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## Proposed Solutions to the Issues in Hiring and Promotion of Teachers and Principals

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### ABSTRACT

This position paper looks at the moral dilemma in the school about students' perceived success and teachers' and principals' qualifications. The dilemma arises when an unlicensed teacher and non-principal test passer may lower the standard or level up the standard. This paper identified existing tensions and potential solutions to help mitigate conflict of interest scenarios. The paper begins with an overview of existing regulations and guidelines. It then discussed areas that were observed to have issues and problems including hiring staff, promoting employees, and ethics training programs. Finally, this paper recommended strategies for managing conflicts that are deemed necessary to address this ever-growing problem. The goal is to provide a comprehensive set of best practices that can be incorporated into organizations to ensure that hiring and promotion processes can lead to greater progress in the school and the community.

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

It is horrifying that basic education schools both private and public clamor for high achieving students and pass several national and international tests (e.g., NAT, PISA, TIMSS), yet some of the school heads of the school and some teachers are not even passers of National Qualifying Examination for School Heads (NQESH) and Licensure Examination for Professional Teachers (LEPT). It is a conflict of interest and a conflict of responsibilities. Thereby reducing the output of all areas of the teaching and learning process of the school.

The Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET), or Board Examination for Teachers as it is commonly known, has an incredibly large number of examinees each year. To meet the growing interest in becoming a certified teaching professional, the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) holds the test twice annually. Anyone wishing to pass must obtain an average score of 75% or higher and not fall below 50% on any given section. Under the Republic Act 7836 or the Philippine Teachers Professionalization Act of 1994, nobody may teach or offer to teach in the Philippines or be placed in any teaching role without first obtaining a valid certificate of registration and professional license from the PRC (Agarry, 2022).

To be appointed or reclassified as a Principal or Assistant Principal in elementary and secondary public schools, one must pass the National Qualifying Examination for School Heads (NQESH), more commonly termed the "Principals' Test," which is specified by various governing documents like Department of Education (DepEd) Order (DO) No. 42, s. 2007, DO 97, s. 2011, and DO 41, s. 2016. Those seeking to become school administrators should be eligible to take the NQESH, providing that, as of March 31, 2022, all qualifications and experience requirements are satisfied within the parameters specified in Department Order (DO) 39, s. 2007 (Modified Qualification Standards for Positions of Head Teachers and Principals). These criteria include: having one year's experience as a Head Teacher; two years as a teacher-in-Charge; two years as a Master Teacher; or five years of teaching experience – either being a teacher III or possessing a similar pay grade, being an existing public-school teacher with management & supervisory skills in its DepEd recognized private institution or CHED recognized higher learning institution; or possessing a combination of the above experiences.

The purpose of this position paper is to detail some observed issues and problems in recruitment and promotion in the DepEd of the Philippines. This paper has provided some viewed solutions to the issues for the improvement of the recruitment and promotion and overall well-being of the schools. There is no harm intended to the department since these problems are observed and experienced by the author and both preservice and in-service teachers. The problems should be discussed and detailed to the public and one of the avenues in this paper.

## **2. METHODS**

This article is a position paper. Position papers are scholarly articles or writings from influential individuals or organizations advocating a particular point of view, line of action, opinion, or program. According to EUnetHTA, a position paper aims to present a systematic way of detecting gaps and forming research proposals based on a thorough evaluation of related literature, which is structured into two parts. The first part is the issues and problems with hiring and promotion and the second is recommendations for improvements. The key contrast between a descriptive or narrative research paper and a position paper is the emphasis on argumentation - whereas, in a research paper, you would simply present facts,

with a position paper you go further to detail and justify your point of view (Nandiyanto & Azizah, 2022).

The literature used in this position was found in news outlets, published works, and government websites. There is no randomization of the articles since the topic needs sources that can support and contrast the arguments presented. However, only article depositories venues like news outlets, published works, and government websites are utilized since they were verified and confirmed by the author and publisher.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1. Issues in Hiring and Promotion

It is difficult to predict what kind of effect the use of teachers who are not licensed may have on a school. Depending on the specific circumstances, it could range from positive to negative. On one hand, hiring unlicensed teachers may allow a school to recruit more experienced educators for a lower cost and provide students with increased individualized attention. On the other hand, Spear-Swerling and Cheesman (2012) argued that 2012 unlicensed teachers may lack the necessary qualifications and expertise to effectively teach at the school level, potentially leading to poorly designed curricula and under-prepared students. Non-licensed teachers may lack formal training in the required subject matter and may not have access to current research or the latest teaching strategies. This could lead to lower student achievement and test scores.

Moreover, if a principal does not pass the principal's test, it could have both positive and negative effects on the school and its students. On the positive side, Bartanen *et al.* (2019) argued that it can give students a better understanding of what is expected of them to be successful in their tests. This can help foster good study habits and provide the motivation needed to work hard for success. Furthermore, having an experienced principal who has failed but was able to get back up again, can provide a role model for students struggling with their tests or feeling discouraged by failure. On the other hand, depending on how much emphasis is placed on these tests within a school district, failing may lead to scrutiny from parents and administrators over how the school is being run. It could also leave open the possibility that if changes aren't made soon enough, there may be decisions about when or if another assessment should be attempted by the same principle. At worst, Nasreen (2019) exclaimed that this may damage morale and disrupt the day-to-day environment in which educators are attempting to promote learning among students.

In the last five years, there has been a greater demand for the Department of Education (DepEd) for school heads who pass the NQESH (Fadillah *et al.*, 2019). There is no data from DepEd on the number of school heads without certificates on NQESH. It is known that this problem will persist in the coming years as fewer teachers pass the NQESH. The recent result of the NQESH last December 2018 has not come in a good light as only 24.75% passed the test. This is 5,111 passers out of 20,653 takers. Although higher than the 2015 result of 11.82% passing percentage. Meanwhile, the same trend is happening in the LEPT. This only suggests that very few teachers are qualified as professionals based on the board examination result.

Another problem is that there are multiple chances for the non-passer to take the LEPT and NQESH. If a non-passer passes the LEPT or NQESH after 10 times trying, the non-passers percentage rate of passing is only 10% which can imply that he has only 10% of the professional qualities of being a professional teacher or it can even be out of luck. Adding to the problem, private schools hire non-passer teachers because they can be paid lowly. This is also happening in the DepEd's senior high school program wherein non-LEPT passers were

able to teach some specialized subjects. They were given a 5-year moratorium to comply with the said requirement.

Although I do not consider them incapable of doing the tasks required, it is still imperative that they must qualify for the position they held. The root of the problem is that they were hired and accepted without the qualification. Hence, it is a must that there must be a tightening protocol in the hiring process.

### **3.2. Recommendations for Improvement**

The DepEd's and other private schools' answer to the shortage of qualified school principals and teachers is a short-term one. There should be a comprehensive way of looking into the different aspects of the problem. One way to do this is to provide two schemes for the school head to become a principal, one is a certificate program and the second is a licensure program with its corresponding salary scheme. The National Educators' Academy of the Philippines (NEAP) can adopt the mechanism provided by the Wallace Foundation. The foundation cited that the principal's test should be reliable and tested and should be adaptable to different purposes and contexts. The DepEd should stop hiring teachers who are non-passers of any professional board program of the Professional Regulation Commission. Republic Act No. 10533 or the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 said that the DepEd should determine the necessary hiring standards for hiring the expert. Can we call a non-member of a professional board an expert? It is definitely, a no and DepEd, therefore, is violating the law.

In promoting teachers from teacher 1 to teacher 3 or even up to master teacher 3, it was observed that the subject expertise of teachers is not tested thoroughly. Jumping from teacher 1 to teacher 3 requires a teacher to be more expert on his subject matter and fully equipped with all the competencies needed. This can only be done by a paper and pencil test to candidate teachers for promotion. Levelling of teachers can be fully justified if one knows that he passed a subject matter test. This should be much heavier if a teacher wanted to become a master teacher.

There should also be limitations to the number of times a prospective school head and teacher can take the examination. Takers who pass an exam on their 10th time or more are not reflective of his/her understanding of the teaching-learning process but are out of luck. Repeat testing can lead to the occurrence of false positives and undermine the main objectives of the licensure exam (Geving *et al.*, 2005). A person passing the test once out of many times has no validity.

These positions and recommendations are made to uphold what we are asking from our students. The improvements we want, like higher academic achievement and positive school results, are likely to happen if teachers and their school heads are qualified, certified, and licensed. It is a conflict to ask these from the students when teachers and their school heads are not even hold up to the best standards. The option that teachers and their school heads may do is to lower the standard. However, Republic Act No. 10533 mentioned that the quality of education our students should receive is at par with international standards which may suggest a violation of the law.

Moreover, the root of all of these problems should have been addressed if our career pathway as citizens was comprehensively planned by DepEd and our parents. Although students took the National Career Assessment Examination (NCAE) to have their career aptitude and guidance for a track in senior high school, the result is recommendatory. The result is not extensively utilized. It is neither used for university entrance qualification nor employment purposes. The effect of this will be career mismatch and job mismatch (Cardinas,

2020). It can even be the reason why a teacher cannot pass the LEPT because his/her soft and hard skills are not aligned with the teaching field. Academic performance is correlated to the NCAE results for students taking STEM and HUMSS-related courses. This implies that the NCAE result can be a predictor of future exams that students should take. Furthermore, the government provides minimal assistance to the school to foster the skills of the students as mentioned in the students' NCAE results.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The hiring and promotion of teachers can be a challenging process, but there are steps that schools and districts can take to improve their hiring and promotion practices. By investing in recruitment efforts, establishing fair and objective criteria for selecting candidates, considering experience and licensure requirements, evaluating current teachers' performance, creating written policies that govern the process of selection and promotion, training administrators on effective strategies for hiring, reviewing job applications thoroughly before making decisions, and communicating expectations to potential hires, administrators can increase the odds of selecting exceptional educators who will remain in their roles long-term to positively impact the school community. The position of this paper is a comprehensive review of the recruitment and hiring being undertaken in the DepEd and considers the extensive utilization of the NCAE results for college and employment intake. The problem of recruiting highly qualified teachers who will become school heads in the future can be solved if their career matches their aptitude test results. Also, school heads can be certified or licensed or both with their corresponding salary schedule.

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#### 6. AUTHORS' NOTE

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