

THIRD EETA RECIPIENTS NAMED

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Translating vision and values into action – that is the guiding principle behind the winning examples of five schools as they were recognized at the 2014 Excellence in Educational Transformation Awards (EETA), which was held recently at the Edsa Shangri-La Hotel.

Organized by the Bayan Academy together with Rex Publishing Co. and The Knowledge Channel Foundation, the EETA is an annual award created in 2012 that recognizes the innovative efforts of both public and private schools in the Philippines in promoting learning effectiveness and school efficiency through transformative learning strategies and programs that benefit not only the students but also the educational system as well.

“This year’s batch of awardees shows us that despite the high standards set by our previous awardees, we still have schools and educational managers that come up with life-changing ideas and institutionalize them,” said Bayan Academy Chairman Dr. Eduardo Morato Jr. “As schools struggle to meet the global and regional demands in the Philippine educational system, the third batch of awardees was able to design programs and educational strategies that created an enabling learning environment for their students while encouraging them to improve not only intellectual but also social skills.”

Xavier School, which won the Most Transformative School for Learning Effectiveness and School Efficiency, led the winners – Pasig Elementary School, Top Achievers Private School (Alicia, Isabela), St. Paul College Pasig and the Sisters of Mary School of Banneux Inc. (Silang, Cavite).

Xavier School was cited for initiating a school-wide recalibration of their curriculum through the creation of Subject Action Goals (SAGs) and Action Goals for Formation (AGF) that aligned the school’s goal to promote 21st-century learning and build relevant contemporary Catholic spirituality for its students, while strengthening their understanding of the school’s roots through the Xavier China Experience, which brings students to a greater understanding the country’s culture. The school’s president, Fr. Aristotle Dy, SJ, received the awards.

Pasig Elementary School got the nod for transforming its Clean and Green Program by anchoring it on the students’ Home Economics and Livelihood Education (EPP in Filipino), introducing not only new gardening technologies like aquaponics and hydroponics in the gardening classes but also an emphasis on environmental awareness and basic appreciation of elementary entrepreneurship. PES school principal Emelita Medina and Division of Pasig City superintendent Dr. Aurora A. Franco were on hand to accept the awards.

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Top Achievers Private School in Alicia, Isabela impressed the panel of judges as it only started in 2011, but introduced state-of-the-art learning for its students through the introduction of high-technology classrooms equipped with interactive touch-screen boards and Internet connectivity, while the whole school is fully automated with CCTV cameras (viewable by parents on the internet) and electronic card ID readers.

“It was not easy for us to open a school like this to a far-flung and rural place, not knowing whether the town has the capability for high-speed Internet connection,” said the owners and couple Michael and Jhoana Quilang. “But we took a gamble believing that even students from outside Metro Manila deserve world-class education.”

The exclusive girls’ school of St. Paul College Pasig paid attention not only to academic excellence but also the creative talents and athletic skills of their students with GIFT program, which aimed to develop well-rounded students. Identifying the student’s innate gifts as early as pre-school, SPCP guides them on honing and fortifying their talents all the way to high school, in categories such as Sports, Performing Arts, Visual Arts, Culinary Arts and Communication Arts.

The Sisters of Mary of Banneux Inc., which administers a school for girls in Silang, Cavite and other areas, seeks out to the needy but deserving students from all over the country by providing them a rich technical-vocational secondary education program. Aside from that, the girls enjoy free meals, clothing, shelter and medical and dental services. While this meant separating them temporarily from their families, the school also oriented their parents on the need for such condition.

“They really had to be aware that the students would be staying with us, and we had our agreement prior to us accepting their children,” said Sr. Gertrudes Dayag. “When they finish, it means the girls are not only earning their diplomas, they have also acquired the skills and are ready for employment, if not higher education.”

The program was highlighted with admirable performances by the grade school and high school students of St. Paul College Pasig, as well as the talented ringing bell chorale of the Sisters of Mary of Banneux and the launch of the book “Excellence in Educational Transformation: Texts and Cases Vol.3” edited by Dr. Morato and published by Rex Publishing.

“The stories from the successful cases on EETA in this book, no less, resound that ‘connect-and-collaborate’ is an emergent leadership style rooted in our nature to find like-minded people and those who do well together,” noted Rex Publishing COO Don Timothy Buhain, one of the proponents of the awards. “It plugs into our basic instinct to be part of something that makes a difference in the world and for others.”

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- **ABAD: NOYNOY'S NOD NEEDE...**
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- **PULSE HIT FOR FALSE POLL...**
- **GMA ADVISED TO SEEK SC ...**

NATION

- **PROSECUTION FAILS TO PIN...**
- **ALBAY GOV: TRANSFER MALA...**
- **US READY TO RESPOND TO A...**
- **LOOMING 'HABAGAT' END PO...**
- **3 KILLED, 5 HURT IN BOMB...**

METRO

- **MMDA CHIEF HIT FOR GIFTI...**
- **RP GAINS INTERNATIONAL A...**
- **LAWMEN SEIZE P100-MILLIO...**
- **DENGUE OUTBREAK WON'T H...**
- **MMDA, PNP-HPG EYE DEPLOY...**

SPORTS

- **WANT ABL? QUIT PBA, PACM...**
- **UNLIKELY HERO LIFTS BLAZ...**
- **SOUTHWOODS LADIES TARGET...**
- **GARCIA NOT GIVING UP OLY...**
- **BULLDOGS GEAR UP VS EAGL...**

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- PASAY FIRE VICTIMS THANK...
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- TRACK-DAY-WITH-THE-MAZDA...
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