



SCHOOL-COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PRACTICES IN THE CONVERSION OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS TO PUBLIC INTEGRATED SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

This study determined the level of school–community engagement practices in the conversion of elementary schools to public integrated schools in a city division in the province of Albay, Philippines, as basis for the preparation of a contextualized guidebook on strengthening socio-economic support through school–community partnership. Using the descriptive survey method, data were gathered from 133 respondents — eight (8) school heads, forty (40) teachers, forty (40) parents, forty (40) barangay officials, and five (5) jurors — from eight newly converted integrated public elementary schools, through a validated researcher-made questionnaire-checklist. Findings revealed that all six engagement domains were Always Practiced, with teacher qualifications obtaining the highest weighted mean (3.79) and socio-economic support the lowest (3.51). The F-test (ANOVA) yielded a computed value of 5.218, greater than the tabular value of 2.621 at 24 degrees of freedom and the 0.05 level of significance, indicating a significant difference in the level of engagement among the six variables. Staff qualifications emerged as the most influential factor shaping engagement, while curriculum-related factors were rated the least influential. Facilities and structural

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support were identified as key strengths, particularly the construction of additional classrooms, while notable gaps were found in livelihood support for parents, budget consultation, and the alignment of enrolment and curriculum decisions with community realities. These results informed the development of a Contextualized Guidebook on Strengthening Socio-economic Support through School–Community Partnership, which a panel of five jurors rated 4.88, Very Much Acceptable. The study recommends the institutionalization of livelihood and skills-training programs for parents, the strengthening of transparent and participatory budgeting, closer alignment of curriculum and enrolment planning with community needs, and the adoption of the guidebook by newly converted integrated schools to sustain and standardize school–community engagement practices.

Keywords: *school–community engagement, school conversion, integrated schools, socio-economic support, contextualized guidebook*

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INTRODUCTION

School–community engagement is central to the successful conversion of elementary schools into public integrated schools, as it fosters collaboration, shared responsibility, and improved learner outcomes during periods of structural and instructional change (Epstein, 2011). Sustained participation from parents, local leaders, and stakeholders, supported by mechanisms such as Brigada Eskwela and School-Based Management (SBM), helps ensure that the transition to an integrated basic-education model is holistic and sustainable despite the resource constraints typically faced by rural and semi-urban public schools.

Philippine education policy provides a strong legal foundation for this transformation. DECS Order No. 91, s. 1999 laid down the foundational guidelines on the establishment and operation of integrated schools, facilitating structural adjustments in basic education. DepEd Order No. 21, s. 2019 strengthened school-based management and stakeholder participation by emphasizing shared governance and accountability, while DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2014 governs the establishment, merging, and conversion of public schools and underscores child protection and safe learning environments as expanded grade levels are introduced. Republic Act No. 7160, the Local Government Code, and Republic Act No. 9155, the Governance of Basic Education Act, together reinforce the role of local government units and communities in supporting education, while DepEd Order No. 007, s. 2024 and DepEd Memorandum No. 063, s. 2025 provide more recent operational guidance on the conversion process. Collectively, these issuances constitute the legal and administrative scaffolding for examining governance, safety, community engagement, and quality assurance in newly integrated schools.

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Understanding how schools and communities interact during this transition is therefore essential. Research on school integration and reform indicates that conversion involves far more than a change in structure; it requires systemic redesign that connects academic, social, emotional, and community development (Domenech et al., 2021; Anderson-Butcher et al., 2022; Knox & Garnett, 2024). Community-based frameworks such as the Community Collaboration Model emphasize shared decision-making, inclusive practice, and the alignment of school goals with community needs, while context-sensitive partnerships have been shown to be crucial for sustaining both academic and socio-emotional support throughout the transition (Hands, 2023).

A second body of literature underscores that successful integration depends on formal engagement structures, strong leadership, and effective governance. Institutional mechanisms such as memoranda of agreement, SBM processes, and structured community dialogue are needed to sustain complex conversion efforts (Sapanik & Brown, 2021; Redondo-Sama et al., 2025; Laut, 2025). Studies on Philippine school conversions further show that while national policy provides the framework, success ultimately depends on data-driven strategies, resource mobilization, and leadership that builds trust among stakeholders (See, 2024, 2025; Roque, 2023; Bucud, 2024; Rosete et al., 2024; Dagrosa, 2025).

At the same time, research also documents that engagement is uneven across settings because of limited transparency, unequal participation, and socio-economic barriers (Ericson, 2025; Freking, 2024; Berhanu & Naidoo, 2024; Truwit, 2025). Rural school conversions in particular face distinct challenges that call for localized strategies to sustain community

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involvement (Lambrecht, 2025; Limbert, 2025), and outcomes depend heavily on whether infrastructure and long-term family needs are addressed alongside access and overcrowding concerns (Garcia, 2020; See, 2025). Although these studies collectively illuminate school–community engagement, collaborative leadership, and community-school models, no study has specifically examined engagement practices in the conversion of public elementary schools to integrated schools within the present setting. This gap motivated the present study, which sought to generate contextualized, evidence-based insights to guide the Department of Education and local stakeholders in strengthening the conversion process.

This study was anchored on three complementary theories. Epstein's (1995) Theory of School–Family–Community Partnership frames engagement as a structured, shared responsibility built through communication, volunteering, decision-making, and collaboration. Homans' (1958) Social Exchange Theory explains why stakeholders sustain participation when they perceive mutual benefit, trust, and reciprocity. Lareau's (2010) Community Schools Transformation Theory positions schools as hubs of community life that integrate academic, social, and health services to meet learners' holistic needs. Taken together, these theories suggest that the conversion of an integrated public elementary school can transform its surrounding community into a dynamic, enabling environment for quality learning outcomes — a proposition this study empirically examined.

Specifically, this study aimed to determine the level of school–community engagement practices in the conversion of elementary schools to public integrated schools along: (a) socio-economic support, (b) teacher qualifications, (c) resource allocation, (d) community

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engagement, (e) promoting inclusivity, and (f) challenge resolution; to test whether a significant difference existed in the level of practice among these variables; to determine the factors that influence engagement along structural factors, staff qualifications, enrolment, curriculum, facilities, and budget and financial resources; to identify practices that could be recommended to strengthen and sustain engagement along these influencing factors; and to develop and evaluate the acceptability of a contextualized guidebook for strengthening socio-economic support through school–community partnership.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

This study used a descriptive research design employing a survey-questionnaire technique to examine the level of school–community engagement practices in the conversion of elementary schools to public integrated schools. The descriptive-survey method was appropriate because it allowed the systematic collection of information on existing practices and relationships without manipulating variables or establishing causal relationships (Best & Kahn, 2006; Creswell, 2014). Data were collected from school heads, teachers, parents, and barangay officials through a structured questionnaire-checklist that captured participation, resource use, and inclusivity, providing a clear picture of current engagement conditions during the ongoing conversion process.

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Locale and Respondents of the Study

The study was conducted in a city division in the province of Albay, involving eight (8) public elementary schools recently converted into integrated schools offering both elementary and junior high school under a single administration. These schools serve residential communities with diverse socio-economic backgrounds, where families rely largely on farming, small business, and local employment. The respondents consisted of eight (8) school heads and 125 stakeholders — 40 teachers, 40 parents, and 40 barangay officials — purposively drawn from the eight integrated schools, plus five (5) jurors who evaluated the acceptability of the contextualized guidebook, for a total of 133 respondents. Table 1 summarizes the distribution of respondents.

Distribution of Respondents of the Study

School	Teachers	Parents	Barangay Officials	School Heads	Total
A	5	5	5	1	16
B	5	5	5	1	16
C	5	5	5	1	16
D	5	5	5	1	16
E	5	5	5	1	16
F	5	5	5	1	16
G	5	5	5	1	16
H	5	5	5	1	16
Jurors	5	0	0	0	5

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School	Teachers	Parents	Barangay Officials	School Heads	Total
Total	45	40	40	8	133

Note. Questionnaire retrieval was 100 percent across all eight schools and the panel of jurors.

Research Instrument

A researcher-developed questionnaire-checklist served as the primary instrument. Part I measured the level of practice of school–community engagement across six criteria — socio-economic support, teacher qualifications, resource allocation, community engagement, promoting inclusivity, and challenge resolution — using a four-point scale (4 = Always Practiced to 1 = Rarely Practiced). Part II examined the factors influencing engagement along structural factors, staff qualifications, enrolment, curriculum, facilities, and budget and financial resources, using a four-point scale of influence (4 = Highly Significant Influence to 1 = Slight Influence). Part III consisted of a checklist of recommended practices that respondents could select to strengthen and sustain engagement along the same influencing factors. A second instrument, a five-point Likert scale (5 = Very Much Acceptable to 1 = Poorly Acceptable), was used by five jurors to evaluate the acceptability of the resulting contextualized guidebook.

Validation of the Research Instrument

Prior to distribution, the instrument was pilot-tested with respondents from a nearby district not included in the main study to assess clarity and usability. Based on the dry-run results, items were simplified for clarity, Part III was reformatted into an easier checklist, and

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the distinctive features of DECS Order No. 91, s. 1999 were incorporated as one basis for identifying factors affecting integrated-school conversion. The revised instrument, along with the guidebook-evaluation tool, was reviewed by the thesis adviser, the Dean of the Graduate School, and a panel of jurors before actual administration.

Data Gathering Procedure

Formal approval was secured from the Schools Division Superintendent, endorsed by the Dean of the Graduate School, prior to data collection. Upon approval, requests were transmitted to the Public Schools District Supervisors and School Heads, and questionnaires were personally distributed and retrieved by the researcher in coordination with each school. Respondents signed a waiver of consent prior to participation. Codes rather than actual names were used for schools and locations to protect respondent confidentiality, and only aggregated data were analyzed and reported, consistent with ethical research standards and APA 7th-edition attribution of sources.

Statistical Treatment

Frequency counts and the percentage technique were used to describe respondent distribution and to summarize factors and recommended practices. The weighted mean was computed to determine the level of engagement practice and the extent of influence of each factor, interpreted using a four-point verbal scale for Parts I and II and a five-point scale for the guidebook's acceptability. The F-test, or one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), was used to determine whether a significant difference existed in the level of engagement among the

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six variables, with the decision rule that the null hypothesis of equal means is rejected when the computed F-value exceeds the tabular F-value at the 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents, analyzes, and interprets the data gathered to answer the objectives of the study. It is organized into three parts: (1) the level of school–community engagement practices along six variables and the test of significant difference among them; (2) the factors influencing engagement and the practices recommended to strengthen and sustain it; and (3) the contextualized guidebook and its acceptability as evaluated by a panel of jurors.

Level of School-Community Engagement Practices Along Socio-Economic Support

Table 2. Level of School-Community Engagement Practices in the Conversion of Elementary Schools to Public Integrated Schools Along Socio-Economic Support (N = 128)

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. Understands students' socioeconomic backgrounds to help plan community programs.	3.63	AP
2. Addresses the needs of learners from low-income families through support programs (e.g., feeding, donations, scholarships).	3.59	AP
3. Community members provide material or financial support to school projects when needed.	3.60	AP

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Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
4. Partners with community organizations to address poverty-related concerns.	3.55	AP
5. Provides parents with access to livelihood or skills-training programs through school–community partnerships.	3.18	OP
Weighted Average	3.51	AP

Legend: 3.50–4.00 Always Practiced (AP) | 2.50–3.49 Often Practiced (OP) | 1.50–2.49 Moderately Practiced (MP) | 1.00–1.49 Rarely Practiced (RP)

The strongest practice was understanding students' socioeconomic backgrounds to guide the planning of community programs (WM = 3.63, AP), while providing parents access to livelihood or skills-training programs through school–community partnerships obtained the lowest rating (WM = 3.18, OP). This pattern suggests that while immediate learner needs — feeding, donations, and scholarships — are well addressed, long-term family economic empowerment remains comparatively underdeveloped.

This implies that although integrated schools have made real progress in identifying and responding to students' immediate socio-economic needs, sustainable solutions that build household economic stability are still needed. Strengthening parent livelihood and skills-development programs could address the root causes of many students' challenges, since economically empowered families tend to support more stable and consistent school participation. The finding is consistent with Sepanik and Brown (2021), who found that linking schools with community resources supports successful integration, and points to a clear

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opportunity: expanding livelihood-oriented partnerships would convert an already strong socio-economic support system into one that also builds long-term family capacity.

Level of School-Community Engagement Practices Along Teacher Qualifications

Table 3. Level of School-Community Engagement Practices in the Conversion of Elementary Schools to Public Integrated Schools Along Teacher Qualifications (N = 128)

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. Participates in seminars or training related to community engagement.	3.77	AP
2. Integrates community-based activities in lessons.	3.83	AP
3. Demonstrates cultural awareness in dealing with community members.	3.75	AP
4. Communicates effectively with parents and guardians.	3.76	AP
5. Encourages parental involvement in classroom and school activities.	3.84	AP
Weighted Average	3.79	AP

Legend: 3.50–4.00 Always Practiced (AP) | 2.50–3.49 Often Practiced (OP) | 1.50–2.49 Moderately Practiced (MP) | 1.00–1.49 Rarely Practiced (RP)

Teacher qualifications obtained the highest overall weighted mean among the six variables. Encouraging parental involvement in classroom and school activities was rated highest (WM = 3.84, AP), while demonstrating cultural awareness in dealing with community members, though still Always Practiced, was comparatively lowest (WM = 3.75, AP). Teachers

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in the newly converted schools consistently participate in community-related seminars, integrate community-based activities into lessons, and communicate effectively with parents and guardians.

This indicates that well-qualified teachers are a critical enabler of consistent, active school–community collaboration and, together with the overall pattern of results, the strongest asset the surveyed schools currently possess. Continued investment in professional development — particularly on culturally responsive engagement — would help sustain and further strengthen this already high level of practice. This finding parallels Rosete et al. (2024), who found that regular parent–teacher collaboration, consistent communication, and supportive leadership enhance teaching efficacy and reinforce school–community relationships during periods of institutional change.

Level of School-Community Engagement Practices Along Resource Allocation

Table 4. Level of School-Community Engagement Practices in the Conversion of Elementary Schools to Public Integrated Schools Along Resource Allocation

(N = 128)

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. Provides funding for initiatives that help students and the community.	3.48	OP
2. Shares facilities with the community for educational or social purposes.	3.59	AP
3. Allows community stakeholders to contribute resources to the school.	3.52	AP

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Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
4. Ensures transparency in the use of funds from stakeholders.	3.56	AP
5. Consults the community on resource requirements prior to significant initiatives.	3.52	AP
Weighted Average	3.53	AP

Legend: 3.50–4.00 Always Practiced (AP) / 2.50–3.49 Often Practiced (OP) / 1.50–2.49

Moderately Practiced (MP) / 1.00–1.49 Rarely Practiced (RP)

Sharing school facilities with the community for educational or social purposes received the highest rating (WM = 3.59, AP), while providing funding for initiatives that directly benefit students and the community was rated lowest (WM = 3.48, OP) — the only indicator in this variable falling just short of the Always Practiced threshold.

This suggests that while resource allocation is characterized by strong collaboration, facility-sharing, and transparency, the comparatively lower emphasis on direct funding for student- and community-benefiting initiatives represents a gap that could limit overall impact if left unaddressed. Schools may need to prioritize strategic investments, targeted fundraising, and more efficient use of existing resources. This is consistent with Limbert (2025), who found that community involvement in school resources builds social trust but that the absence of dedicated internal budgets creates a structural gap; formal agreements and participatory budgeting were recommended as ways to close this gap.

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Level of School-Community Engagement Practices Along Community Engagement

Table 5. Level of School-Community Engagement Practices in the Conversion of Elementary Schools to Public Integrated Schools Along Community Engagement (N = 128)

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. Invites parents to regularly attend school meetings, orientations, and programs.	3.43	OP
2. Involves community members as volunteers in school activities (e.g., Brigada Eskwela).	3.60	AP
3. Local leaders support the school's programs and initiatives.	3.72	AP
4. Invites community members to participate in planning and decision-making processes.	3.66	AP
5. Recognizes community members who support the goals of the school.	3.70	AP
Weighted Average	3.62	AP

Legend: 3.50–4.00 Always Practiced (AP) | 2.50–3.49 Often Practiced (OP) | 1.50–2.49 Moderately Practiced (MP) | 1.00–1.49 Rarely Practiced (RP)

Local leaders' support for school programs and initiatives was rated highest (WM = 3.72, AP), while inviting parents to regularly attend school meetings, orientations, and programs was rated lowest (WM = 3.43, OP), the second indicator across the entire instrument falling below the Always Practiced range.

This implies that community engagement in the surveyed schools is anchored more in leadership support and volunteerism than in consistent parental meeting attendance, which

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may reflect scheduling conflicts, work obligations, or accessibility barriers rather than a lack of interest. Offering flexible meeting schedules, digital or multilingual access, and formalized volunteer or liaison programs could help translate strong leadership support into more consistent parental participation. This finding aligns with Garner (2025), who noted that inclusive, responsive practices — rather than availability alone — determine the depth of parental engagement in school activities.

Level of School-Community Engagement Practices Along Promoting Inclusivity

Table 6. Level of School-Community Engagement Practices in the Conversion of Elementary Schools to Public Integrated Schools Along Promoting Inclusivity (N = 128)

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. Promotes equal participation of all stakeholders.	3.73	AP
2. Community partnerships support students with special needs.	3.55	AP
3. Includes marginalized and minority groups in school programs.	3.63	AP
4. Designs school activities that are accessible to all community members.	3.73	AP
5. Welcomes and values parents and guardians so they feel respected and included.	3.77	AP
Weighted Average	3.68	AP

Legend: 3.50–4.00 Always Practiced (AP) | 2.50–3.49 Often Practiced (OP) | 1.50–2.49

Moderately Practiced (MP) | 1.00–1.49 Rarely Practiced (RP)

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Welcoming and valuing parents and guardians so that they feel respected and included obtained the highest rating (WM = 3.77, AP), while offering community partnerships that support students with special needs was rated lowest, though still Always Practiced (WM = 3.55, AP).

This indicates that the surveyed schools have cultivated a generally welcoming and participatory climate, but that structured support for learners with special needs — such as assistive technologies and formal referral partnerships with specialists — remains comparatively underdeveloped. The result is consistent with Anderson-Butcher et al. (2022), whose Community Collaboration Model emphasizes that inclusive engagement must move beyond a general welcoming culture toward targeted, service-oriented partnerships with health providers and community organizations to ensure that all learners, particularly those with special needs, receive adequate and sustained support.

Level of School-Community Engagement Practices Along Challenge Resolution

Table 7. Level of School-Community Engagement Practices in the Conversion of Elementary Schools to Public Integrated Schools Along Challenge Resolution (N = 128)

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. Collaborates with the community and school to find solutions to issues affecting students.	3.63	AP
2. Resolves conflict respectfully and effectively.	3.70	AP

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Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
3. Exercises open communication channels for reporting concerns.	3.70	AP
4. Considers community feedback in decision-making.	3.63	AP
5. Monitors regularly its engagement practices.	3.69	AP
Weighted Average	3.67	AP

Legend: 3.50–4.00 Always Practiced (AP) | 2.50–3.49 Often Practiced (OP) | 1.50–2.49 Moderately Practiced (MP) | 1.00–1.49 Rarely Practiced (RP)

Resolving conflict respectfully and effectively, and exercising open communication channels for reporting concerns, were both rated highest (WM = 3.70, AP), while collaborative problem-solving with the community and considering community feedback in decision-making, though still Always Practiced, were comparatively lower (WM = 3.63, AP).

This suggests that the surveyed schools have built a foundation of respectful, transparent conflict management, but that more formal and participatory mechanisms for incorporating community feedback into decisions could further strengthen trust. This is consistent with Ericson (2025), who emphasized that transparency, inclusiveness, and structured feedback systems are essential to building trust and collaboration during school transitions, suggesting that institutionalizing clear reporting and feedback channels would deepen the already strong culture of open communication found in this study.

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Comparative Overview of Engagement Practices Across the Six Variables

Table 8. Comparative Level of School-Community Engagement Practices Among the Six Variables

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. Socio-Economic Support	3.51	Always Practiced
2. Teacher Qualifications	3.79	Always Practiced
3. Resource Allocation	3.53	Always Practiced
4. Community Engagement	3.62	Always Practiced
5. Promoting Inclusivity	3.68	Always Practiced
6. Challenge Resolution	3.67	Always Practiced
Overall Weighted Mean	3.63	Always Practiced

Across all six variables, school–community engagement practices in the conversion of elementary schools to public integrated schools were consistently rated Always Practiced, ranging from 3.51 (Socio-Economic Support) to 3.79 (Teacher Qualifications). This narrow but meaningful spread — together with the ANOVA result presented next — indicates that although all engagement domains are being actively practiced, the depth and consistency of practice differ measurably across areas, with socio-economic support in particular lagging behind the other five domains.

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Significant Difference in the Level of School-Community Engagement Practices

Among the Variables

Table 9. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on the Level of School-Community Engagement Practices Among the Six Variables

Source of Variation	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	Computed F	Tabular F (0.05)
Between Groups	5	0.2673	0.0534	5.218	2.621
Within Groups	24	0.2459	0.0102		
Total	29	0.5132			

Note. Significant at the 0.05 level; the null hypothesis of equal means was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted.

The one-way ANOVA yielded a computed F-value of 5.218, which exceeded the tabular F-value of 2.621 at 24 degrees of freedom and the 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis of no significant difference was therefore rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was accepted: there is a significant difference in the level of school–community engagement practices among the six variables. This indicates that at least one engagement domain — in this case, socio-economic support — differs meaningfully from the others, underscoring the need for targeted, domain-specific strategies rather than a uniform approach to strengthening engagement. This finding is consistent with Sepanik and Brown (2021), who recommend a multi-level framework linking weaker engagement domains to specific policy reforms so that engagement shifts from isolated events toward a cohesive, institutionalized system.

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Factors Influencing School-Community Engagement Practices

Beyond determining the level of practice, the study examined the factors that influence school–community engagement along six dimensions: structural factors, staff qualifications, enrolment, curriculum, facilities, and budget and financial resources. Frequency and percentage were used to identify which specific indicators respondents perceived as most and least influential within each dimension.

Factors Influencing Engagement Along Structural Factors

Table 10. Factors Influencing School-Community Engagement Practices in the Conversion to Integrated Schools Along Structural Factors (N = 128)

Structural Factors Indicators	f	%
1. Organizational structure encourages community participation in school programs.	93	73
2. School heads and administrators build partnerships with people in the community.	93	73
3. School governing councils or committees strengthen school–community engagement.	91	71
4. Clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of school personnel supports community involvement in school decision-making.	90	70

The proactive role of school heads and administrators in building community partnerships, together with an organizational structure that encourages participation, emerged as the most influential structural indicators (93 respondents, 73%), while the clear

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definition of personnel roles and responsibilities in supporting community involvement was comparatively the least influential (90, 70%) — though still endorsed by a strong majority.

This suggests that hands-on, visible leadership currently does more to drive engagement than formal role definitions, pointing to an opportunity for schools to strengthen governance frameworks and clarify personnel responsibilities so that engagement is less dependent on individual leaders and more embedded in the school's organizational design. This is consistent with Knox and Garnett (2024), who found that collaborative leadership paired with functioning governing councils sustains partnerships and reinforces structural support for engagement over time.

Factors Influencing Engagement Along Staff Qualifications

Table 11. Factors Influencing School-Community Engagement Practices in the Conversion to Integrated Schools Along Staff Qualifications (N = 128)

Staff Qualifications Indicators	f	%
1. Teachers' professional qualifications.	109	85
2. Teachers' training and competencies in handling integrated schools.	100	78
3. Ability of school staff to communicate effectively with parents and community members.	102	80
4. Continuous professional development of teachers supports partnerships.	102	80

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Teachers' professional qualifications were rated as the most influential factor (109, 85%), notably ahead of training and competencies specific to integrated-school settings (100, 78%), while the ability of staff to communicate effectively with parents and continuous professional development were rated equally (102, 80%).

This implies that communities place particular weight on formal academic credentials as a basis for trust, even as they also value ongoing training and communication skills. Schools should therefore prioritize recruiting and retaining well-qualified teachers while continuing to invest in professional development that builds communication and cultural-engagement competencies specific to integrated-school contexts. This parallels Musekiwa (2025), who found that strong academic and professional credentials enhance school reputation, provided they are paired with effective communication and community-oriented practice.

Factors Influencing Engagement Along Enrolment

Table 12. Factors Influencing School-Community Engagement Practices in the Conversion to Integrated Schools Along Enrolment (N = 128)

Enrolment Indicators	f	%
1. Increased student enrollment as an influence on community support.	92	72
2. Availability of secondary education in the community.	90	70
3. Cooperation in school development projects.	94	73
4. Strengthened by stable or increasing enrollment.	95	74

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Stable or increasing enrolment was rated the most influential enrolment-related factor (95, 74%), followed closely by cooperation in school development projects (94, 73%), while the availability of secondary education within the community was rated comparatively least influential (90, 70%).

This indicates that steady enrolment growth functions as a strong motivator for community cooperation and support, likely because it signals institutional stability and community confidence in the newly converted school. This is consistent with Lambrecht (2025), who found that meeting parental priorities such as quality curriculum and reasonable class sizes builds early trust and sustained community buy-in during school transitions.

Factors Influencing Engagement Along Curriculum

Table 13. Factors Influencing School-Community Engagement Practices in the Conversion to Integrated Schools Along Curriculum (N = 128)

Curriculum Indicators	f	%
1. Fits the curriculum to the requirements of the community.	83	65
2. Community participates in curriculum-related activities (e.g., career seminars, local programs).	86	67
3. The K–12 curriculum strengthens community–school collaboration.	84	66
4. Curriculum offerings are in line with the local context.	85	66

Community participation in curriculum-related activities, such as career seminars and local programs, was rated most influential (86, 67%), while fitting the curriculum to

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community requirements was comparatively least influential (83, 65%) — the lowest set of ratings among all six factor dimensions.

This suggests that curriculum, while still a positive influence on engagement, is perceived as less directly connected to community participation than structural, staffing, or facility-related factors. Strengthening the alignment between the K–12 curriculum and local context, and involving the community more deliberately in curriculum planning, could help close this gap. This aligns with Bucud (2024), who found that co-creating curricula that reflect community aspirations fosters shared ownership and stronger, more inclusive school–community partnerships.

Factors Influencing Engagement Along Facilities

Table 14. Factors Influencing School-Community Engagement Practices in the Conversion to Integrated Schools Along Facilities (N = 128)

Facilities Indicators	f	%
1. Adequate instructional facilities.	85	66
2. Secondary school classroom availability.	74	58
3. Community participates in improving the facilities at school.	94	73
4. Facilities that are safe and well-maintained during school events.	95	74

Safety and maintenance of facilities during school events emerged as the most influential facilities-related factor (95, 74%), while the availability of secondary-level

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classrooms was rated the least influential (74, 58%) — the single lowest rating recorded across all factor tables.

This implies that well-maintained, secure facilities are strong drivers of community trust and participation, while the comparatively lower rating for secondary classroom availability signals a structural capacity gap that newly converted schools may still be addressing. Prioritizing facility safety, regular maintenance, and strategic classroom expansion would likely strengthen this dimension further, consistent with See (2025), who linked facility upgrades and adequate staffing with stronger family confidence during school-conversion processes.

Factors Influencing Engagement Along Budget and Financial Resources

Table 15. Factors Influencing School-Community Engagement Practices in the Conversion to Integrated Schools Along Budget and Financial Resources

(N = 128)

Budget and Financial Resources Indicators	f	%
1. Adequate school budget allocation.	89	70
2. Transparency in budget utilization.	93	73
3. Community financial support.	91	71
4. Availability of funds for facilities and learning resources.	98	77

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The availability of funds for facilities and learning resources was rated the most influential budget-related factor (98, 77%), while adequate school budget allocation for program participation was rated comparatively lowest (89, 70%) — though all four indicators were regarded by a clear majority as influential.

This suggests that direct, visible investment in tangible resources carries more weight with stakeholders than general programmatic budget allocation, reinforcing the importance of transparent and participatory financial planning. This aligns with Roque (2023), who found that transparent and participatory financial management strengthens school–community engagement and trust, particularly when stakeholders such as parent–teacher associations and local government units are involved in budget planning.

Recommended Practices to Strengthen and Sustain School-Community Engagement

Building on the factors found to influence engagement, respondents were asked to identify, from a prepared checklist, the practices they considered most important for strengthening and sustaining school–community engagement along the same six dimensions.

Recommended Practices Along Structural Factors

Table 16. Recommended Practices That May Strengthen and Sustain School-Community Engagement Along Structural Factors

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Structural Factors	f	%
1. A clear organizational structure that defines the roles of school and community stakeholders should be implemented.	103	80
2. School governing councils with active community representation should be strengthened.	83	65
3. Regular coordination meetings between school leaders and community members should be institutionalized.	97	76
4. Shared decision-making between the school and community should be practiced in school planning.	91	71

Implementing a clear organizational structure that defines the roles of school and community stakeholders was the most strongly endorsed structural recommendation (103, 80%), while strengthening school governing councils with active community representation, though still favored by a majority, was comparatively the least prioritized (83, 65%). Schools are encouraged to institutionalize regular coordination meetings and practice shared decision-making in planning to formalize the partnerships that currently depend heavily on individual leadership.

Recommended Practices Along Staff Qualification

Table 17. Recommended Practices That May Strengthen and Sustain School-Community Engagement Along Staff Qualification

Staff Qualification	f	%
1. Teachers assigned to integrated schools should meet appropriate qualification standards for both elementary and secondary levels.	99	77
2. Continuous professional development on community engagement should be provided to teachers.	89	70

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Staff Qualification	f	%
3. School personnel should be trained in effective communication with parents and community stakeholders.	85	66
4. Qualified guidance and support staff should be provided to address learners' and community needs.	93	73

Ensuring that teachers assigned to integrated schools meet appropriate qualification standards for both elementary and secondary levels was the top-rated recommendation (99, 77%), while training school personnel in effective communication with parents and community stakeholders, though still endorsed by a majority, was rated comparatively lowest (85, 66%). This underscores the value of pairing continued investment in formal qualifications with deliberate communication-skills training.

Recommended Practices Along Enrolment

Table 18. Recommended Practices That May Strengthen and Sustain School-Community Engagement Along Enrolment

Enrolment	f	%
1. Enrolment data should be used as a basis for planning school–community engagement programs.	94	73
2. The school should actively coordinate with the community to address increasing enrollment needs.	89	70
3. Community awareness programs should be conducted to encourage school participation and retention.	90	70

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Enrolment	f	%
4. Enrolment trends should guide decisions on expanding grade levels in the school.	71	55

Using enrolment data as a basis for planning school–community engagement programs was the most strongly supported recommendation (94, 73%), while allowing enrolment trends to guide decisions on expanding grade levels received markedly less support (71, 55%), reflecting stakeholder caution about using enrolment data alone to justify major structural changes such as grade-level expansion.

Recommended Practices Along Curriculum

Table 19. Recommended Practices That May Strengthen and Sustain School-Community Engagement Along Curriculum

Curriculum	f	%
1. The curriculum should be contextualized to address community needs and local conditions.	100	78
2. Community members should be involved in relevant curriculum-related activities and programs.	101	79
3. The implementation of the K–12 curriculum should be supported through community partnerships.	77	60
4. Life skills and livelihood-related learning should be integrated with support from the community.	94	73

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Involving community members in relevant curriculum-related activities and programs received the highest endorsement (101, 79%), closely followed by contextualizing the curriculum to community needs (100, 78%), while supporting K–12 curriculum implementation specifically through community partnerships was rated lowest (77, 60%) — again pointing to curriculum as the dimension requiring the most deliberate strengthening.

Recommended Practices Along Facilities

Table 20. Recommended Practices That May Strengthen and Sustain School-Community Engagement Along Facilities

Facilities	f	%
1. Additional classrooms should be constructed to support the needs of integrated schools.	108	84
2. School facilities should be upgraded with the assistance of community stakeholders.	93	73
3. Shared use of community facilities should be encouraged to support school programs.	90	70
4. Safe, accessible, and well-maintained facilities should be prioritized in school planning.	103	80

Constructing additional classrooms to support the needs of integrated schools was the most strongly endorsed facilities-related recommendation (108, 84%) — the highest single rating recorded in the entire study — while encouraging shared use of community facilities to support school programs was comparatively the least prioritized (90, 70%), suggesting

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stakeholders are more focused on expanding the school's own instructional capacity than on reciprocal facility-sharing arrangements.

Recommended Practices Along Budget and Financial Resources

Table 21. Recommended Practices That May Strengthen and Sustain School-Community Engagement Along Budget and Financial Resources

Budget and Financial Resources	f	%
1. Adequate budget allocation should be provided to support school–community engagement initiatives.	104	81
2. Budget planning should involve consultation with community stakeholders.	82	64
3. Transparent use of funds should be practiced to strengthen community trust.	97	76
4. Community-generated resources should be encouraged to supplement the school budget.	77	60

Providing adequate budget allocation to support school–community engagement initiatives was the most strongly endorsed recommendation (104, 81%), while encouraging community-generated resources to supplement the school budget was rated lowest (77, 60%). This pattern reinforces the earlier finding that stakeholders regard sustained funding for engagement as primarily an institutional responsibility, best supported by transparent budgeting rather than reliance on community financial contributions.

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The Contextualized Guidebook and Its Acceptability

Based on the identified strengths and gaps — particularly the comparatively low rating of socio-economic support and the specific gaps found in livelihood programs, budget consultation, curriculum alignment, and enrolment-based planning — a Contextualized Guidebook on Strengthening Socio-economic Support through School–Community Partnership was developed. The guidebook translates the study's findings into a practical, policy-aligned tool for school heads, teachers, parents, local government units, and community partners. It presents the legal basis for school-conversion and community-engagement policy, a conceptual foundation for socio-economic intervention, a structured intervention program addressing livelihood and skills-development gaps, an implementation plan, a monitoring and evaluation mechanism, and a sustainability plan, so that schools can adopt research-based, locally contextualized strategies rather than generic engagement templates.

Acceptability of the Contextualized Guidebook

The guidebook's acceptability was evaluated by a panel of five jurors — two Master Teachers and three Teachers with relevant expertise — using a validated five-point instrument covering content, format and design, presentation and organization, and accuracy and relevance.

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Table 20. Evaluation of the Jurors on the Level of Acceptability of the Prepared Contextualized Guidebook

Criterion	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
I. Content	4.96	Very Much Acceptable
II. Format and Design	4.80	Very Much Acceptable
III. Presentation and Organization	4.87	Very Much Acceptable
IV. Accuracy and Relevance	4.90	Very Much Acceptable
Total Average	4.88	Very Much Acceptable

Rating Scale: 4.50–5.00 Very Much Acceptable | 3.50–4.49 Much Acceptable | 2.50–3.49 Acceptable | 1.50–2.49 Less Acceptable | 1.00–1.49 Poorly Acceptable

The guidebook obtained a total average rating of 4.88, interpreted as Very Much Acceptable, reflecting its high quality as a professional educational material. It performed strongest in Content (4.96), with several indicators receiving perfect scores of 5.00 for cultural relevance, practical value, unbiased presentation, and alignment with DepEd policies. Its comparatively lowest ratings, though still Very Much Acceptable, were in Format and Design (4.80), largely attributed to minor concerns in layout, illustrative diagrams, and font presentation. This is consistent with Schutz et al. (2021), who found that structured dialogue and shared decision-making in guidebook development foster stakeholder ownership; the

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guidebook's strong content-quality ratings and its grounding in local context suggest it is well positioned to serve as a credible, evidence-based resource for strengthening socio-economic support through school–community partnership in newly converted integrated schools.

Summary of Findings

This study determined the level of school–community engagement practices in the conversion of eight elementary schools to public integrated schools in a city division in Albay, as basis for a contextualized guidebook on strengthening socio-economic support through school–community partnership. Data were gathered from 133 respondents using a validated descriptive-survey instrument. The following major findings emerged:

1. Socio-economic support obtained the lowest weighted mean (3.51, Always Practiced), while teacher qualifications obtained the highest (3.79, Always Practiced); all six engagement variables were nonetheless rated Always Practiced overall.
2. The F-test (ANOVA) yielded a computed value of 5.218, greater than the tabular value of 2.621 at 24 degrees of freedom and the 0.05 level of significance, leading to rejection of the null hypothesis; a significant difference exists in the level of engagement among the six variables.
3. Staff qualifications was the most influential factor shaping engagement (ratings of 78–85% across indicators), while curriculum-related factors were the least influential (65–67% across indicators), though still regarded as meaningful by most respondents.

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4. Facilities emerged as a particular strength, with construction of additional classrooms receiving the single highest endorsement (84%) among all recommended practices; structural factors also performed well but showed a wider gap between highest- and lowest-rated indicators. Enrolment- and curriculum-related recommendations showed the sharpest drop-offs, particularly for grade-level expansion (55%) and K–12 implementation through community partnerships (60%).

5. A Contextualized Guidebook on Strengthening Socio-economic Support through School–Community Partnership was developed based on the study's findings.

6. The guidebook obtained a total average acceptability rating of 4.88, Very Much Acceptable, performing strongest in content quality (4.96) and comparatively lowest, though still highly acceptable, in format and design (4.80).

Conclusions

1. School–community engagement practices in the conversion of elementary schools to public integrated schools are consistently and actively implemented, but socio-economic support — particularly sustainable livelihood and skills-development programs for parents — requires further strengthening to address the root causes of student challenges.

2. There is a significant difference in the level of school–community engagement practices among the six variables studied, indicating that engagement is uneven across domains and that domain-specific interventions are warranted rather than a single, uniform strategy.

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3. Staff qualifications are the most influential factor in school–community engagement, reflecting strong community trust in professionally qualified teachers, while curriculum-related practices remain the least influential, pointing to a need for closer alignment between curriculum implementation and community realities.

4. Facilities and structural support are notable strengths of the newly converted schools, and staff are well-qualified and stable; however, inconsistencies remain in curriculum implementation, budget consultation, and enrolment planning, with grade-level expansion planning representing the weakest area overall.

5. The Contextualized Guidebook effectively translates the study's findings into a practical, evidence-based tool that addresses the identified strengths and gaps in school–community engagement during the conversion process.

6. The guidebook is a highly acceptable, well-developed professional resource, particularly strong in content quality and relevance, and is ready for adoption with only minor refinements to its format and design.

Recommendations

1. Schools should develop and institutionalize livelihood and skills-training programs for parents, alongside existing feeding, donation, and scholarship initiatives, to build long-term family economic stability and sustain socio-economic support for learners.

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2. School heads should formalize school–community partnerships through clear organizational structures, active governing councils, and institutionalized coordination meetings, converting current leadership-driven engagement into a structure that persists across leadership transitions.

3. Schools should continue to prioritize hiring and retaining well-qualified teachers while providing continuous professional development in communication and culturally responsive engagement, and should strengthen curriculum-related engagement by involving stakeholders directly in contextualizing lessons to local needs.

4. School administrators, in coordination with local government units, should adopt data-driven, community-consulted planning for enrolment and budget decisions, particularly for grade-level expansion and program-related budget allocation, where stakeholder support was comparatively lowest.

5. Schools should sustain and expand investment in facility safety, maintenance, and classroom construction, while formalizing shared-use agreements for community facilities to strengthen reciprocal engagement.

6. The Department of Education and school administrators should formally adopt and disseminate the Contextualized Guidebook, with proper orientation for school heads and teachers, and establish a feedback mechanism for its continuous review and improvement.

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7. Future researchers may replicate this study in other divisions undergoing school conversion, examine the guidebook's actual implementation outcomes over time, and explore quantitative or mixed-methods approaches linking engagement practices to measurable learner outcomes.



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