



School Improvement and Safety Plan for Limited Face-to-Face Classes

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ABSTRACT

As public schools nationwide in the country take a huge step of reintroducing face-to-face classes amidst pandemic and the public health situation, the study investigated the school improvement and safety plan for the limited face-to-face classes of eighty-nine (89) randomly selected public schools from Divisions of Camarines Sur and Albay, both elementary and secondary schools for the school year 2021-2022 and assessed how they effectively implemented the plan. The study utilized the descriptive-survey research method and conducted from February - July 2022. The data were collected using a developed survey questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Results showed that the implementation of safety protocols and standards in public schools during the start of the school year was evident as they were prepared and organized prior to the conduct of classes. It is also revealed that safety protocols and standards were in consonance with the mandates of the Department of Health and observed among the public schools. Thus, it was concluded that public schools conducted and effectively implemented as per observed from the results of the school improvement and safety plans and protocols for limited face-to-face classes.

Keywords: School; Plan; Improvement; Face-to-face Classes; Pandemic, Adaptation;

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the Dep. Ed. Memorandum No. 85, s. 2021 entitled "PREPARATIONS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EXPANDED PHASE OF FACE-TO-FACE CLASSES", one hundred (100) public schools nationwide started the implementation of limited face-to-face on November 15, 2021. Before implementing the program, participating schools should have met the standards set in DepEd-DOH JMC No. 1, s. 2021. Physical structures of schools were properly set up, WASH facilities and supplies, personal protective equipment (PPEs), health and safety protocols, learning materials, class programs, and human resource requirements as required in the JMC; coordinated with the concerned government agencies, partners and community members to discuss their respective participation in the limited face-to-face classes; secured free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) with the necessary documentation for schools in IP communities. It is deemed necessary to involve the community in the school reopening process and ensure local coordination mechanisms with Barangay Health Emergency Response Team (BHRT)





and Local Government Units (LGUs) for referral system, contact tracing, school traffic management, disinfection, contingency school lockdown, among others; coordinate with LGUs to fast-track vaccination of teachers, school personnel, and eligible learners and their household members; strengthened advocacy and campaign programs for vaccination of teachers, and eligible learners; adjust class programs according to their Alternative Work Arrangements (AWA) and conducted an orientation of teaching personnel on possible changes in their AWA; Set up mechanisms to respond to mental health concerns of learners and teachers; oriented learners, parents, guardians, teaching and nonteaching personnel, external stakeholders, and LGU of the eligibility for participation, existing protocols, mechanisms, and procedures needed in the conduct of face-to-face classes. Orientation should take place two weeks prior to the conduct of face-to-face classes to allow parents/guardians to help children to mentally and emotionally adapt and cope with the transition. During the orientation, the school observed health and safety protocols and simulated the implementation protocols among school personnel to identify possible implementation issues and discuss possible scenarios during the actual conduct of advanced face-to-face classes.

Relative thereto, the Department of Education (DepEd), in its commitment to ensure learning continuity and to protect the safety, health, and well-being of learners, teachers, and DepEd personnel amid the COVID-19 Pandemic, issues the School Contingency Plan Manual for the Implementation of Limited Face to Face Classes to support schools in mitigating the impact of an emergency associated with COVID-19. The Manual aims to capacitate schools on the processes to manage situations in which a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case or close contact with the aforementioned cases are detected within and/or outside school premises.

To date, the Department of Education (DepEd) has released the guidelines on the School Calendar and Activities for School Year 2022-2023 in accordance with its commitment to the resumption of 5 days of in-person classes. Signed by Vice President and Secretary Sara Z. Duterte on Monday, DepEd Order No. 034, series of 2022, sets the start of classes on August 22 and will end on July 7, 2023. There will be 203 school days or as may be determined by further issuance/s in case of changes in the school calendar due to unforeseen circumstances.

In the issuance, DepEd also provides direction and guidance in the re-opening of classes and the gradual introduction of 5 days of in-person learning modality classes. According to DO 034, s. 2022, there will be no inspections, tools, or any additional requirements to re-open schools and implement five (5) days of in-person classes will be required, except for the compliance with the usual pre-pandemic regulatory permits and licenses, as required by law or ordinances.

DepEd only prescribed the options of 5 days person in-person classes, blended learning modality, and full distance learning until October 31, 2022. Starting November 2, 2022, all public and private schools shall have transitioned to 5 days of in-person classes. No school shall be allowed to implement purely distance learning or blended learning except for those implementing Alternative Delivery Modes as provided in DO 21, s. 2019 (Policy Guidelines on the K to 12 Basic Education Program) and DO 01, s. 2022 (Revised Policy Guidelines on Homeschooling Program).

Meanwhile, the learning intervention for Alternative Learning System (ALS) will officially start on the said opening date, while the program duration will depend on the learner's educational background or existing knowledge level before enrolment in the ALS program.



In relation to the school opening, the implementing guidelines on the School Calendar and Activities for SY 2022-2023 will apply to public and private elementary and secondary schools, including Community Learning Centers (CLCs) nationwide. Private schools, state/local universities, and colleges may implement the calendar. They may also start classes not earlier than the first Monday of June and not later than the last day of August. Enrollment will be held from July 25 to August 22, and Brigada Eskwela and Oplan Balik Eskwela will be conducted from August 1 to 26 and on August 15, respectively.

Furthermore, the Basic Education Development Plan (BEDP) 2030, Learning Recovery and Continuity Plan (LRCP), and Classroom-based and System Assessments will guide schools in effectively delivering the K to 12 Basic Education Program amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The pandemic greatly affects the competence of young learners today. Most of them cannot go with the flowing system of the implemented modular type of learning hence our educators themselves as the best to make the learners equipped with the knowledge that they must have to level up their competence in academics despite the pandemic.

In the last portion of this pandemic, face-to-face classes are now on their way to being back. Many problems that educators and learners may have to overcome. Progressive face-to-face classes in another new normal form of education that is considered not the same as we have experienced during the pre-pandemic era of this Covid-19. Even in online learning, the motivation to learn must be adopted by the learners. During the pandemic time motivation in teaching is the best and most relevant way to introduce to learners in order to be able them participate in the teaching-and-learning process (Avila,2020)

Based on the study of Pravat, 2020 that the educational system in the country has affected students' education meanwhile, this pandemic turn our teaching style instantly in the utilization of technology, and our educators have worked as a catalyst for educational institutions to grow and opt for platforms with technologies, which have not been used before. The education sector has been fighting to survive the crises with a different approach and digitizing the challenges to wash away the threat of the pandemic. Just like in the study conducted by Avila, 2022 the new teaching style in this current situation is to allow learners to use a mobile phone with the internet to use social media due to demand under distance learning. Meanwhile, some other places had transitioned to online classes due to their necessity while there are some schools that cannot cope with the new teaching style because of their localization (Khan, 2021)

According to Reynolds, et al. (2011) blended learning with the combination of the different strategies in merging learning is the most effective learning situation for students. Although during this pandemic most of the students are thirsty for total quality education blended learning even this time is the most needed and effective.

Moorhouse (2020) describes the adaptations the tutor made, and the challenges faced adapting to the new mode of delivery. This is found that face-to-face learning is more effective than any other mode of learning especially that students in basic education. The school must develop and find more research that helps the school or the institution to improve so that the learners will learn better Heck, et. Al, 2011.

Above all this, young children are the most in danger of the collateral damage of the pandemic in the field of education. Wasmult (2020) believes that children had deprived of all the necessary improvements for their development as young learners. This is why this new face-to-face learning shall be the next chapter for young children to cope with all the competencies they need to improve such as cognitive, social interactions, and many more.





Luckily, most schools now a day has their total innovation and improvement to make the easy of learning learners. The government allocated funds for the necessary things to give a smooth transition from distance learning to this progressive face-to-face classes. And these funds must be utilized to give equal opportunity to the learners to be benefited from the new form of education at this last point of a pandemic.

The school that will be participating in this must make sure that the learners are safe as well as the teachers who will be handling the subjects. Planning is a very important component in the positive implementation of this program. The school administrator must conduct a prior investigation of the local government and other stakeholders to help the schools and the learners effectively enjoy face-to-face classes. This is risky but because of the participating agencies, everything can be done efficiently. The Manual shall serve as a guide for schools in crafting and activating their contingency plan. Recognizing the critical role of various levels of governance and institutions, the Manual contains case scenarios that may affect school operations and the required actions to be undertaken by each stakeholder for the safe closure and reopening of schools.

That is why this study will investigate the school improvement and safety plan for the limited face-to-face classes in some schools and will be evaluated how they effectively implement the face-to-face classes.

METHOD

This study utilized a descriptive research design to determine the school improvement and safety plan for the limited face-to-face classes in some public elementary and secondary schools for the S/Y 2021-2022 and will be evaluated how they effectively implement the face-to-face classes during the covid-19 pandemic. During the data gathering process, there were a total of 89 randomly selected schools that served as the respondents of the study. Therefore, the researchers used a total enumeration of the 89 teacher-respondent connected from different schools. The study was conducted from February 2022 until July 2022. To collect the data, the researchers developed their questionnaires through an online survey and distributed them using Google forms, then it was sent to the respondent's email and messengers to easily access the data. The data collected were recorded, tabulated, and analyzed using descriptive statistics

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Perspectives of Schools about the quality of Protocols and standards in classroom improvement with regards to the limited opening of the face-to-face classes

Table 1 shows the respondents' perspectives about the quality Protocols and standards in classroom improvement implemented with regards to the limited opening of the face-to-face classes.

Table 1: School Improvement

Indicators		Mean Interpretation
1. The school has secured the support of LGUs (Barangay, Municipality, City, Province) through a resolution or a letter of support.	4.87	Very Much Evident
2. The school has secured written consent from the parents/ guardians who will participate in the limited face-to-face classes	5.00	Very Much Evident
3. The school has mobilized resources and support from community stakeholders to meet the standards of health and safety protocols.	4.84	Very Much Evident
4. The school has conducted simulation activities among school personnel regarding protocols and routines to replicate and discuss	4.92	Very Much Evident



Indicators		Mean Interpretation
possible scenarios during the actual conduct office-to-face classes.		
5. The school has implemented an Alternative Work Arrangement necessary to deliver quality basic education in a safe learning environment to learners.	4.88	Very Much Evident
6. The school has established mechanisms inside the classroom to ensure zero to minimal risk of COVID-19 transmission to the learners.	4.91	Very Much Evident
7. The school has set up clear and easy-to-understand signages, preferably in local languages and Braille, and mechanisms to strengthen observance of health protocols and protective measures.	4.81	Very Much Evident
9. The school has prepared an orientation session for learners, parents, guardians, teaching and non-teaching personnel, external stakeholders, and LGU on the eligibility criteria for participation, existing protocols, mechanisms, and procedures needed in the conduct of the limited face-to-face classes.	4.94	Very Much Evident
9. The school has prepared an orientation session for learners, parents, guardians, teaching and non-teaching personnel, external stakeholders, and LGU on the eligibility criteria for participation, existing protocols, mechanisms, and procedures needed in the conduct of the limited face-to-face classes.	4.94	Very Much Evident
10. The school has provided an appropriate learning and development support plan in providing better quality basic education services.	4.82	Very Much Evident
11. The school has developed strategies for providing psychosocial support to the learners, teachers, and personnel.	4.73	Very Much Evident
12. The school has established close coordination with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Case managers of those learners who are marginalized; Other partner agencies and organizations such as National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA).	4.51	Very Much Evident
AVERAGE	4.84	

Based on the 4.84 average mean of the data in Table 1, the respondents highly agreed that the protocols and standards in school improvement of schools during the opening of the limited face-to-face classes are very much evident. It is also revealed that the school has secured written consent from the parents/ guardians who will participate in the limited face-to-face classes. The consent form includes key considerations of stakeholders and identifies resources required for the effective and efficient transition of learners from distance learning to expanded face-to-face classes. It is also very much evident that the school has prepared an orientation session for learners, parents, guardians, teaching and non-teaching personnel, external stakeholders, and LGU on the eligibility criteria for participation, existing protocols, mechanisms, and procedures needed in the conduct of the limited face-to-face classes. The orientation session must be given importance to access more information about the protocols and standards of the school.

Also, it is very much evident that the school has conducted simulation activities among school personnel regarding protocols and routines to replicate and discuss possible scenarios during the actual conduct of face-to-face classes. Simulation of classes provides crucial procedure analysis which is easily verified, communicated, and understood by everyone.

The school had set up clear and easy-to-understand signages, preferably in local languages and Braille, and mechanisms to strengthen observance of health protocols and





protective measures. It is very much evident for schools to ensure that the students will be able to continue their education in a safe and healthy environment. Learners need to understand what are the rules to follow by providing the right information and understanding about the COVID-19 virus, it is an important step on how we can protect our learners and others, these warnings in school show procedures and protocols. The school had also developed strategies in providing psychosocial support to the learners, teachers, and personnel "It shall also guide the participants to practice positive coping strategies". It also shows that the school had established close coordination with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Case managers of those learners who are marginalized; Other partner agencies and organizations such as National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA). All indicators that schools have provided in order to implement the upcoming limited face-to-face classes. Each indicator in the table shows that coordination with the LGU's approval of parents, the community, the school's stakeholders, personnel, faculty, the students and other allied forces are fully prepared and guided by the proper safety and health protocols as mandated by the inter-agency task force (IATF) as preparation for the limited face-to-face classes. This table also shows that the level of readiness with school improvement mentioned is very much evident which translates to a high positive response.

Safety plans of the schools in the implementation of limited face-to-face classes

Table 2 presents the schools' readiness on the safety plans of the school in the implementation of limited face-to-face classes as mandated by DepEd-DOH Joint Memorandum Circular 001, s. 2021

TABLE 2: Safety plans of the schools in the implementation of limited face-to-face classes.

Indicator	Mean	Interpretation
1. The school has established safe entrance and exit procedures for teachers, students, non-teaching personnel, and social visitors.	4.99	Very Much Evident
2. The school has established contact tracing procedures/ tools for school-goers.	4.98	Very Much Evident
3. The school has mobilized the School COVID-19 DRMM team that will take charge in ensuring effective implementation of the school health and safety protocols that are in place and are observed during the preparation and implementation of limited face-to-face classes.	4.96	Very Much Evident
4. The school has set a proper sanitation and hygiene facility for school-goers	4.94	Very Much Evident
5. The school has ensured regular sanitation and disinfection of school facilities, furniture, and equipment.	4.91	Very Much Evident
6. The school has ensured a proper disposal system of infectious wastes, such as used tissues and masks, in non-contact receptacles.	4.84	Very Much Evident
7. The school has a proactive COVID-19 local hotline/ desk or any similar local mechanisms that connects and coordinates to the hospitals, testing facilities, and LGUs.	4.87	Very Much Evident
8. The school has followed a decision model and contingency plan for reclosing and reopening the school in case of COVID-19 resurgence in the community.	4.87	Very Much Evident



9.The school has secured sufficient supply of personal protective equipment and gears for learners and school personnel.	4.72	Very Much Evident
10. The school has ensured that the available sanitation and disinfection materials are approved by the Philippine Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and sufficient supply of sanitation and disinfection materials for strategic school locations.	4.78	Very Much Evident
11. The school has established a clear procedure or referral system for COVID-19 confirmed and suspected personnel and learners.	4.85	Very Much Evident
12 The school has established a clear contact tracing and quarantine system for the close contacts of COVID-19 confirmed positive cases.	4.90	Very Much Evident
13.The school has ensured participation in school-based services which includes but is not limited to feeding and nutrition programs, immunizations, Mental Health and Psychological Support (MHPSS), prevention of Violence against Children (VAC) (i.e., bullying from social stigma) and other health services.	4.80	Very Much Evident
Average	4.87	

Table 2 shows that the schools have established safe entrances and exit procedures for teachers, students, non-teaching personnel, and social visitors, contact tracing procedures/ tools for school-goers have mobilized the school COVID-19 DRMM team that will take charge in ensuring effective implementation of the school health and safety protocols that are in place and are observed during the preparation and implementation of limited face-to-face classes. Furthermore, the schools have also secured sufficient supply of personal protective equipment and gears for learners and school personnel. It is very much evident that the schools have ensured the available sanitation and disinfection materials which are approved by the Philippine Food and Drug Administration (FDA). They ensured to provide sufficient supplies of sanitation and disinfection materials for strategic school locations and participation in school-based services which includes but is not limited to feeding and nutrition programs, immunizations, Mental Health and Psychological Support (MHPSS), prevention of Violence against Children (VAC) (i.e., bullying from social stigma) and other health services.

It is very much evident that it illustrates the safety plan of the schools in the implementation of limited face to face. This is also in accordance with the CHED-DOH Joint Memorandum Circular (JMC) No. 2021-001 or the Guidelines for the Gradual Reopening of Campuses of Higher Education Institutions for limited face-to-face classes during the COVID-19 Pandemic and the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF). For the benefit of the students, faculty, and all personnel the school has also formulated its health and safety protocols such as proper regulation of entrance and exits for all students, faculty & personnel, proper sanitation & disinfection guidelines, regulation of contact tracing and others which also mirrors the guidelines set by IATF and DOH to help combat the spread of the virus at school and other public places. These protocols are received with an average mean of 4.87 which is a very evident positive rating among the respondents.



**Correlation between the protocols and standards in classroom improvement and safety plans of the schools in the implementation of limited face-to-face classes**

Table 3: presents the respondent's responses about the correlation between the protocols and standards in classroom improvement and safety plans during the new normal School Year, as provided by the schools in the implementation of limited face-to-face classes.

Indicators	Correlation	Significance
Safety protocols and standards in classroom improvement implemented with regards to the limited opening of the face-to-face classes	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.700** .000 89
Safety plans of the schools in the implementation of limited face-to-face classes	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 89
		** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 shows the two variables which are the safety protocols and standards in classroom improvement and safety plans of the schools in the implementation of limited face-to-face classes. Table 3 reveals that safety protocols and standards in classroom improvement have statistical significance.000 out of N 89 respondents' while the safety plans of the school's significance resulted in .000 also. The protocols and standards in classroom improvement and safety plans of the schools in the implementation of limited face-to-face classes resulted to correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) which shows that there is significant correlation between the variables.

The aforementioned results made the researchers conclude that school's readiness on the opening of the limited face-to-face classes have significant correlation between the two indicators. This is because all schools that participated the opening of limited face-to-face classes follows the rules mandated by the Department of Health and Education.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to identify the protocols and standards in school improvement implemented with regards to the limited opening of the face-to-face classes and the safety plans of the schools in the implementation of limited face to face classes. Based on the quantitative analysis with the different variables, elementary and secondary schools were evaluated on how they effectively implemented the face-to-face classes during the covid-19 pandemic.

In connection with the respondents' perspectives about the quality Protocols and standards in classroom improvement implemented with regards to the limited opening of the face-to-face classes, respondents highly agreed that the protocols and standards in school improvement of schools during the opening of the limited face-to-face classes are very much evident. It is also revealed that the school has secured written consent from the parents/guardians who will participate in the limited face-to-face classes. It is also very much evident that the school has prepared an orientation session for learners, parents, guardians, teaching and non-teaching personnel, external stakeholders, and LGU on the eligibility



criteria for participation, existing protocols, mechanisms, and procedures needed in the conduct of the limited face-to-face classes.

Based on the Safety plans of the schools in the implementation of limited face-to-face classes. Schools have established safe entrances and exit procedures for teachers, students, non-teaching personnel, and social visitors, contact tracing procedures/ tools for school-goers have mobilized the school COVID-19 DRMM team that will take charge in ensuring effective implementation of the school health and safety protocols that are in place and are observed during the preparation and implementation of limited face-to-face classes. Thus, It is very much evident that it illustrates the safety plan of the schools in the implementation of limited face to face.

To better understand the implications of these results, future studies could address the variables of this study.

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