and collective investment in education. Through these partnerships, the vision of quality education for all remains within reach.

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## Navigating Disputes in the Classroom: A Guide for Teachers

by JANETH C. PALOMAR

In the diverse and bustling classrooms of the Philippines, disputes among students are not uncommon. The Department of Education (DepEd) encourages teachers to foster a supportive and inclusive environment, and managing conflicts effectively plays a crucial role in achieving this goal. Teachers often find themselves navigating a path of maximum tolerance, balancing understanding and discipline to ensure that conflicts are resolved constructively.

When conflicts arise, teachers are tasked with the responsibility of facilitating communication between students. Encouraging students to express their thoughts and feelings provides an opportunity for them to voice their concerns and resolve misunderstandings. A crucial aspect of this process is active listening, where teachers ensure that each party feels heard and respected. This not only helps de-escalate tensions but also fosters empathy among students as they

learn to see issues from multiple perspectives.

Despite this emphasis on tolerance, it is important for teachers to establish clear behavioral guidelines that define acceptable conduct in the classroom. These rules serve as a framework for addressing disputes and maintaining a respectful learning environment. When disagreements turn into disruptive behavior or involve serious issues such as bullying, teachers must take appropriate action to uphold these standards. Striking the right balance between maximum tolerance and necessary intervention is key to promoting positive student interactions.

The DepEd emphasizes the importance of character formation and social-emotional learning. Therefore, teachers can utilize conflicts as teachable moments. By guiding students through the process of conflict resolution, teachers help them develop critical life skills, such as negotiation, compromise, and mutual respect.

In doing so, teachers empower students not only to resolve their current disputes but also to navigate future challenges effectively.

Training and professional development opportunities offered by DepEd can further equip teachers with strategies for conflict resolution. Workshops and seminars often provide insights into effective communication techniques, classroom management, and restorative practices that emphasize

reconciliation over punishment. These resources can enhance teachers' ability to handle disputes with a calm demeanor and an objective viewpoint, ensuring that all students feel valued and understood.

Managing student disputes in Philippine classrooms requires a thoughtful approach that combines maximum tolerance with clear expectations. By fostering open communication, establishing guidelines, and viewing conflicts as learning opportunities,

teachers can create an inclusive atmosphere where every student can thrive. In this way, teachers not only address immediate conflicts but also contribute to developing a generation of respectful and responsible individuals equipped for the complexities of life beyond the classroom.

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Capiz Ecology Park and Cultural Village stands as one of Western Visayas' most remarkable success stories in cultural tourism. Once a site devastated by Typhoon Yolanda, the area has been transformed since 2014 through a replanting of native trees and a master plan to reimagine the space as a holistic tourism and cultural destination.

Set across 14 hectares in the town of Cuartero, Capiz — with 7 hectares under the stewardship of the Provincial Veterinary and Environmental Management Office — the park now offers visitors a space where heritage isn't only preserved, but lived.

Under the vision of Provincial Tourism Officer Sir Alfonso Tesoro, the park has aligned ecological sustainability with a deeper cultural purpose.

One of the park's main features are IP Houses that honors the Indigenous traditional architecture from Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. These structures are not mere exhibits but they have become active cultural sites, maintained and renamed to reflect evolving narratives. The park also serves as a satellite venue for the Indigenous Peoples' Festival like that of the Panay Bukidnon Community, showcasing their traditions, stories, and crafts.

Perhaps the most compelling is their commitment to reviving its weaving heritage, the Hinabol kag Panubok textile. Known locally as "Tiral," the handloom tradition vanished for over 20 years until cultural mapping and validation from the National Commission for Culture and the Arts in 2015 reignited interest. With guidance from the Institute of Living Traditions, a new generation of women weavers now continue the craft, offering a powerful story of cultural resilience and female empowerment. The Hinabol kag Panubok is one of the valuable textiles in the industry, thanks to its unique execution.

The park also acts as an ideal and dynamic venue for meaningful educational tours, camping retreats, and cultural immersions. Everything served on the table, with a prearranged local delicacy cooking demonstration, are sourced directly from the complex or neighboring communities. Even the park's workforce reflects its mission: mothers previously without stable income now take part in sustaining the grounds, while skilled panday artisans bring heritage to life through their craftsmanship.

For travelers seeking cultural experience, Capiz Ecology Park and Cultural Village is a rare gem. It invites visitors to reconnect not just with nature, but with the enduring traditions of Western Visayas. This is travel with a purpose where every step, every taste, every weave, every photograph and every encounter tells a story worth remembering.

Make the journey. Let the Province of Capiz show you how communities rise, thrive, and share their truth.

For inquiries, you can email at [capiz.tourism@gmail.com](mailto:capiz.tourism@gmail.com)

# Where Culture and Nature Converge in Cuartero, Capiz

By Jan Darren Guiwan

