**My K12 Proposal in RP**

**By: George P. Lumayag**

K12 proposal upgrades K10 at present in accordance with international standards which I humbly agreed for a better change. Ideas are shared in print media and online. While majority of the stakeholders are provoking the additional years in our basic education curriculum. Where to add two years? Is it in the pre-elementary, elementary, or secondary?

DepEd 7 Director Recaredo Borgonia is suggesting that the two additional years be implemented in the basic years, like pre-elementary or elementary levels, to ensure that this benefits majority of the students.

"We should put the additional two years at the lower levels because our statistics show that only a few percent of our elementary and high school students go to college," said Borgonia during the 888 News Forum at the Marco Polo Plaza Hotel last June 22, 2010 at 5:47 pm on MARS MOSQUEDA JR’s article: Cebu schools gear up for two additional years.

The director has his point statistically, but I shall not nod to his suggestions because if we would like to upgrade our education and employment systems for a good change and could meet the international standard, I suggest that additional two years shall be at the higher levels. There must be Senior High in the secondary which is a preparatory for a course in college or university. Subjects shall be lowered from eight (8) to six (6). I shall have to recommend these subjects, namely: 1) Computer Technology, 2) Industrial Technology, 3) Home and Business Technology, 4) English and Public Speaking, 5) Science and Engineering, 6) Advanced Mathematics and Accountancy.

To increase years of basic education from 10 to 12 is supported by Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile and Senate committee on education chairman Edgardo Angara.

Enrile said the 12-year basic education would improve the quality of education system in the country.

“I think it is necessary in order to improve the quality of our educational system so that we can become competitive in the world market,” Enrile said.

For his part, Angara said it is now high time to consider increasing the number of years of basic education in the country.

“I think we’re one of only two countries in the world that has only 10 years in basic education. Every else has two years,” Angara, former education secretary, said.

While favoring the proposal, Angara said it should be immediately implemented due to pressing and urgent problems like lack of teachers and congested classrooms that must be addressed first by the government.

“It will entail huge cost if you add one year to elementary because you have to hire teachers, construct classrooms, desk and textbooks,” Angara said.

A former University of the Philippines (UP) president, Angara said the proposal to add two more years in basic education is not ‘anti-poor’.

“In the end, it is going to help the poor because the poor gets its fight chance only through education,” Angara said.

Both of them have excellent ideas in educational reform which is helping the poor in the end. For me, to help the poor students is to give them government scholarship while K12 is hopefully implemented.

Meanwhile, Senate majority floor leader Vicente Sotto III expressed opposition against the 12-year basic education plan, suggesting to instead focus the government effort on “early childhood program” like kindergarten.

Hon. Sotto, for me is not looking at the global competition in education that in return for this is employment.

However, the article of INA HERNANDO-MALIPOT: The 12-year Switch, published last August 5, 2010 at 9:00am states one of the groups that is pushing for the additional two years in basic education is the Philippine Business for Education (PBED), a group that believes that aside from shortage in classrooms, teachers, and textbooks, the country’s ailing educational system also suffers from another major shortage — its school years.

PBED executive director Chito Salazar explains that the global standard for a student to enter the university is 12 years of basic education. In Southeast Asia, the Philippines is the only country with a 10-year basic education, followed by Cambodia with 11 years.

“This is the reason why many universities abroad do not recognize our high school graduates because they are lacking in years here.”

Salazar maintains that one year in elementary school and another in high school could improve the quality of RP education. “Actually, the current curriculum is based on a 12-year system but it is being squeezed into 10 due to lack of budget. But you cannot absorb that much thus we really need to spread it out over 12 years,” he says.

Well, he has also his outstanding research and findings as well as his ideas to add one year in elementary and another year in high school. For me, it is better to add two years in high school before enrolling into college or university because biologically, the students are matured enough to develop his skills and knowledge to attain education.

If we push through this K12-year switch, where can we get the budget for education?

According to the Presidential Task Force on Education (PTFE), a multi-sectoral body created by the Aquino administration, has reported that the 12-year basic education system cannot be considered as high priority.

Headed by Ateneo de Manila University president Fr. Bienvenido Nebres, PTFE believes that “adding two more years to schooling may further cut back the number of children financially able to finish school.”

Nebres urges the government to first focus on the essentials such as the backlog in classrooms, teachers, schools, and textbooks. “They should prioritize first how to cut by half the number of students who drop out of elementary school every year,” he said.

PTFE studies showed that around 800,000 elementary school students or around a third of the 2.4 million every school year drop out before they even reach the sixth grade. “Once all these have been addressed, then that would be the best time to talk about the additional two years,” Nebres said.

Another major reason the plan is being opposed is budget. Based on the initial studies of PBED, the implementation of the 12-year cycle would cost about P13 billion pesos annually or almost P100 billion over a five-year period.

Luistro acknowledges the budget constraint and the need to prioritize which problems to solve. But he also believes that all these is not just about adding more years but about giving the Filipino youth a holistic education curriculum that will prepare them for real life.

“If we fix basic education, we fix the long-term problems of the country. And if we fix the country’s problems, we can build a truly strong society we can proudly call the Philippines,” he ends.

Well, Sir Luistro has also a brilliant idea by stressing … all these is not just about adding more years but about giving the Filipino youth a holistic education curriculum that will prepare them for real life.

I would end my reaction of this RP K12 Proposal in an optimistic way… “…Education is an unending change. So, be it, as it is being desired either by the minority or by the majority; it is now the chance for us to do our part in the fine tuning and upgrading of our education today for a better life in the future”.

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