**Implementation of child-friendly school system in the second congressional district of Northern Samar**

**ABSTRACT**

 This study explored the implementation of the Child-Friendly School System (CFSS) in selected secondary schools using a descriptive-correlational research design. Specifically, it aimed to determine the profile of school heads and teachers, assess the extent of CFSS implementation, and examine the relationship between selected characteristics of school heads and the degree of CFSS implementation in their respective institutions.

 Employing a descriptive-evaluative approach, the study utilized complete enumeration for school head respondents and proportionate sampling for teacher-respondents. Data were gathered through a structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistical tools, including means, frequency distributions, and percentages. Findings revealed that while school heads generally possessed strong academic credentials and leadership experience, their participation in CFSS-related professional development was limited. Teacher-respondents, on the other hand, demonstrated considerable professional advancement, with a majority holding postgraduate degrees and more than a decade of teaching experience. Implementation of the CFSS was evident across stakeholder groups, suggesting a general alignment with the framework’s principles.

 These findings have several practical and policy-oriented implications. First, the limited engagement of school leaders in CFSS-specific capacity-building may hinder their ability to effectively model and reinforce child-friendly practices at the institutional level. This highlights the need for targeted leadership training programs that reinforce CFSS values and implementation strategies. Second, the presence of a highly qualified teaching workforce presents an opportunity to deepen integration of CFSS principles into classroom practice, particularly in areas such as inclusive pedagogy, child protection, and learner participation. Finally, the study underscores the importance of institutionalizing CFSS monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure that its implementation remains responsive to evolving educational needs and student well-being. Overall, the results point to the critical role of continuous professional development and leadership support in sustaining child-friendly school environments.

**KEYWORDS:***child-friendly school system, inclusive education, child protection policies, school program evaluation*

**INTRODUCTION**

 Child-Friendly School System (CFSS) is a framework designed to create learning environments that support the holistic development of children. It is an educational setting that stimulates children’s natural curiosity and encourages them to take ownership of their own learning path while fostering a sense of responsibility (Shikha, 2021).

 There is an effort to realize the fulfillment of children's rights and protection while children are at school through school efforts to make schools clean, safe, friendly, beautiful, inclusive, healthy, beautiful, and comfortable (Suminar et al., 2022). Provide space for students without discrimination to develop their potential and talents in order to realize character education. Syahroni et al. (2022).

 The child-friendly school is considered a significant initiative in promoting sustainable education development. This approach aims to create a hygienic and conductive learning environment while prioritizing children welfare in the school (Ambarsari and Harun, 2019). Involvement of various stakeholders, such as parents, families, teachers, principals, educational administrators, civil society organizations, and local and national governments, is essential (Fitriani and Istaryatiningtias, 2020).

 Despite the widespread recognition of the CFSS model, its implementation faces significant challenges (UNICEF, 2017). Countries around the world are willing to implement the CFS Model prorogated by the UNICEF, nut it is not an easy task to be completed (Avasthi, et al., 2024). Schools had an inadequate classroom, desks, water, and electricity for physical facilities (Musila, 2015). Challenges of implementing child-friendly schools lead to three things, namely mentoring and sustainability, technical implementation, and evaluation mechanism (Liestyasari et al. (2023). Nearly half of students’ report being victims of bullying, and many experience food insecurity, leading to physical and emotional distress (Educational Commission Report, 2022).

 This study aims to investigate the factors that hinder the full implementation of the CFSS in the Philippines, particularly in the Division of Northern Samar, and to provide recommendations for improving the system. Hence, this study.

**METHODOLOGY**

*Locale of the Study*

 This study was conducted in the public secondary schools in the Second Congressional District of Northern Samar, which served as an ideal locale due to its diverse educational settings. The district offers a unique mix of school types and sizes, allowing for a comprehensive examination of child-friendly school system.

 A total of forty-seven (47) secondary schools in the Second Congressional District of Northern Samar were included in this study. These schools included fourteen (14) large secondary schools, thirteen (13) medium-sized schools, and twenty (20) small schools. The diverse mix of school sizes will provide perspectives into how CFSS practices function in different contexts, from larger institutions with more resources to smaller schools with fewer students and staff.

*The Variables*

 This study examined the implementation of the Child-Friendly School System (CFSS) in public secondary schools in Northern Samar's Second District, focusing on key factors influencing CFSS practices and their effect on school performance.

 Descriptive variables in this study included profile of the school head, including their highest educational attainment, present position, number of sponsored seminars/trainings attended related to CFSS, number of years as a school administrator, and the number of seminars implemented in the school related to CFSS and teachers’ profile in terms of highest educational qualification, position and number of seminars attended related to CFSS. Moreover, another variable is the extent of CFSS implementation, measured through student participation, health and well-being initiatives, and the provision of safe, protective learning environments.

*Sampling Technique*

 A complete enumeration of schools and school heads was conducted, meaning that all forty-seven (47) secondary schools and their respective school heads in the Second Congressional District of Northern Samar were included in the respondents group.

 For the teacher-respondents, proportionate sampling was used, with 30% of the total teacher population from each school selected as respondents.

*Respondents*

 This study involved two groups of respondents: school heads, and teachers. The first group will include all school heads from the 47 public secondary schools in the Second Congressional District of the Province of Northern Samar.

 The number of teacher respondents for each school was determined using proportionate sampling, selecting 30% from each school, resulting in a total of two hundred sixteen (216) respondents.

*Instrument*

 A survey questionnaire was an adopted tool from DepEd Order No. 44, series of 2015 (Guidelines on the Enhanced School Improvement Planning (SIP) Process and the School Report Card (SRC) which stipulated the program requirements of CFSS. Part I of the research instrument were the profile of the school head and teacher. Part II is composed of the extent of implementation of the child-friendly school system (CFSS) and Part III encompassed the challenges encountered in the implementation of the CFSS.

*Validation of Instrument*

 The research instrument was patterned from DepEd Tool. This tool need not to be validated instead, editing and critiquing of language expert from the University of Eastern Philippines was done. Upon checking the research instrument, the expert found that the tool is ready to be used and all the items used common terms for easy understanding of the respondents.

*Scoring and Interpretation*

 The data on the profile of the respondents were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts and percentages.

Extent of implementation of child-friendly school system was analyzed using their mean scores and interpreted as follows: Very Evident, (4.20 –5.00), Evident (3.40 –4.19), Moderately Evident, (2.60 –3.39), Rarely Evident (1.80 –2.59), Not Evident (1.0 – 1.79).

*Data Gathering Procedures*

 Before conducting the study, the researcher secured permission through a formal request letter signed by the Dean of Graduate Studies, addressed to the DepEd Regional Director and Schools Division Superintendent of Northern Samar. Once approved, similar letters were sent to school heads to obtain their consent and schedule data collection without disrupting classes.

 Ethical standards were strictly followed. The study’s purpose was clearly explained, and informed consent was obtained from school heads and teachers.

 A detailed data collection schedule was coordinated with schools. The researcher personally administered and retrieved the questionnaires, providing clear instructions and on-site support to ensure proper completion and confidentiality. Collected data were securely stored, then consolidated, analyzed, and interpreted using appropriate statistical tools.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

 Table 1 shows the educational attainment of school heads. Data reveals that a significant majority of school heads possess graduate-level education, with 48.94% holding a completed master’s degree and 23.40% having earned master’s units. Additionally, 19.15% are doctoral graduates and 8.51% have doctorate units, indicating that over a quarter (27.66%) have pursued education beyond the master’s level. This trend suggests a strong commitment to academic and professional growth among school leaders.

Table 1. Profile of School Heads

Highest Educational Attainment

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Highest Educational Attainment | Frequency | Percentage |
| Doctoral Graduate | 9 | 19.15% |
| Doctorate Units | 4 | 8.51% |
| Master’s Graduate | 23 | 48.94% |
| Master’s Units | 11 | 23.40% |
| TOTAL | 47 | 100% |

 Table 2 presents the distribution of current leadership roles among 47 school heads which shows that 44.68% serve as Head Teachers, 31.91% as Principals, and 23.40% as Teachers-in-Charge (TIC). This indicates that a significant majority (68.08%) occupy acting or mid-level leadership positions rather than formal principal roles. This data reflects a broader national issue: as of early 2025, over 55% of public schools in the Philippines lack officially appointed principals, with many being led by Head Teachers or TICs.

Table .2. School Heads’ Present Position

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Present Position | Frequency | Percentage |
| Principal | 15 | 31.91% |
| Head Teacher | 21 | 44.68% |
| Teacher-in-Charge | 11 | 23.40% |
| Total | 47 | 100% |

 Table 3 shows that a majority of school heads (57.45%) have attended only 1 to 3 seminars related to the Child-Friendly School System (CFSS), while 34.04% have attended 4 to 6. Notably, no school head has attended 10 or more CFSS-related seminars, and only 8.51% have participated in 7 to 9. This finding suggests limited professional development exposure to CFSS among school heads, which may affect the depth of their understanding and implementation of child-friendly practices in schools.

Table 3. Number of Seminars Attended Related

to CFSS

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| No. of Seminars Attended Related to CFSS | Frequency | Percentage |
| 7-9 | 4 | 8.51% |
| 4-6 | 16 | 34.04% |
| 1-3 | 27 | 57.45% |
| TOTAL | 47 | 100% |

 Table 4 shows that school heads have attended a range of a majority of school level seminars related to CFSS, most of which lasted 24 hours, with only one—on Healthy Learning Institutions with a duration of 40 hours. These trainings covered key areas such as child protection, inclusive education, gender sensitivity, bullying prevention, and school-based management. While the variety of topics suggests a broad understanding of CFSS principles, the limited duration and local scope imply that the depth of training may be insufficient for comprehensive implementation. This indicates a need for more intensive, sustained, and higher-level capacity-building programs to better equip school heads in leading effective CFSS practices.

Table.4. Relevant Trainings Attended by Respondents

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Name of Training | Level | Number of Hours |
| Child Protection Policy | School | 24 |
| Inclusive Education Training | School | 24 |
| Child Friendly School System | School | 24 |
| Comprehensive Sexuality Education Seminar | School | 24 |
| Gender and Development Related Seminar | School | 24 |
| Seminar on Handling Bullying Cases  | School | 24 |
| Healthy Learning Institutions Seminar | Division | 40 |
| School-Based Management Capability Building Seminar | Division | 24 |
| WASH Program Seminar | School | 24 |
| Learner’s Rights Protection Seminar | School | 24 |

 Table 5 shows that the largest group of respondents—16 or 34.04%—have served as school administrators for 11 to 15 years, indicating a solid presence of mid-career leaders with significant on-the-ground experience. Meanwhile, 13 or 27.66% have five years or less of experience, highlighting a notable group of novice school heads who may require targeted mentoring and leadership development. Another 12 respondents (25.53%) fall within the 6 to 10-year range, representing administrators still refining their leadership skills. Only 6 or 12.77% have served for over 16 years, pointing to a limited pool of veteran leaders. This distribution suggests a need for structured succession planning and professional growth strategies, particularly to support emerging leaders while leveraging the expertise of experienced administrators.

Table 5. Number of Years as School Administrator

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Number of Years as School Administrator | Frequency | Percentage |
| 16 up | 6 | 12.77% |
| 11-15 | 16 | 34.04% |
| 6-10 | 12 | 25.53% |
| 5 below | 13 | 27.66% |
| Total | 47 | 100% |

 Table 6 shows that a large majority of teachers (82.34%) have earned units toward a master’s degree, while only 10.05% have completed it. A small portion (3.26%) hold only a bachelor’s degree, and very few have pursued doctoral studies. This reflects a teaching force actively engaged in advanced education, signaling a strong commitment to professional growth. However, the relatively low completion rate of master’s degrees suggests potential barriers such as financial limitations or workload constraints. This gap between aspiration and attainment may affect the depth of instructional expertise, emphasizing the need for institutional support to help teachers complete their graduate studies and strengthen initiatives like the LAC program.

Table 6. Profile of Teachers

Highest Educational Attainment

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Highest Educational Attainment | Frequency | Percentage |
| Doctoral Graduate | 5 | 1.36% |
| Doctorate Units | 11 | 2.99% |
| Master’s Graduate | 37 | 10.05% |
| Master’s Units | 303 | 82.34% |
| Bachelor’s Degree | 12 | 3.26% |
| TOTAL | 368 | 100% |

 Table 7 shows that 69.84% of teachers hold the position of Teacher III, while fewer have advanced to Master Teacher ranks—15.76% at Master Teacher I, 4.35% at Master Teacher II, and just 1.09% at Master Teacher III. No respondents hold the Master Teacher IV rank. This indicates limited upward mobility beyond entry-level promotions, likely due to competitive qualifications or limited vacancies. The lack of representation at higher levels may constrain peer mentoring and instructional leadership, suggesting a need for clearer promotion pathways and stronger support systems for career advancement.

Table 7. Present Position

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Present Position | Frequency | Percentage |
| Master Teacher IV | 0 | 0% |
| Master Teacher III | 4 | 1.09% |
| Master Teacher II | 16 | 4.35% |
| Master Teacher I | 58 | 15.76% |
| Teacher III | 257 | 69.84% |
| Teacher II | 16 | 4.35% |
| Teacher I | 17 | 4.62% |
| TOTAL | 368 | 100% |

 Table 8 shows that the majority of teachers (73.37%) have attended between 1 to 3 Child-Friendly School System (CFSS) training sessions, while 26.63% have participated in 4 to 6. This indicates that most teachers have engaged in CFSS-related professional development, though for many, the frequency of participation remains relatively modest. Each training session reportedly spans 24 hours, suggesting a standardized and in-depth approach to content delivery.

 Despite the variation in attendance frequency, teachers emerge as the most consistently involved participants in these training initiatives. Their sustained engagement reflects a proactive stance toward implementing child-friendly practices in schools. However, the limited number of sessions attended by most may also point to missed opportunities for deeper capacity-building. Strengthening the continuity and breadth of CFSS training—particularly through follow-up workshops and school-level reinforcement—may further enhance the program’s integration into daily teaching practices and school culture.

Table 8. Number of CFSS Training Attended by the School Head being Implemented in the School

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Number of CFSS Training Attended by the School Head being Implemented in the School | Frequency | Percentage |
| 4-6 | 98 | 26.63% |
| 1-3 | 270 | 73.37% |
| TOTAL | 368 | 100% |

 Table 9 reflects a comprehensive and multi-stakeholder approach to promoting a Child-Friendly School System (CFSS), with all programs uniformly delivered over 24 hours to ensure depth and consistency. Teachers were the primary participants across all sessions, underscoring their central role in implementing child-centered practices. The inclusion of guidance counselors, PTA officers, barangay officials, school governing council members, and security personnel in specific trainings—such as those on child protection, bullying prevention, and learner rights—demonstrates efforts to build collective accountability and shared leadership within the school community. However, the consistently identical duration across diverse and complex topics may warrant reconsideration, as differentiated content likely requires variable time allocations.

 Overall, the training matrix suggests a solid foundation for CFSS implementation, though future capacity-building efforts could benefit from greater contextual customization and sustained stakeholder engagement beyond attendance.

Table 9. CFSS-Related Training Attended by the School Head being Implemented in the School

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Name of Training | Number of Hours | Participants |
| Child Protection Policy | 24 | Teachers, Guidance Counselor, PTA Officers |
| Inclusive Education Training | 24 | Teachers |
| Child Friendly School System | 24 | Teachers, PTA Officers, School Governing Officers |
| Comprehensive Sexuality Education Seminar | 24 | Teachers |
| Gender and Development Related Seminar | 24 | Teachers |
| Seminar on Handling Bullying Cases  | 24 | Teachers, PTA Officers, Security Personnel |
| Healthy Learning Institutions Seminar | 24 | Teachers, PTA Officers, Barangay Officials |
| School-Based Management Capability Building Seminar | 24 | Teachers, PTA Officers, Barangay Officials |
| WASH Program Seminar |  24 | Teachers |
| Learner’s Rights Protection Seminar |  24 | Teachers, PTA Officers, Barangay Officials |

Extent of Implementation of the CFSS as Evaluated by the Respondents

Encourage Children’s Participation in School and Community

 Table 10 shows that the sub-variable Encouraging Children’s Participation in School and Community received a very evident rating from school heads, with an overall mean of 3.81. This suggests that student involvement in school governance, disaster preparedness, and community engagement is both visible and valued within the school culture. The high rating reflects deliberate efforts to uphold the principles of democratic participation and child empowerment, which are central to the Child-Friendly School System (CFSS). However, while this rating is promising, it also invites further inquiry into the depth and authenticity of student participation. For instance, it remains essential to determine whether student voices are genuinely influencing decisions or if participation is limited to symbolic activities. Ensuring meaningful involvement—where learners contribute to agenda-setting, problem-solving, and leadership—requires not only programmatic inclusion but also a shift in institutional mindsets that regard students as partners rather than passive recipients. Thus, while the findings suggest structural opportunities for engagement, continuous monitoring is needed to ensure these practices translate into empowered, child-led participation in both school and community spheres.

Table 10. Encouraging Children’s Participation in School and Community

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Statements | Weighted Mean | Interpretation |
| School involves students in the organizing, planning, and execution of the disaster preparedness and response plan. | 4.03 | Evident |
| The school has a working student government. | 3.90 | Evident |
| School has a mechanism or mechanisms – such as a school publication, students’ bulletin board, or opinion box – for pupils to express their opinions about school and community issues. | 3.67 | Evident |
| School involves students in meetings and planning sessions that concern their well-being. | 3.98 | Evident |
| School encourages its students to get involved in community work.  | 3.45 | Evident |
| Overall Mean | 3.81 | Evident |

 Table 11 shows that the Enhancement of Children’s Health and Well-being received a mean score of 4.04, indicating that school heads perceive this domain as evidently implemented. This suggests consistent delivery of health and nutrition interventions such as the OK sa DepEd and the School-Based Feeding Program, signaling institutional commitment to promoting holistic learner development. However, while the rating reflects favorable implementation on paper, it warrants closer scrutiny regarding the scope and sustainability of these efforts. For instance, questions remain about the actual reach and regularity of health services, especially in resource-constrained schools. A high rating may reflect compliance with mandated programs rather than an in-depth evaluation of outcomes such as reduced absenteeism, improved student nutrition, or psychosocial well-being. Thus, beyond quantitative implementation, qualitative assessments and feedback from learners and health personnel are essential to ensure that these interventions produce tangible, equitable, and sustained improvements in learner welfare.

Table 11. Enhancement of Children’s

Health and Well-being

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Statements | Weighted Mean | Interpretation |
| School holds annual dental examination of your pupils. | 3.85 | Evident |
| The school has a steady supply of clean and safe drinking water. | 4.23 | Very Evident |
| School holds annual weighing and health examination of your pupils. | 4.04 | Evident |
| The school has separate toilet facilities for boys and girls consisting of urinals and lavatories that are regularly maintained and kept clean. | 4.19 | Evident |
| School maintains and regularly updates a health record of each pupil.  | 3.54 | Evident |
| The school treats pupils with decayed teeth. | 4.32 | Very Evident |
| The school serves or sells healthy and nutritious food in your premises. | 4.50 | Very Evident |
| The school has a feeding program for malnourished children. | 4.09 | Evident |
| The school has a functional clinic. | 3.87 | Evident |
| The school practices proper waste disposal. | 4.36 | Very Evident |
| School treats or refers pupils with health problems. | 3.50 | Evident |
| OVERALL MEAN | 4.04 | Evident |

 Table 12 reveals an overall mean score of 3.45, interpreted as Evident, indicating that respondents generally view the school environment, safety protocols, and physical facilities as satisfactorily maintained and conducive to student well-being. Core components such as campus cleanliness, presence of security personnel, and established disciplinary procedures appear consistently in place, reflecting basic adherence to safety and operational standards. However, the lower ratings for areas such as emergency preparedness, recreational amenities, and inclusive infrastructure suggest uneven implementation across domains. This disparity highlights a possible gap between routine operational compliance and the broader vision of a truly child-friendly environment—one that holistically addresses physical safety, psychosocial development, and inclusivity. Strengthening under-implemented areas will be crucial for fostering environments that not only protect students but also promote their full participation, resilience, and sense of belonging within the school community.

 Separately, Patalinghug et al. (2022) found that during the COVID‑19 pandemic, many elementary schools lacked sufficient facilities, equipment, and clear preparedness plans—highlighting significant shortfalls in school readiness for emergencies. Finally, Caballes et al. (2024) report strong compliance (mean = 4.62 on a 5‑point scale) with disaster risk reduction protocols—such as safe-site selection, resilient construction, and disability‑friendly design—in Rizal’s public schools, signaling pockets of excellence that could inform broader practice.

Table 12. Guarantee Safe and Protective Spaces for Children

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Statements | Weighted Mean | Interpretation |
| Classrooms, facilities, and premises are regularly maintained and kept clean. | 3.75 | Evident |
| The school has duly assigned personnel in charge of securing its premises, its properties, and those of its pupils and teachers. | 4.02 | Evident |
| The school has adequate emergency/first aid kits that are readily available. | 3.90 | Evident |
| Teachers use non-threateningstyles of discipline. | 3.67 | Evident |
| The school has a policy against discrimination with regard to gender, cultural origin, social status, religious belief, and others | 3.87 | Evident |
| The school has sufficient lawn space and vegetation. | 3.67 | Evident |
| Classrooms have a bulletin board or a corner that displays helpful learning materials such as posters, illustrations, newspaper and magazine clippings, and your pupils’ own works. | 3.56 | Evident |
| The school has a program for childrenwith special needs. | 3.56 | Evident |
| The school coordinates with the barangay and local authorities to ensure the safety and protection of your pupils. | 3.45 | Evident |
| Classrooms have proper ventilation and lighting and enough space for 45-50 pupils. | 3.43 | Evident |
| The school has safe facilities in place to address hazard threats. | 3.04 | Moderately Evident |
| The school has facilities and equipment for recreation and sports. | 3.45 | Evident |
| Classrooms’ layout and furniture allow pupils to interact and do group work. | 3.32 | Moderately Evident |
| The school has a library for reading and for study. | 3.16 | Moderately Evident |
| Classroom desks and other furniture are sized to the age of the pupils. In the case of shared desks, each pupil has enough space to do seatwork. | 3.05 | Moderately Evident |
| The school conducts regular evacuation drills for earthquake, fire, flooding, or tsunami. | 3.34 | Moderately Evident |
| The school has identified and prepared alternative learning spaces in cases of emergencies. | 3.07 | Moderately Evident |
| OVERALL MEAN | 3.45 | Evident |

 Table 13 shows an overall mean score of 3.64, interpreted as Evident, indicating that both school heads and teachers perceive community coordination and student attendance monitoring as generally established and operational. This suggests that schools are engaged in collaborative efforts with local barangay councils to identify out-of-school children and uphold attendance-tracking mechanisms. These partnerships reflect a shared accountability framework, aligning with the Child-Friendly School System’s emphasis on inclusive education and child protection. However, the score also implies that while foundational systems are in place, efforts may still be reactive rather than proactive—particularly in sustaining enrollment drives and early intervention for at-risk students. Strengthening community outreach, formalizing referral protocols, and leveraging data analytics for attendance trends could elevate these practices from compliance to strategic prevention, ensuring every learner’s consistent access to education.

 A research in Northern Mindanao showed a strong negative correlation between parental involvement and student absenteeism, reinforcing the role of local communities and barangay councils in maintaining school attendance through structured engagement (Grepon and Grepon , 2021).

Table 13. Encourage Enrollment and Competition

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Statements | Weighted Mean | Interpretation |
| The school regularly coordinates with the local barangay council to identify school age children who are out of school, for the purpose of bringing them to school | 4.15 | Evident |
| The school has a system to regularly check on the attendance of its pupils and address problems concerning non-attendance. | 3.44 | Evident |
| The school has a master list of all school-age children in the community, whether enrolled or not | 3.60 | Evident |
| The school conducts campaigns to encourage parents to enroll their children. | 3.36 | Evident |
| OVERALL MEAN | 3.64 | Evident |

 Table 14 presents an overall mean score of 3.39 for the sub-variable “Ensure Children’s High Academic Achievement and Success”, interpreted as Evident. This suggests that school heads acknowledge the presence of academic support systems and child-friendly instructional practices, yet also recognize that these are not being fully optimized. The moderate rating points to partial implementation—where interventions such as remedial instruction, differentiated strategies, and performance monitoring may be present but inconsistently applied or under-resourced. Contributing factors may include large class sizes, limited instructional materials, and insufficient teacher capacity.

 Recent findings by Arnaiz-Sánchez et al. (2020) emphasize that collaborative learning methodologies and project-based instruction significantly enhance academic performance, particularly in linguistic and mathematical competencies. However, such approaches require sustained teacher training, adequate resources, and institutional support to be effective. The current data imply that while the intent to foster academic success is evident, systemic constraints may be limiting the depth, reach, and sustainability of these efforts. Addressing these gaps through targeted investments in pedagogy, instructional leadership, and inclusive learning environments is essential to fully realize the goals of a child-friendly academic framework.

Table 14. Ensure Children’s High Academic Achievement and Success

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Statements | Weighted Mean | Interpretation |
| School encourages and promotes cooperative and “hands-on” learning (“learning by doing” | 3.89 | Evident |
| Principal and teachers are familiar with child-centered and child-friendly principles. | 3.68 | Evident |
| School provides students access to ADM, ALS, and/or other learning materials for their use during emergencies. | 3.45 | Evident |
| Principal has data on the school’s past three years performance in the division, regional or national tests for the purpose of improving its current year performance. | 3.17 | Moderately Evident |
| The school has a clear vision/mission statement that is prominently displayed and adequately explained to all school personnel. | 3.11 | ModeratelyEvident |
| OVERALL MEAN | 3.18 | Moderately Evident |

 Table 15 shows an overall mean score of 3.41 for the sub-variable Leadership, Staff Welfare, and Professional Development, interpreted as Evident. This suggests that both school heads and teachers generally perceive leadership structures and support systems as present but not fully optimized. While the existence of these mechanisms reflects a foundational commitment to staff development and institutional guidance, the moderate rating implies gaps in consistency, responsiveness, and alignment with teachers’ evolving professional and personal needs. Recent research by De Clercq, Watt, and Richardson (2022) underscores that supportive leadership significantly increases the likelihood of teachers transitioning into more engaged and professionally ambitious profiles, while excessive work demands correlate with burnout and attrition. This finding reinforces the need for leadership practices that go beyond structural compliance—emphasizing mentoring, recognition, and psychosocial support to foster teacher well-being and sustained engagement. Without such holistic support, leadership efforts may be perceived as procedural rather than transformative, limiting their impact on both teacher motivation and the broader goals of child-centered education.

Table 15. Raise Teachers’ Morale and Motivation

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Statements | Weighted Mean | Interpretation |
| Principal provides strong direction and leadership guided by a written supervisory plan. | 3.88 | Evident |
| School provides annual medical examination to your teachers and other staff. | 3.65 | Evident |
| Principal regularly monitors teachers’ performance and provides needed support. | 3.56 | Evident |
| Teachers support their co-teachers by sharing teaching techniques and experiences. | 3.44 | Evident |
| Teachers are given annual medical check-up. | 3.05 | Evident |
| Teachers undergo continuing and advance professional training at least once a year. | 3.34 | Evident |
| Teachers are regularly trained in new and effective teaching-learning strategies. | 3.25 | Evident |
| Teachers have their own lounge and/or work area. | 3.11 | Moderately Evident |
| OVERALL MEAN | **3.41** | **Evident** |

 Table 16 presents an overall mean score of 3.59, interpreted as Evident, suggesting that school heads generally perceive their institutions as actively engaged in community-oriented initiatives such as literacy programs, disaster risk reduction efforts, parental involvement, and stakeholder collaborations. This perception reflects a recognition of the school’s role as a hub for civic engagement and holistic learner development. However, the moderate score also implies that while foundational partnerships are in place, challenges persist in sustaining, institutionalizing, or deepening these efforts. Barriers may include inconsistent community participation, lack of formalized agreements with stakeholders, or limited resources to support wider outreach and capacity-building. To move beyond surface-level engagement, schools may need to adopt more strategic approaches—such as localized needs assessments, co-developed initiatives with stakeholders, and regular impact evaluation—to ensure that community collaboration is responsive, inclusive, and sustainable over time.

Table 16. Mobilize Community Support for Education

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Statements | Weighted Mean | Interpretation |
| The school takes the lead in conducting literacy programs for illiterate parents. | 4.12 | Evident |
| The school has organized and capacitated the School Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Committee (SDRRMC) | 3.79 | Evident |
| The school enlists the support of community organizations to help raise funds and resources for learning. | 3.76 | Evident |
| The school invites parents to discuss with your teachers the learning experiences and progress of their children. | 3.46 | Evident |
| The school consults parents in the drafting of its policies, and in the planning and implementation of school activities | 3.19 | Moderately Evident |
| The school coordinates with barangay institutions to identify children who are physically or sexually abused or are made to do hard physical labor, for the purpose of identifying their special needs. | 3.87 | Evident |
| The school has a Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) that has elected leaders, meets regularly, and has a written plan of action. | 3.29 | Evident |
| The school coordinates with the barangay and local institutions to enroll illiterate parents in literacy programs. | 3.16 | Moderately Evident |
| The school has strong partnerships with external stakeholders in order to address disaster risk reduction and the CCA-related needs of the school (i.e. data and statistics, capacity building, resources, etc). | 3.08 | Moderately Evident |
| OVERALL MEAN | 3.59 | Evident |

**CONCLUSION**

 Based on the findings, the majority of school heads possess strong academic qualifications and considerable leadership experience, their participation in professional development activities specifically related to the Child-Friendly School System (CFSS) remains limited. This can be deduced a critical gap in the area of continuous training and capacity-building. Strengthening their involvement in such training opportunities can significantly enhance their capacity to foster child-friendly environments and drive systemic improvements in their respective schools.

 Similarly, the teacher-respondents demonstrated significant levels of professional growth. Many have pursued advanced studies and achieved notable milestones in their teaching careers, supported by extensive classroom experience. This reflects a well-established and competent teaching workforce. However, to ensure that their growth translates into meaningful improvements in classroom practice and student outcomes, there is a clear need for ongoing support. Providing targeted, needs-based development programs that align with CFSS principles can further empower teachers to take on leadership roles within their classrooms and contribute more proactively to school-wide reforms. Overall, tailored interventions that address specific stressors and support teachers’ diverse backgrounds are essential to enhance their teaching experience and well-being.

 The study also found that CFSS implementation is generally evident and integrated throughout the school community, with relatively few challenges reported. This indicates a positive trend in terms of embedding CFSS values and practices across various school functions. Nevertheless, the findings suggest that sustained support is still required to maintain momentum, address emerging challenges, and secure long-term success. Providing ongoing technical and financial support, ensuring stakeholder collaboration, and promoting continuous reflection and feedback mechanisms will be key to sustaining these gains.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

 School administrators may implement accessible, ongoing CFSS professional development for school leaders through varied formats such as online modules, workshops, and peer learning, while teachers should receive specialized training in classroom management, instructional strategies, and CFSS integration. Moreover, DepEd Northern Samar can support this through targeted programs, and future researchers may explore comprehensive evaluations of CFSS, focusing on school facilities, stakeholder participation, and health initiatives that support learners’ holistic well-being.

**Ethical Approval:**

As per international standards or university standards written ethical approval has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

**Consent**

As per international standards or university standards, Participants’ written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

**Disclaimer (Artificial intelligence)**

I hereby declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc.) and text-to-image generators have been used during the writing or editing of this manuscript.

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