

Report of the Committee on Educational Excellence

12 February 2018

My role continues to be defined in terms of what being "Asesor a La Junta de Educacion" involves and Bishop Quezada's identifying education as a major focus of his episcopate. I anticipate 4-5 visits each year (approx 2-3 weeks per visit), while continuing to work with the Junta de Educacion and the Bishop by email; I maintain a blog to publicize our work here.

As Bishop has noted in his report -- the Episcopal schools are facing a "challenge" from the government's emphasis on spending for education. It is a challenge in the sense that we need to offer a high quality education to raise enrollments and enable schools not only to operate but also to offer a distinctive and attractive educational opportunity for children. Our improvement efforts might include: bilingual programs, an emphasis on values/civic education, technology, specialty programs (e.g., graphic arts) and instructional best practice in classrooms. Equally important is the raising of scholarships and the revision of ways in which these moneys are distributed.

Currently, an executive committee from the Junta de Educacion is visiting schools to assess their effectiveness and gather information about needs. Roughly 12-13 have been schools visited to date; using an instrument based on MINERD requirements, we have identified schools that look strong and schools have some needs to address.

Sense of school improvement activities are emerging, including: Improving teacher salaries, PR here in the DR, laboratories (e.g., technology, science), bilingual education, teacher professional development, centralization of school leadership in a Diocesan office of education. The possibility of establishing a Dominican Episcopal university has been raised and is in very early stages of conversation.

The Junta is preparing a 5-year strategic plan for presentation to the Bishop. Major work on the document will happen at the next meeting of the Junta de Educacion.

Major priority in our improvement efforts -- teacher professional development. Toward that end we offered a second, more extensive workshop series in December. The team included Dominican educators and presented to the Diocesan educational leadership, then to classroom educators at 4 regional locations. 240 teachers attended. Evaluations reported tremendous satisfaction on part of teachers.

Plans for another workshop series in May/June with dates TBD. Our team would add 2 missionary members and at least 3 Dominican educators. Themes have been identified by teachers at previous sessions.

Very much appreciate the DDG's increasing interest and support for education in the Diocese of the DR. One of my needs -- ongoing, longer term support for workshop mission teams; hope to have DDG support in these efforts, including obtaining grant support.

Dr. Tom McGowan