

Needs Assessment of Students at Risk of Dropping Out in MAPEH: Basis for Student Retention Strategy

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ABSTRACT

Student dropout remains a continuing challenge in secondary education, particularly among learners who gradually disengage due to unmet needs and persistent difficulties. This study assessed the needs and challenges of students at risk of dropping out in Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health (MAPEH) at Nueva Vizcaya General Comprehensive High School during the School Year 2025-2026, with the end view of developing a student retention strategy. A descriptive survey research design was utilized, and data were gathered through a researcher-made questionnaire administered to identified students at risk of dropping out. The instrument measured students' levels of needs in terms of personal, academic, social, financial/material, family support, and teachers'/school support, as well as the extent of challenges experienced across personal, academic, social, financial, family-related, and school environment/teacher-related domains. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistical tools. The findings revealed that students at risk of dropping out exhibited a high level of needs across all dimensions, with academic support, social interaction, family encouragement, and teacher guidance emerging as priority areas. Meanwhile, the extent of challenges experienced by the learners was generally moderate, particularly in relation to performance-based tasks, confidence during activities, access to learning materials, and balancing academic demands with family responsibilities. These results indicate that while the challenges are manageable, they require timely and targeted interventions to prevent further disengagement and potential dropout. Based on the findings, a Student Retention Strategy in MAPEH was developed. The strategy emphasizes holistic and learner-centered interventions that respond to identified needs and challenges. It is recommended that the school implement and continuously evaluate this strategy to strengthen learner engagement and promote sustained participation in performance-based learning areas such as MAPEH.

Keywords: Disengagement, Dropout, Learner Needs, Support, Retention Program

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Student retention continues to be a major concern in education systems around the world, especially at the secondary level where many learners struggle to complete their studies. Dropping out of school is not something that happens overnight. Rather, it is often the result of a gradual process influenced by academic difficulties, declining motivation, weak connection to school, and challenging socioeconomic conditions. Adolescents who struggle academically, feel disconnected from school, or lack confidence are at greater risk of slowly disengaging from their education (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2023). Additionally, experiences of social exclusion, performance anxiety, and insufficient support can intensify feelings of not belonging, further increasing the likelihood of school withdrawal (Eccles & Roeser, 2011).

These challenges are not only seen globally but are also evident in the Philippine education system. Despite continuous efforts to improve access to education, ensuring that students stay in school until completion remains a challenge. While more learners are enrolling in school, not all are able to finish, particularly at the junior high school level. Data shows that about 87 percent of students who enter junior high school are able to complete Grade 10, leaving around 13 percent who drop out before finishing (Abrigo & Orbeta, 2023). This suggests that

adolescence is a critical stage where academic pressure, personal struggles, and external factors often come together, leading some students to disengage from school.

The Department of Education recognizes that dropping out is usually caused by a combination of factors such as difficulty in lessons, lack of interest, financial problems, family responsibilities, and health concerns. These issues often build up over time, gradually affecting students' motivation and ability to attend school regularly (Department of Education [DepEd], 2023). National assessments also show that many learners struggle to meet expected learning standards as they move to higher grade levels. Reports from the Second Congressional Commission on Education reveal that only a small percentage of Filipino learners reach proficiency in secondary school, highlighting persistent learning gaps that can lower students' confidence and increase the risk of disengagement (EDCOM II, 2026). When academic difficulties go unaddressed and adequate support is lacking, students are more likely to miss school frequently and, over time, may eventually withdraw from their education (Bowers et al., 2013).

The Philippines' performance in international assessments reflects these ongoing challenges. Results from the Programme for International Student Assessment show that many Filipino learners did not meet minimum proficiency levels in reading, mathematics, and science in 2022, with little improvement from previous years (OECD, 2023). This situation is shaped by a combination of factors, including instructional limitations, socioeconomic conditions, and individual learner differences, especially among students from disadvantaged backgrounds (Cabural, 2024). These findings highlight that dropping out is not only an academic issue but also a social concern that requires a comprehensive and well-rounded response.

Aside from academic concerns, family and socioeconomic conditions also play a big role in whether students stay in school. Poverty, household responsibilities, limited parental support, and lack of access to learning resources are commonly identified reasons why students stop schooling (Parreño, 2023). Many learners are forced to balance their studies with work or responsibilities at home, which often leads to frequent absences, fatigue, and reduced participation in class. Without strong support from both family and school, it becomes difficult for these students to continue their education.

In this context, the subject area of Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health (MAPEH) presents its own set of challenges. Unlike other subjects, MAPEH requires active participation, creativity, physical involvement, and collaboration. Students who lack confidence, struggle with peer interaction, or do not have the necessary materials may feel anxious or hesitant to participate, which can affect their motivation and engagement (Ronquillo, 2023). When students repeatedly experience discomfort or feel unsuccessful in performance-based tasks, they may begin to withdraw socially and lose interest in school activities (Eccles & Roeser, 2011).

School conditions can further add to these difficulties. In many public schools, limited facilities, lack of equipment, and insufficient time for instruction affect the delivery of MAPEH. These limitations can reduce students' opportunities to develop skills and enjoy meaningful learning experiences, especially for those who are already struggling (Ariola et al., 2025). When these school-related challenges are combined with personal, academic, financial, and family issues, the likelihood of disengagement and eventual dropout increases. Recognizing this, the Department of Education emphasizes the need for learner-centered and preventive approaches that address the overall needs of students, not just their academic performance (DepEd, 2023).

Nueva Vizcaya General Comprehensive High School caters to learners from diverse backgrounds, many of whom face similar challenges. These students often deal with overlapping difficulties such as academic struggles, limited resources, and family concerns, which may affect their ability to stay in school. Understanding the specific needs and challenges of students at risk of dropping out, particularly in MAPEH, is therefore important in creating effective and relevant interventions.

The study aims to assess the needs and challenges of students-at-risk of dropping out in MAPEH at Nueva Vizcaya General Comprehensive High School for the School Year 2025–2026. The findings of this study are expected to serve as a basis for developing a student retention strategy that is aligned with the priorities of the Department of Education and responsive to the actual experiences of learners in public secondary schools.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to assess the level of needs and extent of challenges experienced by students at risk of dropping out in MAPEH at Nueva Vizcaya General Comprehensive High School for the School Year 2025-2026.

Specifically, this study sought answers for the following questions:

1. What is the level of needs of students at risk of dropping out in MAPEH in terms of Personal Needs, Academic Needs, Social Needs, Financial/Material Needs, Family Support Needs and Teachers/School Support Needs?
2. What is the extent of challenges experienced by students at risk of dropping out in MAPEH in terms of Personal Challenges, Academic Challenges, Social Challenges, Financial Challenges, Family-Related Challenges and School Environment/Teacher Challenges?
3. Based on the results of the needs assessment, what student retention strategy may be proposed to support students of dropping out?

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to assess the needs and challenges of students at risk of dropping out in Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health (MAPEH) at Nueva Vizcaya General Comprehensive High School for the School Year 2025–2026 as a basis for proposing a student retention strategy.

Specifically, this study addressed the following objectives:

1. To determine the level of needs of students at risk of dropping out in MAPEH in terms of personal needs, academic needs, social needs, financial/material needs, family support needs, and teachers' and school support needs.
2. To identify the extent of challenges experienced by students at risk of dropping out in MAPEH in terms of personal challenges, academic challenges, social challenges, financial challenges, family-related challenges, and school environment or teacher-related challenges.
3. To develop a student retention strategy based on the results of the needs assessment to support students at risk of dropping out in MAPEH.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are expected to be significant to various stakeholders in the field of education, particularly in addressing the needs and challenges of students at risk of dropping out in Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health (MAPEH).

Students at Risk of Dropping Out. This study will directly benefit students at risk of dropping out by identifying their specific needs and challenges in personal, academic, social, financial, family, and school-related dimensions. The proposed student retention strategy may help provide appropriate support mechanisms, improve learning engagement, and encourage continued school participation, particularly in MAPEH.

MAPEH Teachers. The results of the study will provide MAPEH teachers with a deeper understanding of the difficulties and unmet needs faced by at-risk students. Insights gained from this research may assist teachers in adopting more responsive instructional strategies, providing targeted support, and creating a more inclusive and supportive learning environment that fosters active participation and motivation.

School Administrators. For school administrators, this study will serve as a valuable basis for planning, implementing, and strengthening school-based intervention programs aimed at reducing dropout rates. The

findings may guide administrators in policy formulation, resource allocation, and the development of learner-centered support systems that address the holistic needs of students.

Parents and Guardians. Parents and guardians may benefit from the study as it highlights the critical role of family support in sustaining students' school engagement. Awareness of the challenges faced by learners may encourage greater parental involvement and cooperation with teachers and school authorities in supporting students' education.

The Department of Education. The findings of this study may contribute to the Department of Education's ongoing efforts to strengthen student retention and dropout prevention initiatives. The proposed retention strategy may serve as a reference for improving existing programs and developing context-specific interventions, particularly for performance-based learning areas such as MAPEH.

Future Researchers. This study will serve as a reference for future researchers who wish to conduct similar studies on student retention, needs assessment, or dropout prevention. It may provide a foundation for further research in other learning areas, grade levels, or school contexts, thereby contributing to the growing body of knowledge in educational research.

THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The present study is anchored on established educational and psychological theories that explain student engagement, persistence, and dropout as outcomes of interacting personal and environmental factors. These theoretical perspectives provide the foundation for understanding why students become at risk of dropping out and how appropriate interventions may support retention, particularly in performance-based learning areas such as Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health (MAPEH).

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory posits that individuals must satisfy basic physiological, safety, social, and esteem needs before they can achieve higher-order goals such as self-actualization (Maslow, 1943). In the school context, students who experience unmet needs such as emotional support, financial stability, social belonging, and encouragement may struggle to maintain motivation and engagement in learning. The inclusion of personal, social, financial/material, and family support needs in this study reflects the premise that unmet foundational needs hinder students' capacity to participate meaningfully in classroom activities and persist in school.

Student Engagement Theory further explains learner persistence by emphasizing the importance of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive involvement in the learning process (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). Students are more likely to remain in school when they are actively participating, feel emotionally connected to their learning environment, and perceive their activities as meaningful. In MAPEH, which requires active participation, collaboration, and performance, students who experience anxiety, low confidence, or lack of teacher and peer support may gradually disengage, increasing their risk of dropping out. This theory supports the examination of both students' needs and the challenges they encounter in sustaining engagement.

Ecological Systems Theory provides further theoretical grounding by explaining student behavior as the product of interactions between individuals and multiple environmental systems, including the family, school, peer group, and broader social context (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Family-related challenges, school environment conditions, and teacher support examined in this study reflect the influence of these interconnected systems on learners' educational experiences. The theory underscores that dropout risk is not solely an individual issue but is shaped by the quality of support and relationships within students' immediate and extended contexts.

Research on student dropout also recognizes school withdrawal as a cumulative and developmental process influenced by persistent academic and social difficulties rather than a single event (Rumberger, 2011). This perspective reinforces the importance of identifying both needs and challenges as early indicators of disengagement. Addressing these factors holistically may help prevent further withdrawal and promote continued participation in school.

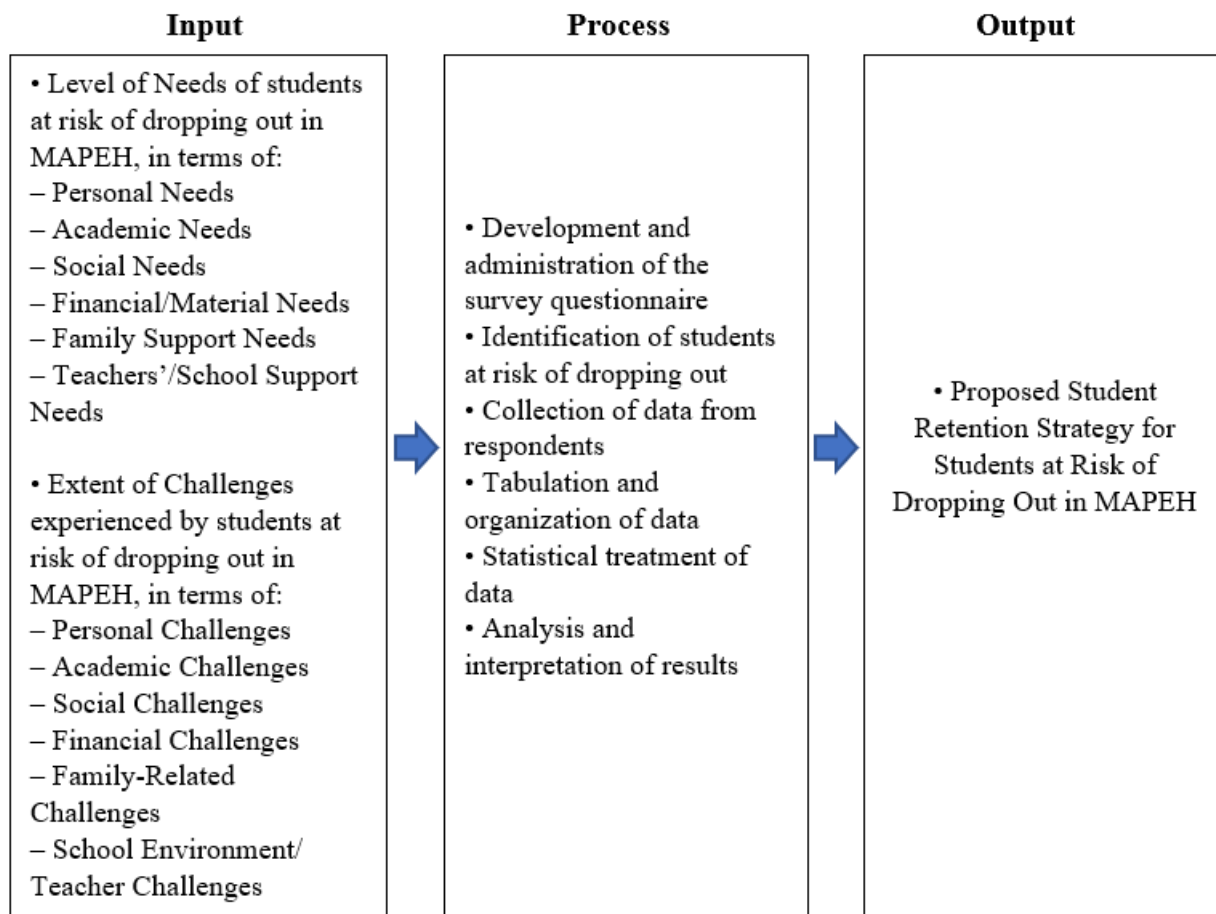


Figure 1. Conceptual Paradigm of the Study

Guided by these theories, the study adopts the Input–Process–Output (IPO) model as the conceptual structure that links students’ conditions to an actionable educational response. The input of the study consists of the identified level of needs and extent of challenges experienced by students at risk of dropping out in MAPEH. The level of needs includes personal needs, academic needs, social needs, financial/material needs, family support needs, and teachers’ or school support needs. These represent the essential conditions required for students to sustain motivation, participation, and engagement in MAPEH. The extent of challenges includes personal challenges, academic challenges, social challenges, financial challenges, family-related challenges, and school environment or teacher-related challenges, which serve as barriers that hinder students’ participation and persistence.

The process component involves the systematic assessment of these inputs through a descriptive research approach. This includes the administration of a survey questionnaire to assess the needs and challenges experienced by students, identification of students at risk of dropping out, collection and organization of data, statistical treatment of data and interpretation of results. Through this process, the raw data on students’ needs and challenges are transformed into meaningful findings that identify priority areas for intervention.

The output of the study is the proposed student retention strategy in MAPEH. This strategy is formulated based on the analyzed results of the needs assessment and is intended to address identified needs while mitigating the challenges faced by students at risk of dropping out. The IPO framework assumes that a retention strategy grounded in empirical assessment and informed by learner-centered theories is more likely to be relevant, responsive, and effective in supporting student engagement and reducing dropout risk.

The integration of the theoretical foundations with the IPO conceptual paradigm underscores the study’s assumption that student retention in MAPEH can be improved when learners’ personal, academic, social, family, and school-related conditions are systematically assessed and translated into targeted intervention strategies. This framework provides a coherent basis for understanding the flow of the study from problem identification to solution development, consistent with the objectives and design of the research.

Operational Definition of Terms

For clarity and consistency, the following terms are operationally defined as they are used in this study:

Students at Risk of Dropping Out. Refers to learners at Nueva Vizcaya General Comprehensive High School identified through school records, teacher referrals, and observable indicators such as poor attendance, low academic performance, lack of class participation, or socio-economic difficulties that may increase the likelihood of discontinuing schooling.

MAPEH (Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health). Refers to the learning area in the secondary school curriculum that integrates music, arts, physical education, and health. In this study, MAPEH is the subject area in which the needs and challenges of students at risk of dropping out are assessed.

Needs Assessment. Refers to the systematic process of identifying and evaluating the level of needs of students at risk of dropping out in MAPEH. In this study, it involves measuring students' perceived needs across personal, academic, social, financial/material, family support, and teachers'/school support dimensions.

Personal Needs. Refer to students' needs related to motivation, self-confidence, emotional support, self-discipline, and time management as they affect participation and engagement in MAPEH activities.

Academic Needs. Refer to learners' needs associated with understanding MAPEH lessons, access to learning materials, opportunities for practice, remediation, and feedback from teachers.

Social Needs. Refer to students' needs related to peer interaction, acceptance, cooperation, encouragement, and support during MAPEH group activities and performances.

Financial/Material Needs. Refer to students' needs concerning access to financial resources, school supplies, sports equipment, art materials, and other learning resources required for MAPEH activities.

Family Support Needs. Refer to the level of encouragement, guidance, understanding, and assistance provided by parents or guardians to support students' participation and persistence in school.

Teachers'/School Support Needs. Refer to students' needs for guidance, clear instruction, encouragement, remedial assistance, and school-based support programs that help address learning difficulties in MAPEH.

Challenges Experienced. Refer to the difficulties or barriers encountered by students at risk of dropping out that hinder their participation, performance, and sustained engagement in MAPEH.

Personal Challenges. Refer to internal difficulties such as lack of motivation, low self-confidence, stress, anxiety, embarrassment, or time-management problems affecting students' participation in MAPEH.

Academic Challenges. Refer to difficulties in understanding lessons, performing physical or artistic tasks, completing assignments, and keeping up with MAPEH requirements.

Social Challenges. Refer to challenges related to peer relationships, cooperation in group activities, feelings of isolation, teasing, or lack of peer support during MAPEH tasks.

Financial Challenges. Refer to difficulties arising from insufficient financial resources to obtain materials, equipment, or other requirements needed for effective participation in MAPEH activities.

Family-Related Challenges. Refer to challenges originating from family responsibilities, domestic problems, lack of parental support, or household obligations that interfere with students' school participation.

School Environment/Teacher Challenges. Refer to difficulties related to limited school facilities, inadequate equipment, insufficient practice opportunities, or limited teacher guidance affecting students' learning experiences in MAPEH.

Student Retention Strategy. Refers to the proposed set of planned interventions, programs, or support mechanisms developed based on the findings of the needs assessment, aimed at supporting students at risk of dropping out and encouraging continued participation and completion of schooling.

REVIEW OF RELATED STUDIES AND LITERATURE

This chapter presents a review of literature and studies related to the present research. It examines theories, research findings, and scholarly discussions relevant to the needs, challenges, and retention strategies of students at risk of dropping out, with particular emphasis on performance-based learning areas such as Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health (MAPEH). The review provides conceptual and empirical foundations that help explain the factors influencing student engagement and persistence in school. Through the synthesis of related literature and studies, this chapter establishes the relevance of the present study and identifies gaps that justify the conduct of the research.

Needs Assessment of Students-At-Risk of Dropping Out

Understanding the conditions that support learners' sustained participation and persistence in school requires careful attention to their needs. Students at risk of dropping out often face unmet needs across multiple areas, including personal, academic, social, financial, family, and school-related domains. Conducting a systematic needs assessment allows educators and school leaders to identify these requirements and design learner-centered interventions that promote engagement and continuity in schooling (Rumberger, 2011).

Personal needs are foundational to students' engagement and persistence. According to Maslow's theory of human motivation, individuals must satisfy basic emotional and psychological needs such as belongingness, esteem, and security before effectively pursuing higher-order goals related to learning and achievement (Maslow, 1943). In educational contexts, learners who lack motivation, confidence, or emotional support often struggle to remain engaged in classroom activities, increasing their risk of withdrawal (Rumberger, 2011).

Academic needs play an equally important role. Learners require clear instruction, access to learning materials, opportunities for guided practice, remediation, and timely feedback to develop confidence and competence in their studies (Fredricks et al., 2004). When instructional support falls short, students may gradually disengage. Adolescents are more likely to stay committed to schooling when academic tasks are aligned with their developmental needs and supported through responsive teaching practices (Eccles & Roeser, 2011).

Social connections also influence student persistence. Peer acceptance, positive interactions, and a sense of belonging within the school environment foster active participation and sustained engagement (Eccles & Roeser, 2011). These social needs become particularly visible in performance-based learning areas, where collaboration and public participation are integral to instruction.

Financial and material resources can significantly affect learners' ability to participate consistently in school activities. Limited access to basic supplies or materials needed for performance-oriented tasks can hinder engagement and motivation (Shields & Miles, 2018). Identifying these material gaps through needs assessment is essential to ensure equitable learning opportunities.

Family support is another critical factor. Learners' development is shaped by interactions within family and school systems, with parental encouragement and guidance serving as key sources of support (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Students who receive consistent family support show greater commitment to schooling and are more likely to persist through secondary education (Parreño, 2023).

Teachers and school environments further influence engagement and persistence. Students who perceive teachers as supportive, approachable, and responsive tend to remain motivated and actively involved in learning (Fredricks et al., 2004). Performance-based subjects particularly benefit from teacher encouragement, clear guidance, and access to school support programs, all of which enhance students' willingness to participate (Ronquillo, 2023).

Performance-oriented subjects such as MAPEH highlight the importance of meeting students' needs across multiple domains. Adequate resources, encouragement, and opportunities for skill development help learners engage confidently in these tasks (Shields & Miles, 2018). When these needs are unmet, students may develop reluctance toward participation, contributing to broader disengagement from school activities.

Local research reinforces these findings. Learners who receive sufficient academic, social, and family support are more likely to remain motivated and complete their schooling (Cabural, 2024). In MAPEH instruction, participation improves when learning environments address personal, material, and support needs (Ariola et al., 2025; Loranans et al., 2024).

Students' personal, academic, social, financial, family, and school support needs are closely linked to engagement and persistence. Systematic needs assessment provides a critical foundation for identifying these requirements and developing effective strategies to enhance student retention.

Challenges Experienced by Students-At-Risk of Dropping Out

Dropping out of school is rarely a sudden decision. It is a gradual process that unfolds as students face challenges across different areas of their lives. Those at risk often encounter obstacles that make it difficult to stay engaged, especially during secondary education when academic demands increase, social pressures intensify, and personal responsibilities grow. Understanding these challenges helps explain why some learners gradually disengage and ultimately leave school.

Personal challenges are central to student dropout risk. Low motivation, diminished self-confidence, stress, and performance anxiety can significantly affect learners' willingness to participate in classroom activities (Eccles & Roeser, 2011). Students who repeatedly encounter failure, embarrassment, or emotional distress in school settings tend to disengage gradually rather than abruptly discontinue schooling (Rumberger, 2011). These challenges often become most visible in performance-oriented subjects, where learners are required to demonstrate skills publicly.

Academic difficulties are another key factor. Learners at risk frequently struggle with understanding lessons, completing tasks, and keeping pace with academic requirements. Persistent academic challenges undermine students' sense of competence, reducing participation and increasing absenteeism (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). These issues intensify in secondary school, where academic expectations rise and instructional support may not meet the needs of struggling learners.

Social dynamics also influence school persistence. Peer rejection, teasing, and social isolation diminish students' sense of belonging, which can lower engagement (OECD, 2023). Adolescents who feel unsupported or excluded during group activities may develop negative attitudes toward school, increasing the likelihood of dropout. Such challenges are particularly pronounced in subjects that rely on collaboration and group performance.

Financial barriers remain a significant obstacle. Students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds often face difficulties securing materials, transportation, and other resources needed for school activities, limiting attendance and participation (Rumberger, 2011). Lack of access to resources also discourages participation in physical education and arts-based learning contexts, reinforcing disengagement over time (Shields & Miles, 2018).

Family circumstances further shape learners' school experiences. Responsibilities at home, domestic conflicts, and limited parental support affect students' ability to prioritize schooling (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Those who assume household duties or experience family instability often struggle to attend regularly and remain cognitively engaged in class, heightening the risk of withdrawal.

The school environment and teacher support play a critical role as well. Limited facilities, inadequate equipment, overcrowded classrooms, and insufficient teacher guidance contribute to negative learning experiences, especially in performance-based subjects (Fredricks et al., 2004). Students perceiving the school environment as unsupportive may become reluctant to participate actively, weakening engagement and persistence.

These patterns are reflected in Philippine educational research. Analyses of student dropout reveal that personal discouragement, academic struggles, and socioeconomic difficulties frequently intersect among learners who leave school prematurely (Parreño, 2023). Filipino students in particular experience heightened academic and personal challenges when instructional support and encouragement are limited, leading to low confidence and disengagement, especially in tasks requiring public performance or active participation (Cabural, 2024).

Performance-based subjects such as MAPEH illustrate these challenges vividly. Participation difficulties often arise from low confidence, lack of materials, and insufficient teacher guidance, leading to avoidance behaviors among students who struggle with performance tasks (Ronquillo, 2023). Inadequate equipment and limited practice opportunities further undermine both performance and willingness to engage (Ariola, Abao, & Bautista, 2025). Family support and school conditions also strongly influence participation; students with limited family encouragement and poor access to facilities face greater challenges sustaining engagement in performance-oriented activities (Loranas, Serviñas, & Eslabon, 2024).

The literature demonstrates that students at risk of dropping out face interconnected personal, academic, social, financial, family-related, and school-based challenges that impede sustained engagement. These factors are especially evident in performance-oriented learning areas, where participation, confidence, and access to support are critical.

Student Retention Strategies for Students-At-Risk of Dropping Out

Student retention strategies aim to help learners stay engaged and complete their education despite the challenges they may face. In secondary education, particularly for students at risk of dropping out, these strategies focus on timely support, enhanced engagement, and learning environments that encourage continued participation. In performance-based subjects such as Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health (MAPEH), retention efforts are especially crucial, as students' confidence, motivation, and willingness to participate strongly influence their continued involvement in school activities (Tinto, 2017).

Interventions that address multiple aspects of learners' experiences tend to be more effective than isolated measures. Retention strategies work best when they support academic performance while simultaneously fostering connections to school through mentoring, supportive relationships, and engagement-oriented activities (Rumberger, 2011). Programs that integrate academic support, motivation, and positive school climate are more likely to reduce dropout rates.

Student engagement is a central focus of effective retention strategies. Approaches that promote behavioral, emotional, and cognitive involvement such as active learning, meaningful participation, and positive feedback enhance students' commitment to schooling (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). These strategies are particularly relevant in MAPEH, where participation and interaction are integral to learning. Sustained engagement has been shown to predict persistence and lower dropout risk (Wang & Eccles, 2016).

Supportive school environments also play a key role. Students are more likely to persist when teachers and peers provide encouragement, recognition, and respect (Eccles & Roeser, 2011). Inclusive and emotionally supportive schools are particularly effective in maintaining engagement for students at risk of disengagement (Skinner, Furrer, Marchand, & Kindermann, 2020).

Performance-based learning areas require strategies tailored to their unique demands. Flexible assessment practices, expanded opportunities for skill development, and constructive instructional feedback improve participation in arts and physical education activities (Shields & Miles, 2018). These approaches reduce anxiety around public performance, build confidence, and help retain students at risk of disengagement.

Data-driven retention strategies further enhance effectiveness. Personalized support programs, peer mentoring, and school-based interventions informed by needs assessments promote persistence, especially among disadvantaged learners (OECD, 2023). Engagement-focused and adaptive programs have been shown to strengthen commitment to schooling over time (Sutton, Langenkamp, Muller, & Schiller, 2019).

Philippine studies echo these findings. School-initiated intervention programs, parental involvement activities, and learner monitoring systems have been identified as effective in reducing dropout rates (Parreño, 2023). Early identification of at-risk students and continuous, context-sensitive support are critical to success. Programs that enhance motivation, confidence, and relevance of learning further sustain participation, particularly for academically struggling students (Cabural, 2024). Integrating psychosocial support into retention efforts addresses underlying disengagement and strengthens overall outcomes.

In MAPEH instruction, strategies that directly support performance-based learning are particularly effective. Teacher encouragement, clear instructions, and access to learning materials foster participation and engagement (Ronquillo, 2023). Providing a supportive, non-threatening environment helps at-risk students remain involved, while enrichment activities, mentoring, and adequate resources improve overall retention outcomes (Ariola, Abao, & Bautista, 2025). Collaborative efforts involving families and schools through parental engagement, guidance services, and coordinated support further enhance student persistence (Loranas, Serviñas, & Eslabon, 2024).

Effective retention strategies for learners at risk of dropping out are comprehensive and responsive. They strengthen engagement, provide academic and emotional support, improve instructional resources, and foster supportive school and family environments. In MAPEH, these strategies must also address the unique challenges of performance-based learning by building confidence, encouraging participation, and creating inclusive learning spaces.

Synthesis

The literature reviewed in this chapter presents student dropout as a gradual, multifaceted process shaped by the interaction of learners' unmet needs, the challenges they face, and the capacity of schools to provide effective retention mechanisms. Dropout is rarely a sudden decision; instead, it often emerges from prolonged disengagement, particularly during secondary education when academic expectations rise and students encounter increased personal and social demands (Rumberger, 2011).

Needs assessment is central to understanding the foundations of sustained school participation. Personal, academic, social, financial, family, and school-based support needs all contribute to learners' ability to remain engaged. Personal needs including motivation, self-confidence, and emotional security are critical, reflecting the principle that learning cannot be sustained when basic psychological and social needs remain unmet (Maslow, 1943). Academic support, such as clear instruction, access to materials, remediation, and timely feedback, strengthens learners' competence and attachment to schooling, particularly when teaching practices align with developmental stages and learning capacities (Fredricks et al., 2004; Eccles & Roeser, 2011). Social support, financial resources, family encouragement, and school assistance further interact to influence engagement, especially in performance-based contexts like MAPEH.

The challenges experienced by students at risk of dropping out often stem directly from unmet needs. Anxiety, stress, and low confidence reduce willingness to participate, while academic difficulties undermine competence. Social exclusion and limited peer support weaken students' sense of belonging, and financial or family-related constraints restrict access to learning opportunities and consistent attendance (Parreño, 2023; OECD, 2023). These challenges are amplified in performance-oriented learning areas, where students must demonstrate skills publicly, making adequate support essential to prevent disengagement (Ronquillo, 2023; Ariola et al., 2025).

Retention strategies that respond effectively to these conditions are comprehensive and grounded in an understanding of learners' experiences. Interventions that address academic support, emotional encouragement, engagement, and school climate simultaneously are more effective than isolated measures (Rumberger, 2011). Sustained engagement serves as a protective factor, particularly when students feel connected to school and perceive learning as meaningful (Wang & Eccles, 2016). Inclusive and supportive school environments that foster positive relationships and emotional safety play a crucial role in maintaining participation, especially for at-risk learners (Skinner et al., 2020).

In performance-based subjects such as MAPEH, retention strategies must address the unique demands of participation and public performance. Flexible assessment practices, supportive feedback, ample practice opportunities, and access to necessary materials help reduce anxiety and build confidence, encouraging continued engagement (Shields & Miles, 2018). Data-driven and personalized interventions, including peer mentoring and context-specific support programs, further strengthen persistence when guided by systematic needs assessment (OECD, 2023). Longitudinal research highlights that adaptive, engagement-focused approaches significantly enhance long-term persistence in secondary education (Sutton et al., 2019).

The literature underscores the interconnected relationship among students' needs, the challenges they encounter, and the effectiveness of retention strategies. Unmet needs give rise to barriers that increase the likelihood of disengagement, while responsive retention strategies foster sustained participation. Despite these findings, localized research integrating needs assessment, challenge identification, and retention strategy development within MAPEH remains limited. This gap highlights the relevance and potential contribution of the present study in improving student retention in performance-based learning areas.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methods and procedures employed in the conduct of the study. It presents the research design, locale of the study, sample and sampling design, data gathering procedures, research instruments, and the statistical treatment of data. These components outline how data are collected, analyzed, and interpreted in assessing the needs and challenges of students at risk of dropping out in MAPEH and in proposing a student retention strategy.

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive research design, specifically a descriptive survey approach, to assess the needs and challenges of students at risk of dropping out in Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health (MAPEH). A descriptive design is appropriate for the study because it seeks to systematically describe existing conditions, characteristics, and experiences of the respondents without manipulating variables or establishing cause-and-effect relationships (Creswell, 2014).

The descriptive survey approach allows the researcher to gather quantifiable data from a defined group of respondents using a structured instrument. In this study, the approach is utilized to determine the level of needs and the extent of challenges experienced by students at risk of dropping out in MAPEH. The data generated through this design serve as the empirical basis for proposing a student retention strategy grounded in the actual conditions and experiences of the respondents.

This research design is suitable for the study as it focuses on describing and interpreting the current status of students' needs and challenges rather than testing hypotheses or examining causal relationships. Through the application of descriptive statistical tool such as weighted mean, the study is able to present an organized and objective depiction of the needs and challenges experienced by students at risk of dropping out. The findings generated from this design are intended to inform the development of a context-specific and responsive student retention strategy in MAPEH.

Locale of the Study

The study was conducted at Nueva Vizcaya General Comprehensive High School (NVGCHS), a public secondary school located in Bayombong, the capital municipality of the province of Nueva Vizcaya. The school serves a large and diverse population of learners coming from various municipalities and socioeconomic backgrounds within the province. As one of the largest and oldest public secondary schools in Nueva Vizcaya, NVGCHS plays a significant role in the delivery of secondary education in the region.

Nueva Vizcaya General Comprehensive High School traces its institutional roots to 1906, when it is established as Nueva Vizcaya High School, the first provincial high school in the area. The institution begins in a two-storey brick building during the American colonial period and gradually expands its academic offerings to serve the

educational needs of the province. In 1969, the school is converted into a national high school under Republic Act No. 5545 and is renamed Nueva Vizcaya General Comprehensive High School. This conversion authorizes the offering of a comprehensive curriculum that includes both academic and vocational courses.

At present, NVGCHS operates under the supervision of the Department of Education and implements the K–12 basic education curriculum. The school offers both junior and senior high school programs and provides various academic, co-curricular, and enrichment activities aligned with national education policies. As part of its curriculum, the school offers the learning area of Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health (MAPEH), which emphasizes performance-based instruction requiring active participation, collaboration, and the use of instructional materials and facilities.

The locale is considered appropriate for the present study because the school caters to learners who experience varying personal, academic, social, financial, family-related, and school-based conditions that influence school engagement and persistence. Conducting the study in this setting will allow the researcher to assess the needs and challenges of students at risk of dropping out within a real-world public secondary school context.

The study will be conducted during School Year 2025–2026, and the findings that will be generated from Nueva Vizcaya General Comprehensive High School will serve as the basis for proposing a student retention strategy that is responsive to the actual conditions and lived experiences of learners, particularly in the MAPEH learning area.

Sample and Sampling Design

The respondents of the study consisted of students-at-risk of dropping out (SARDOs) who are enrolled in Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health (MAPEH) at Nueva Vizcaya General Comprehensive High School. These students were identified based on existing school records and indicators commonly used by the school, such as frequent absenteeism, poor academic performance in MAPEH, lack of participation in class activities, and referrals from subject teachers and guidance personnel.

This study utilized the total enumeration sampling technique. Total enumeration, also known as complete enumeration, is a sampling method in which all members of the identified population are included as respondents in the study. This technique was considered appropriate because the number of identified respondents was manageable and all participants were deemed relevant to the objectives of the research.

The respondents of this study were the Students At Risk of Dropping Out (SARDOs) identified by the Junior High School MAPEH teachers of Nueva Vizcaya General Comprehensive High School. A total of forty-six (46) SARDOs served as the respondents of the study. Since all identified SARDOs were included, no sampling procedure for selection was conducted.

Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Total
16	12	10	8	46

Data Gathering Procedures

To acquire the needed data to answer the study's specific questions, the following procedures were undertaken:

Securing permission and coordination with school authorities. The researchers sought formal permission from the Schools Division Office of Nueva Vizcaya and the School Head of Nueva Vizcaya General Comprehensive High School to conduct the study and coordinated with MAPEH teachers and guidance personnel to ensure the smooth implementation of the research activities.

Development of the survey questionnaire. The researchers developed a survey questionnaire designed to assess the needs and challenges experienced by students at risk of dropping out in MAPEH. The items in the questionnaire were based on relevant literature, the objectives of the study, and the identified dimensions of needs and challenges to ensure content relevance and alignment with the research variables.

Validation of the survey questionnaire. The developed questionnaire was subjected to content validation by a panel of experts composed of MAPEH teachers, guidance personnel, and educators with relevant expertise. Their comments and suggestions were used to revise and improve the instrument to ensure clarity, appropriateness, and accuracy of the items.

Identification of students at risk of dropping out (SARDOs). The researchers identified students at risk of dropping out in MAPEH using existing school records and indicators such as attendance reports, academic performance, participation in MAPEH activities, and referrals from subject teachers.

Selection of respondents through total enumeration. The respondents of the study were selected using the total enumeration sampling technique. All identified Students At Risk of Dropping Out (SARDOs) were included in the study to ensure complete representation of the target population. This technique was employed because the number of identified respondents was manageable and all participants were considered significant to the objectives of the research. A total of forty-six (46) SARDOs identified by the Junior High School MAPEH teachers of Nueva Vizcaya General Comprehensive High School served as the respondents of the study.

Orientation of the respondents. The researchers oriented the selected respondents about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, and the confidentiality of their responses, as well as provide clear instructions on how to answer the questionnaire.

Administration of the survey questionnaire. The survey questionnaire was administered to the selected respondents at a scheduled time and designated venue within the school. The researchers personally supervised the administration to address questions and ensure that the responses are properly accomplished.

Collection, checking, and organization of data. The researchers collected the completed questionnaires, checked them for completeness and consistency, and organized the data for encoding and statistical analysis to serve as the basis for interpreting the results of the study.

Research Instrument

The primary instrument used in this study is a researcher-made survey questionnaire entitled “Survey Questionnaire for Learners at Risk of Dropping Out in MAPEH.” The instrument is designed to assess the level of needs and the extent of challenges experienced by students at risk of dropping out in Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health (MAPEH).

The survey questionnaire is composed of two major parts. Part I focuses on the Level of Needs among Learners at Risk of Dropping Out in MAPEH. This section consists of six domains: Personal Needs, Academic Needs, Social Needs, Financial/Material Needs, Family Support Needs, and Teachers’ and School Support Needs. Each domain includes five indicators, for a total of thirty (30) items. Responses are measured using a five-point Likert scale, where 5 indicates Very High Need, 4 High Need, 3 Moderate Need, 2 Low Need, and 1 Very Low Need.

Part II of the questionnaire addresses the Challenges Experienced by Learners at Risk of Dropping Out in MAPEH. This section is likewise composed of six domains: Personal Challenges, Academic Challenges, Social Challenges, Financial Challenges, Family-Related Challenges, and School Environment or Teacher Challenges, with five indicators under each domain, totaling thirty (30) items. Responses are measured using a five-point Likert scale, where 5 corresponds to Always, 4 Often, 3 Sometimes, 2 Rarely, and 1 Never.

All items in the questionnaire are framed as clear and specific statements to capture the learners’ self-reported experiences related to participation, performance, and support in MAPEH. The use of Likert-type scales allow the data to be quantified and analyzed using descriptive statistical measures.

Prior to its administration, the researcher-made questionnaire will undergo content validation by experts in education, MAPEH, and guidance services to ensure clarity, relevance, and alignment with the objectives of the study. Revisions will be made based on the validators’ suggestions to improve the accuracy and appropriateness of the instrument.

The researcher-made survey questionnaire is considered appropriate for the study as it enables the direct and systematic assessment of context-specific needs and challenges experienced by students at risk of dropping out in MAPEH at Nueva Vizcaya General Comprehensive High School.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The data gathered using the researcher-made survey questionnaire were statistically treated and analyzed using appropriate descriptive statistical tools to answer the research questions of the study.

Weighted Mean. This was used to determine the level of needs of students at risk of dropping out in MAPEH in terms of Personal Needs, Academic Needs, Social Needs, Financial/Material Needs, Family Support Needs, and Teachers'/School Support Needs, as well as the extent of challenges experienced by the respondents in terms of Personal Challenges, Academic Challenges, Social Challenges, Financial Challenges, Family-Related Challenges, and School Environment or Teacher Challenges.

The following scale will be used to interpret the computed weighted mean for the level of needs of students at risk of dropping out in MAPEH:

Weighted Mean Range	Qualitative Description	Interpretation
4.21 – 5.00	Very High Need	The need is strongly felt and requires immediate attention.
3.41 – 4.20	High Need	The need is evident and requires appropriate intervention.
2.61 – 3.40	Moderate Need	The need is present but not urgent.
1.81 – 2.60	Low Need	The need is minimal and requires limited support.
1.00 – 1.80	Very Low Need	The need is rarely felt and requires little to no intervention.

The following scale will be used to interpret the computed weighted mean for the extent of challenges experienced by students at risk of dropping out in MAPEH:

Weighted Mean Range	Descriptor	Qualitative Description
4.21 – 5.00	Always	Very High Extent
3.41 – 4.20	Often	High Extent
2.61 – 3.40	Sometimes	Moderate Extent
1.81 – 2.60	Rarely	Low Extent
1.00 – 1.80	Never	Very Minimal Extent

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the data collected using the research instrument, as well as its analysis and interpretation. The tabular display of the data and the accompanying explanation follow the order in which the problem is presented in Chapter I.

Problem 1. What is the level of needs of students at risk of dropping out in MAPEH in terms of Personal Needs, Academic Needs, Social Needs, Financial/Material Needs, Family Support Needs and Teachers/School Support Needs?

To determine the level of needs of students at-risk of dropping out in MAPEH, respondents' answers were analyzed using weighted mean and are presented in Tables 1 to 6.

Table 1 Level of Need in Terms of Personal Needs

Statement	Mean	Description
1. I need motivation and encouragement to actively participate in MAPEH activities.	3.46	High Need

2. I need to develop confidence in performing tasks in music, arts, physical education, and health.	4.13	High Need
3. I need emotional support when I feel discouraged in learning MAPEH.	3.30	Moderate Need
4. I need guidance in improving my self-discipline and responsibility in class.	3.41	High Need
5. I need support in managing my time to complete MAPEH requirements.	3.5	High Need
Overall	3.56	High Need

*1.00-1.80-Very Low Need, 1.81-2.60-Low Need, 2.61-3.40-Moderate Need, 3.41-4.20-High Need, 4.21-5.00 – Very High Need

The results indicate that learners generally experience a high level of personal need in learning MAPEH, as reflected by the overall mean of 3.56. Most indicators fall within the high need category, suggesting that learners require considerable motivation, guidance, and support to actively participate and perform in MAPEH activities.

A comparison of the indicators shows that the highest mean (4.13) was obtained for the need to develop confidence in performing tasks in music, arts, physical education, and health, highlighting confidence as the most critical concern among learners. This suggests that performance-based and skills-oriented activities pose challenges when students lack self-assurance. In contrast, the lowest mean (3.30) was recorded for the need for emotional support when feeling discouraged, which was described as a moderate need. While emotional support remains relevant, learners appear to place greater priority on developing confidence, motivation, and self-management skills necessary for successful engagement in MAPEH.

The strong emphasis on confidence, motivation, and guidance reflects key principles of Self-Determination Theory, which asserts that learners are more engaged and motivated when their need for competence is addressed (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In performance-oriented subjects such as MAPEH, confidence enables learners to participate actively and demonstrate skills with less anxiety and hesitation. Furthermore, effective guidance in self-discipline and time management contributes to the development of self-regulated learning, which is essential for sustaining effort and improving performance in tasks that require continuous practice and responsibility (Zimmerman, 2002).

Table 2 **Level of Need in Terms of Academic Needs**

Statement	Mean	Description
1. I need clearer explanations from my teacher about MAPEH lessons.	3.72	High Need
2. I need additional learning materials to better understand MAPEH topics.	3.22	Moderate Need
3. I need more practice activities to improve my skills in MAPEH.	3.89	High Need
4. I need remediation or extra lessons when I do not understand the topic.	3.74	High Need
5. I need feedback from my teacher regarding my performance in MAPEH.	3.43	High Need
Overall	3.60	High Need

*1.00-1.80-Very Low Need, 1.81-2.60-Low Need, 2.61-3.40-Moderate Need, 3.41-4.20-High Need, 4.21-5.00 – Very High Need

The data reflect that learners exhibit a high level of academic need in MAPEH, with an overall mean of 3.60. Most indicators were described as high need, suggesting that students consistently require instructional guidance and academic support to strengthen their understanding and performance in the subject.

The results further indicate that the need for more practice activities to improve MAPEH skills obtained the highest mean of 3.89, highlighting learners' strong preference for hands-on and repetitive engagement to achieve skill mastery. This finding emphasizes the performance-based nature of MAPEH, where learning is enhanced through active participation. In contrast, the need for additional learning materials registered the lowest mean of 3.22 and was interpreted as a moderate need, implying that while supplementary resources are helpful, learners place greater value on direct instruction, guided practice, and teacher support.

The prominence of practice activities, remediation, clear explanations, and feedback reflects principles of mastery learning, which stress that learners benefit from sufficient opportunities to practice and receive corrective instruction to attain desired competencies (Bloom, 1976). Moreover, timely and meaningful feedback enables learners to monitor their progress, identify areas for improvement, and refine their skills, thereby contributing significantly to academic achievement (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). The need for clearer explanations and remediation also aligns with the concept of instructional scaffolding, where guided support helps learners bridge gaps in understanding and gradually develop independent learning skills (Vygotsky, 1978).

Table 3 Level of Need in Terms of Social Needs

Statement	Mean	Description
1. I need better cooperation with my classmates during MAPEH group activities.	3.76	High Need
2. I need encouragement from my classmates to participate in class activities.	3.61	High Need
3. I need to feel accepted and respected by my classmates during performances.	3.63	High Need
4. I need opportunities to collaborate with my peers in MAPEH tasks and projects.	3.54	High Need
5. I need support from friends to stay motivated in school.	3.50	High Need
Overall	3.61	High Need

*1.00-1.80-Very Low Need, 1.81-2.60-Low Need, 2.61-3.40-Moderate Need, 3.41-4.20-High Need, 4.21-5.00 – Very High Need

The results indicate a high level of social need among learners in MAPEH, as reflected by the overall mean of 3.61. All indicators fall within the high need category, suggesting that learners place strong value on interpersonal relationships, peer interaction, and social support as integral components of their learning experience in the subject.

The highest mean score (3.76) was registered for the need for better cooperation with classmates during MAPEH group activities, highlighting learners' concern for effective teamwork and coordinated participation. This emphasizes the collaborative nature of MAPEH, where group activities and collective performances require active cooperation and shared responsibility. In contrast, the lowest mean (3.50) was obtained for the need for support from friends to stay motivated in school, although it remains classified as a high need. This pattern indicates that while peer encouragement contributes to motivation, learners prioritize immediate social dynamics such as cooperation, acceptance, and encouragement during class activities and performances.

The strong need for cooperation, encouragement, and acceptance reflects the social foundations of learning emphasized in social constructivist theory, which views interaction and collaboration as essential processes in knowledge and skill development (Vygotsky, 1978). Cooperative learning theory further explains that positive peer interdependence enhances motivation, engagement, and performance, particularly in collaborative environments such as MAPEH (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Additionally, the importance placed on acceptance and respect during performances aligns with the need for belongingness, which influences learners' confidence, emotional security, and willingness to participate in group and performance-based activities (Maslow, 1987).

Table 4 Level of Need in Terms of Financial/Material Needs

Statement	Mean	Description
1. I need financial support to buy materials required in MAPEH activities.	3.37	Moderate Need
2. I need access to sports equipment or art materials needed in class.	3.52	High Need
3. I need assistance in preparing materials or costumes for performances.	3.52	High Need
4. I need school resources such as facilities and equipment for MAPEH activities.	3.22	Moderate Need
5. I need affordable materials for completing MAPEH projects.	3.50	High Need
Overall	3.43	High Need

*1.00-1.80-Very Low Need, 1.81-2.60-Low Need, 2.61-3.40-Moderate Need, 3.41-4.20-High Need, 4.21-5.00 – Very High Need

Learners demonstrate a high level of financial and material need in relation to MAPEH, as reflected by the overall mean of 3.43. This indicates that many students encounter practical difficulties in securing the materials required to participate meaningfully in MAPEH activities, which may affect both their engagement and performance in the subject.

The most evident concerns involve access to sports equipment or art materials and assistance in preparing materials or costumes for performances, both of which obtained the highest mean of 3.52 and were interpreted as high need. These results suggest that learners often depend on support beyond their own resources to meet the material demands of performance-based tasks. In contrast, the need for school resources such as facilities and equipment recorded the lowest mean of 3.22, categorized as a moderate need, indicating that while basic school resources may be available, they may not fully address learners' individual and project-specific material needs.

These concerns underline the reality that learning in MAPEH often extends beyond classroom instruction and requires financial capacity to obtain materials for participation and performance. Access to adequate and affordable learning resources is essential for meaningful engagement, particularly in hands-on and skills-oriented subjects (UNESCO, 2015). From a bioecological perspective, learners' educational experiences are shaped by interactions between individual circumstances and environmental systems such as family resources, school support, and community context, which influence their opportunities for participation in school activities (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). When financial and material support is limited, learners may face obstacles that restrict full involvement in MAPEH tasks, emphasizing the need for institutional initiatives that help reduce resource-related barriers.

Table 5 Level of Need in Terms of Family Support Needs

Statement	Mean	Description
1. I need encouragement from my parents or guardians to continue my studies.	4.00	High Need
2. I need support from my family in completing school requirements.	3.80	High Need
3. I need understanding from my family regarding my school responsibilities.	3.74	High Need
4. I need my family to motivate me to attend school regularly.	3.57	High Need
5. I need guidance from my parents or guardians regarding my education.	3.37	Moderate Need
Overall	3.70	High Need

*1.00-1.80-Very Low Need, 1.81-2.60-Low Need, 2.61-3.40-Moderate Need, 3.41-4.20-High Need, 4.21-5.00 – Very High Need

Family involvement continues to be a vital element in learners' educational experiences, as indicated by the overall mean of 3.70, which reflects a high level of need for family support. This suggests that students strongly depend on their parents or guardians for encouragement, motivation, and assistance as they continue to manage school demands.

The need that emerged most strongly is encouragement from parents or guardians to continue studying, which obtained the highest mean of 4.00 and was interpreted as a high need. This highlights how emotional reassurance and verbal encouragement from family members play a key role in sustaining learners' determination to pursue their education. Closely following this are the needs for family support in completing school requirements (3.80) and understanding from family regarding school responsibilities (3.74), both categorized as high need, indicating that learners value practical assistance and empathy from their families as they balance academic tasks and obligations. In contrast, the need for guidance from parents or guardians regarding education registered the lowest mean of 3.37 and was described as a moderate need. This suggests that while learners are beginning to exercise some independence in making educational decisions, they still benefit from parental guidance, albeit to a slightly lesser extent than encouragement and support.

These results underscore the important role families play in promoting learners' motivation, consistency, and overall engagement in school. Parental encouragement and involvement have been found to strengthen students' persistence and commitment to their studies, particularly by fostering a supportive home environment that reinforces positive attitudes toward education (Hill & Tyson, 2009). Additionally, family understanding and

motivation contribute to better school attendance and task completion, as learners feel supported both emotionally and academically (Jeynes, 2016). When families actively participate in their children's educational lives, students are more likely to remain engaged, motivated, and resilient in facing academic challenges.

Table 6 Level of Need in Terms of Teachers and School Support Needs

Statement	Mean	Description
1. I need guidance from my teacher when performing MAPEH tasks.	3.37	Moderate Need
2. I need clear instructions before performing activities in class.	4.17	High Need
3. I need encouragement from my teacher to participate in MAPEH lessons.	3.39	Moderate Need
4. I need additional assistance from teachers when I find lessons difficult.	3.72	High Need
5. I need support programs from the school that will help struggling learners like me.	3.54	Moderate Need
Overall	3.63	High Need

*1.00-1.80-Very Low Need, 1.81-2.60-Low Need, 2.61-3.40-Moderate Need, 3.41-4.20-High Need, 4.21-5.00 – Very High Need

Learners express a high level of need for teacher and school support in relation to MAPEH, as reflected by the overall mean of 3.63. This suggests that students place considerable importance on teachers' guidance, clarity of instruction, and institutional support to help them actively participate in and cope with the subject's demands.

The strongest concern centers on the need for clear instructions before performing activities in class, which obtained the highest mean of 4.17 and was interpreted as a high need. This highlights how learners rely on clear directions to feel prepared and confident, especially in performance-based tasks common in MAPEH. Another indicator rated with high need is the requirement for additional assistance from teachers when lessons are difficult (mean = 3.72), underscoring students' expectation for timely help when they encounter learning challenges. In contrast, the need for guidance from teachers while performing MAPEH tasks recorded the lowest mean of 3.37, classified as a moderate need, suggesting that learners may already possess some task awareness but still benefit from teacher presence and supervision. Similarly, the needs for teacher encouragement to participate and school support programs for struggling learners were rated as moderate, indicating that while these supports are available to some extent, students continue to see room for improvement.

These findings emphasize the critical role of teachers and schools in creating supportive learning environments, particularly in subjects that involve active participation and skill demonstration. Clear instruction has been identified as a key factor in improving student engagement and performance, as it reduces confusion and builds learner confidence (Hattie, 2009). Moreover, responsive teacher assistance supports students within their zone of proximal development, enabling them to overcome difficulties that they cannot manage independently (Vygotsky, 1978). School-based support programs further contribute to inclusive education by addressing diverse learning needs and helping struggling students remain engaged and motivated (UNESCO, 2017).

Problem 2. What is the extent of challenges experienced by students at risk of dropping out in MAPEH in terms of Personal Challenges, Academic Challenges, Social Challenges, Financial Challenges, Family-Related Challenges and School Environment/Teacher Challenges?

To determine the extent of challenges experienced by students at-risk of dropping out in MAPEH, respondents' answers were analyzed using weighted mean and are presented in Tables 7 to 12.

Table 7 Extent of Challenges Experienced by Learners in Terms of Personal Challenges

Statement	Mean	Description
1. I lack motivation to participate in MAPEH activities.	3.28	Moderate Extent
2. I feel shy or embarrassed performing in front of my classmates.	3.74	High Extent
3. I have difficulty managing my time to complete MAPEH tasks.	3.09	Moderate Extent
4. I easily lose interest during MAPEH lessons.	2.87	Moderate Extent

5. I feel pressured or stressed when performing in class.	3.13	Moderate Extent
Overall	3.22	Moderate Extent

*1.00-1.80-Very Minimal Extent, 1.81-2.60-Low Extent, 2.61-3.40-Moderate Extent, 3.41-4.20-High Extent, 4.21-5.00 – Very High Extent

Learners experience a moderate extent of personal challenges in MAPEH, as reflected by the overall mean of 3.22. This indicates that personal difficulties are present in learners' experiences and may affect how they engage, perform, and feel during MAPEH activities, even though these challenges are not consistently dominating their learning experiences.

Among the identified concerns, feeling shy or embarrassed when performing in front of classmates emerged as the most significant challenge, receiving a mean of 3.74 and interpreted as a high extent. This suggests that performance situations often trigger self-consciousness among learners, which may reduce their confidence and willingness to participate actively in performance-based tasks. Meanwhile, other challenges such as lack of motivation, difficulty managing time, losing interest during lessons, and feeling pressured or stressed while performing were all assessed at a moderate extent, indicating that these difficulties occur but do not persist at a heightened level.

The prominence of shyness and embarrassment during class performances highlights the role of confidence and emotional security in performance-oriented subjects like MAPEH. Learners who experience lower self-efficacy are more likely to feel anxious in public performance settings, which can hinder participation and skill development (Bandura, 2012). At the same time, challenges related to motivation, stress, and time management point to the importance of self-regulation in sustaining engagement and coping with academic demands (Zimmerman, 2013). Creating a supportive classroom environment that encourages gradual participation, provides assurance, and helps learners manage responsibilities may help reduce these personal challenges and foster more confident involvement in MAPEH activities.

Table 8 Extent of Challenges Experienced by Learners in Terms of Academic Challenges

Statement	Mean	Description
1. I find some MAPEH lessons difficult to understand.	3.22	Moderate Extent
2. I have difficulty performing certain physical or artistic activities.	3.46	High Extent
3. I struggle to complete MAPEH assignments and projects.	3.39	Moderate Extent
4. I find it difficult to remember important concepts in MAPEH.	3.41	High Extent
5. I have difficulty keeping up with the required tasks in MAPEH.	3.37	Moderate Extent
Overall	3.37	Moderate Extent

*1.00-1.80-Very Minimal Extent, 1.81-2.60-Low Extent, 2.61-3.40-Moderate Extent, 3.41-4.20-High Extent, 4.21-5.00 – Very High Extent

The results indicate that learners encounter academic challenges in MAPEH to a moderate extent, as evidenced by the overall mean of 3.37. This suggests that while learners do experience academic difficulties in the subject, these challenges are generally within a manageable level and do not consistently hinder their overall learning.

Two academic concerns emerged more prominently. Difficulty performing certain physical or artistic activities obtained a mean of 3.46, while difficulty remembering important concepts in MAPEH recorded a mean of 3.41; both were interpreted as challenges experienced to a high extent. These results suggest that learners find skill execution and retention of key concepts particularly demanding, which is understandable given the performance-based and multidisciplinary nature of MAPEH. Activities often require not only physical coordination and artistic expression but also the recall and application of concepts, which can pose difficulties for learners with varying abilities and learning styles.

Other academic challenges, including difficulty understanding some MAPEH lessons, struggling to complete assignments and projects, and difficulty keeping up with required tasks, were all rated at a moderate extent. This indicates that while learners encounter challenges related to comprehension, workload, and task pacing, these

issues are not consistently severe. Instead, they suggest occasional gaps in understanding and academic adjustment that may affect learners' confidence and efficiency when completing MAPEH requirements.

These findings highlight the need for instructional strategies that support both skill development and conceptual understanding. Performance difficulties and challenges in remembering concepts may be linked to cognitive load, as learners are required to process information while simultaneously performing tasks (Sweller et al., 2019). In addition, academic challenges in skill-based subjects underscore the role of guided practice and feedback in helping learners gradually master complex tasks (Hattie, 2012). Providing clear instruction, opportunities for repetition, and differentiated support may help learners cope more effectively with academic demands and promote sustained engagement in MAPEH.

Table 9 Extent of Challenges Experienced by Learners in Terms of Social Challenges

Statement	Mean	Description
1. I feel uncomfortable working with classmates during group activities.	2.70	Moderate Extent
2. I experience teasing or criticism when performing MAPEH activities.	3.09	Moderate Extent
3. I find it difficult to cooperate with my group members.	3.07	Moderate Extent
4. I feel that I am not supported by my classmates during activities.	2.93	Moderate Extent
5. I sometimes feel isolated during MAPEH class activities.	2.96	Moderate Extent
Overall	2.95	Moderate Extent

*1.00-1.80-Very Minimal Extent, 1.81-2.60-Low Extent, 2.61-3.40-Moderate Extent, 3.41-4.20-High Extent, 4.21-5.00 – Very High Extent

Learners' experiences in MAPEH suggest that social challenges are present at a moderate level, as indicated by the overall mean of 2.95. This reflects that interactions with classmates are generally manageable, yet learners still encounter situations where social dynamics affect their comfort and participation during class activities.

Working with classmates during group activities emerged as the most common social concern, indicating that collaboration can sometimes be uncomfortable for learners. Group-based tasks in MAPEH often require coordination, shared responsibility, and open interaction, which may be challenging for learners who differ in confidence, skill level, or communication style. Other social challenges such as experiencing teasing or criticism during performances, difficulty cooperating with group members, feeling unsupported by classmates, and occasional feelings of isolation were also reported at a moderate level. These results suggest that while learners are not consistently hindered by negative peer interactions, such experiences occur often enough to influence how engaged and confident they feel during activities.

Given the collaborative and performance-oriented nature of MAPEH, social interactions play an important role in shaping learners' classroom experiences. Moderate social challenges may affect learners' willingness to participate actively, particularly in group work and public performances. Research indicates that positive peer relationships and well-structured cooperative activities contribute to better engagement and participation in class (Johnson & Johnson, 2009), while a sense of belonging supports learners' comfort and involvement in school activities (Allen et al., 2018). Providing opportunities for guided collaboration and fostering a supportive classroom environment may help ease social challenges and promote more positive peer interactions in MAPEH.

Table 10 Extent of Challenges Experienced by Learners in Terms of Financial Challenges

Statement	Mean	Description
1. I cannot afford the materials required for MAPEH activities.	2.96	Moderate Extent
2. I lack access to sports equipment or art materials at home.	3.35	Moderate Extent
3. Financial problems affect my participation in MAPEH activities.	3.00	Moderate Extent
4. I sometimes cannot complete projects because of lack of materials.	3.37	Moderate Extent
5. Lack of resources prevents me from fully participating in class activities.	3.28	Moderate Extent
Overall	3.19	Moderate Extent

*1.00-1.80-Very Minimal Extent, 1.81-2.60-Low Extent, 2.61-3.40-Moderate Extent, 3.41-4.20-High Extent, 4.21-5.00 – Very High Extent

Learners experience financial challenges in MAPEH to a moderate extent, as reflected by the overall mean of 3.19. This indicates that financial concerns are present in learners' experiences and can affect their participation and completion of MAPEH activities, although these challenges are not severe enough to consistently hinder learning for all students.

The results suggest that learners sometimes struggle to complete projects and participate fully in activities because of limited access to required materials, such as sports equipment or art supplies. When activities require specific materials that learners cannot readily afford or access, participation may feel limited or incomplete. While many learners are still able to take part using available resources, financial constraints can place others at a disadvantage, particularly in performance-based and activity-oriented tasks. Similar studies have shown that access to learning resources plays an important role in student engagement, especially in subjects where practice, materials, and active participation are central to learning (Hattie, 2012).

Given that MAPEH emphasizes hands-on, physical, and creative learning, the availability of materials and equipment shapes how learners experience the subject. Experiential learning theories emphasize that meaningful learning occurs when learners are able to actively engage with tasks using appropriate resources (Kolb, 2015). When such resources are limited, learners' opportunities to fully demonstrate skills and achieve learning outcomes may be reduced. Providing shared materials, offering alternative activities, or strengthening school-based resource support may help ease financial barriers and allow learners to participate more equitably and confidently in MAPEH activities.

Table 11 Extent of Challenges Experienced by Learners in Terms of Family-Related Challenges

Statement	Mean	Description
1. Household responsibilities make it difficult for me to focus on my studies.	3.04	Moderate Extent
2. Family problems affect my participation in school activities.	3.00	Moderate Extent
3. My parents or guardians cannot always support my school needs.	2.87	Moderate Extent
4. I sometimes miss school because of family responsibilities.	3.39	Moderate Extent
5. Lack of family support affects my motivation to study.	3.11	Moderate Extent
Overall	3.08	Moderate Extent

*1.00-1.80-Very Minimal Extent, 1.81-2.60-Low Extent, 2.61-3.40-Moderate Extent, 3.41-4.20-High Extent, 4.21-5.00 – Very High Extent

Family-related conditions present a moderate extent of challenge to students' schooling, as reflected by the overall mean of 3.08. This suggests that family circumstances influence learners' academic experiences at times, particularly as they balance school demands with responsibilities at home, though these challenges do not consistently disrupt their schooling.

All statements were rated at a moderate extent, indicating that family-related challenges are commonly experienced but not severe. The concern that obtained the highest mean is missing school because of family responsibilities ($\bar{x} = 3.39$), suggesting that household obligations occasionally interfere with learners' attendance. This is followed by lack of family support affecting motivation to study ($\bar{x} = 3.11$), highlighting the role of parental encouragement in sustaining learners' academic drive. Household responsibilities making it difficult to focus on studies recorded a mean of 3.04, reflecting how domestic duties can compete with academic tasks. Likewise, family problems affecting participation in school activities ($\bar{x} = 3.00$) indicate that issues at home may influence learners' involvement in school-related engagements. The lowest mean, though still within the moderate extent, was observed for parents or guardians not always being able to support school needs ($\bar{x} = 2.87$), suggesting that while material or practical support may generally be available, limitations are still experienced by some learners.

The presence of these challenges reflects the influence of the home environment on learners' academic engagement. Family responsibilities and concerns can place additional demands on learners, affecting their attendance, focus, and participation in school activities (Eccles & Roeser, 2011). Moreover, parental involvement and emotional support have been shown to play a key role in sustaining learners' motivation and engagement, particularly during adolescence when academic and household expectations often overlap (Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2014). Recognizing these family-related challenges emphasizes the importance of school practices that are responsive to learners' home situations and that provide appropriate support to help learners manage academic responsibilities alongside family obligations.

Table 12 Extent of Challenges Experienced by Learners in Terms of School Environment/Teacher Challenges

Statement	Mean	Description
1. Limited school facilities affect my participation in MAPEH activities.	2.78	Moderate Extent
2. Lack of equipment affects my performance in physical activities.	2.96	Moderate Extent
3. I sometimes feel hesitant to ask questions during the lesson.	3.61	Moderate Extent
4. I need more guidance when performing tasks in class.	3.09	Moderate Extent
5. Limited opportunities to practice affect my learning in MAPEH.	2.96	Moderate Extent
Overall	3.08	Moderate Extent

*1.00-1.80-Very Minimal Extent, 1.81-2.60-Low Extent, 2.61-3.40-Moderate Extent, 3.41-4.20-High Extent, 4.21-5.00 – Very High Extent

School environment and teacher-related factors present a moderate extent of challenge to learners in MAPEH, as indicated by the overall mean of 3.08. This suggests that conditions within the school and classroom, such as facilities, equipment, and instructional interactions, sometimes affect learners' participation and learning, though these challenges are not consistently overwhelming.

All indicators under this dimension were assessed at a moderate extent, indicating that environment- and teacher-related challenges are commonly encountered by learners. The most notable concern is hesitation to ask questions during lessons ($\bar{x} = 3.61$), which suggests that some learners may feel unsure or lack confidence in seeking clarification during class. This is followed by the need for more guidance when performing tasks in class ($\bar{x} = 3.09$), indicating that learners sometimes require additional instructional support to carry out MAPEH activities effectively. Challenges related to lack of equipment affecting performance and limited opportunities for practice affecting learning both obtained a mean of 2.96, reflecting how resource limitations and insufficient practice opportunities may influence skill development. The least pronounced concern is limited school facilities affecting participation ($\bar{x} = 2.78$), suggesting that facilities are generally available but may not always be sufficient to fully support MAPEH activities.

These challenges point to the role of classroom climate, instructional support, and learning resources in shaping learners' confidence and participation. Learners' reluctance to ask questions may be influenced by their perceptions of teacher approachability and classroom safety, as students tend to engage more actively when they feel supported and encouraged to express difficulties (Wentzel, 2010). Ensuring that learners feel comfortable seeking help and have access to adequate resources and guidance may help reduce these challenges and support more effective engagement in MAPEH activities.

Problem 3. Based on the results of the needs assessment, what student retention strategy may be proposed to support students of dropping out?

In response to the findings of the study, a student retention strategy was developed to support learners at risk of dropping out in MAPEH. The proposed intervention adopts the standard program/project planning template of the Department of Education (DepEd) to ensure that it is systematic, implementable, and aligned with school-based management practices and intervention frameworks. The use of the DepEd template ensures that the proposed strategy follows a structured format that includes rationale, objectives, activities, implementation procedures, monitoring, and evaluation, making it suitable for actual adoption at the school level.

Curriculum Implementation Division

Project Title: Project STAY (Supporting and Transforming At-Risk Youth in MAPEH)

Target Date: July- December 2026

Background and Rationale

Based on the results of the needs assessment, students at risk of dropping out (SARDOs) in MAPEH exhibit high levels of needs across personal, academic, social, financial/material, family support, and teacher/school support domains. Meanwhile, the extent of challenges experienced by learners is generally moderate, particularly in areas such as performance anxiety, academic difficulty in skill-based tasks, limited access to materials, and balancing school with family responsibilities.

These findings indicate that although the challenges are not extreme, they are persistent and interconnected, requiring timely and targeted interventions. Without appropriate support, these moderate challenges may accumulate and lead to gradual disengagement and eventual dropout.

Given that MAPEH is a performance-based subject requiring active participation, collaboration, and confidence, students who lack support in these areas are more vulnerable to withdrawal. Therefore, there is a need to implement a comprehensive, learner-centered, and school-based retention strategy that addresses both the needs and challenges identified in the study.

Project STAY is designed to provide holistic support mechanisms that will enhance student engagement, improve participation, and promote continuous school attendance among SARDOs in MAPEH.

Objectives

General Objectives: To improve student retention and sustained participation of learners at risk of dropping out in MAPEH through targeted and holistic intervention strategies.

Enabling Objectives:

1. To enhance students' confidence, motivation, and self-management skills in participating in MAPEH activities.
2. To provide academic support through remediation, guided practice, and feedback.
3. To strengthen peer relationships and social support systems within the classroom.
4. To assist learners with financial/material needs related to MAPEH activities.
5. To increase parental involvement and family support in students' education.
6. To improve teacher support and school-based intervention programs for at-risk learners.

Target Beneficiaries

1. Students at Risk of Dropping Out (SARDOs) in MAPEH
2. MAPEH Teachers
3. Parents/Guardians
4. School Administrators

Intervention and Strategies

The strategy consists of six major intervention components aligned with the identified needs and challenges:

Components of Interventions/ Strategies	Activities	Expected Outcomes
1. Personal Development Support Program (Addressing Personal Needs and Challenges)	➤ Confidence-building workshops (e.g., performance readiness training) ➤ Motivation and goal-setting sessions ➤ Stress management and coping skills seminars ➤ Time management training	➤ Improved self-confidence and reduced performance anxiety ➤ Increased motivation and active participation in MAPEH
2. Academic Enhancement Program (Addressing Academic Needs and Challenges)	➤ Remediation classes and tutorial sessions ➤ Skills-based practice workshops (music, arts, PE, health) ➤ Peer tutoring system ➤ Regular feedback and performance monitoring	➤ Improved academic performance and skill mastery
3. Peer Support and Social Integration Program (Addressing Social Needs and Challenges)	➤ Group dynamics and team-building activities ➤ Peer mentoring program ➤ Cooperative learning strategies in MAPEH classes ➤ Recognition of group achievements	➤ Strengthened peer relationships ➤ Increased sense of belonging and collaboration
4. Financial and Material Assistance Program (Addressing Financial/Material Needs and Challenges)	➤ Provision of shared materials and equipment ➤ Resource mobilization (donations, school support) ➤ Use of low-cost or improvised materials	➤ Increased access to materials and resources ➤ Improved participation in performance-based activities
5. Family Engagement Program (Addressing Family Support Needs and Challenges)	➤ Parent orientation and awareness programs ➤ Regular communication between teachers and parents ➤ Family support seminars ➤ Home-school partnership initiatives	➤ Increased parental involvement and support ➤ Improved student motivation and attendance
6. Teacher and School Support Enhancement Program (Addressing Teachers/School Support Needs and Challenges)	➤ Training for teachers on differentiated instruction ➤ Development of flexible and inclusive assessment methods ➤ Strengthening guidance and counseling services ➤ Implementation of early warning and monitoring system	➤ More responsive and supportive learning environment ➤ Early identification and intervention for at-risk students

Project Implementation (Gantt Chart)

This chart will serve as guide in the implementation of the various activities/intervention of this project.

Project Implementation Plan	Jul. 2026	Aug. 2026	Sept. 2026	Oct. 2026	Nov. 2026	Dec. 2026
I. Pre-Implementation Activity						
Conceptualization of the Project						
Submission for the approval of permit to conduct						
II. Implementation Activity						
Personal Development Support Program						
Academic Enhancement Program						
Peer Support and Social Integration Program						

Financial and Material Assistance Program						
Family Engagement Program						
Teacher and School Support Enhancement Program						
Monitoring and Evaluation of the Project						
III. Post Implementation Activity						
Preparation of the documents for acceptance of the project						

Budgetary Requirement and Source of Funding

Activity	Item Description/ Particular/Needs	Cost	Total Amount
Printing of materials	15 reams A4 bond Papers	290.0 * 15	4,350.00
	3 set Printer ink	3,000.00 * 3	3,000.00
Filing documents	6 pcs A4 folder	15.00 * 6	90.00
	6 pcs fastener	7.00 *6	42.00
Submission to D.O for approval of proposal and acceptance of the project	Fare back and forth	150.00 * 4	600.00
	Total		8,082.00

Monitoring and Evaluation

The implementation of the project will use the Project Monitoring Report from D.O 44, s. 2015, DM 43, s. 2018. Form:

Name of project	Project objectives & targets	Date of monitoring/ implementation	Accomplishment/ status to date	Issues/ challenges	Actions Points	Signature of project team
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Strategies and Project Sustainability

The findings drawn from the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) will be utilized for the improvement and sustainability of the project; and it will be institutionalized after its acceptance.

The proposed student retention strategy, entitled Project STAY (Supporting and Transforming At-Risk Youth in MAPEH), is a comprehensive intervention program designed to address the multidimensional needs and challenges of students at risk of dropping out (SARDOs) as identified in the results of this study.

The findings revealed that students exhibit a high level of needs across personal, academic, social, financial/material, family support, and teachers'/school support domains. At the same time, the extent of challenges experienced by learners is generally moderate, particularly in areas such as performance anxiety, difficulty in skill-based tasks, limited access to materials, and family-related responsibilities. While these challenges are not extreme, they are persistent and, when left unaddressed, may gradually lead to disengagement and eventual withdrawal from school.

In response to these findings, Project STAY adopts a holistic and learner-centered approach anchored on the principle that student retention is best achieved when both the needs and barriers of learners are addressed simultaneously. The project integrates academic, psychosocial, social, financial, and environmental support mechanisms to ensure that learners are not only able to cope with the demands of MAPEH but are also motivated to remain engaged in school.

A key component of the project is the Personal Development Support Program, which aims to enhance students' confidence, motivation, and emotional readiness in participating in MAPEH activities. Since the results highlighted that learners have a high need for confidence development and experience performance-related anxiety, this component provides activities such as confidence-building workshops, stress management sessions, and time management training. These interventions are expected to help learners overcome fear and hesitation, thereby increasing their willingness to participate in performance-based tasks.

The Academic Enhancement Program is also central to the strategy, as students expressed a high need for clearer instruction, more practice opportunities, and remediation. This component focuses on providing structured academic support through remediation sessions, guided practice, peer tutoring, and regular feedback. By strengthening learners' understanding and mastery of MAPEH skills, the program aims to improve academic performance and reduce frustration associated with learning difficulties.

To address learners' strong need for social support, the project includes a Peer Support and Social Integration Program. This component promotes positive peer interaction through cooperative learning, peer mentoring, and team-building activities. Given that MAPEH involves collaborative and group-based tasks, strengthening peer relationships is essential in creating a supportive classroom environment where learners feel accepted and encouraged to participate.

Recognizing the financial and material constraints faced by some learners, the Financial and Material Assistance Program is designed to reduce barriers to participation. This includes the provision of shared materials, use of improvised resources, and mobilization of school and community support. By ensuring access to necessary materials, the program helps create equitable learning opportunities for all students.

The study also emphasized the importance of family support; thus, the Family Engagement Program is incorporated to strengthen home-school collaboration. Through parent orientations, regular communication, and awareness activities, this component seeks to encourage parents and guardians to actively support their children's education. Increased family involvement is expected to enhance students' motivation, attendance, and overall commitment to schooling.

Finally, the Teacher and School Support Enhancement Program focuses on improving instructional practices and institutional support systems. This includes teacher training on differentiated instruction, implementation of flexible assessment strategies, and strengthening guidance and counseling services. Additionally, an early monitoring system will be established to identify and support at-risk students promptly.

The implementation of Project STAY follows a structured process that includes planning, execution, monitoring, and evaluation. Continuous monitoring of student attendance, participation, and performance will be conducted to assess the effectiveness of the interventions. Feedback from students, teachers, and parents will also be used to improve the program.

Overall, Project STAY is designed to be responsive, sustainable, and adaptable to the needs of learners in MAPEH. By addressing both the needs and challenges identified in the study, the project aims to enhance student engagement, strengthen support systems, and ultimately reduce the risk of dropout among students. The successful implementation of this retention strategy is expected to contribute to improved participation, better academic outcomes, and increased completion rates in secondary education.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides synthesis of the findings, draws conclusions based on the results, and offers recommendations for future research and educational practice.

The study assessed the needs and challenges of students at risk of dropping out in Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health (MAPEH) at Nueva Vizcaya General Comprehensive High School for the School Year 2025-2026 as a basis for proposing a student retention strategy.

Specifically, this study addressed the following objectives:

1. To determine the level of needs of students at risk of dropping out in MAPEH in terms of personal needs, academic needs, social needs, financial/material needs, family support needs, and teachers' and school support needs.

2. To identify the extent of challenges experienced by students at risk of dropping out in MAPEH in terms of personal challenges, academic challenges, social challenges, financial challenges, family-related challenges, and school environment or teacher-related challenges.
3. To develop a student retention strategy based on the results of the needs assessment to support students at risk of dropping out in MAPEH.

The study employed a descriptive research design, specifically a descriptive survey approach. The respondents were the 46 students of Nueva Vizcaya General Comprehensive High School selected using simple random sampling. A researcher-made questionnaire was used to assess the level of needs and the extent of challenges experienced by the respondents. The instrument was designed to gather relevant data aligned with the objectives of the study. The collected data were treated and interpreted using the weighted mean.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Based on the results, the following findings are drawn:

1. Students at risk of dropping out in MAPEH manifested a high level of needs, as shown by an overall mean of 3.59. All identified areas- Personal Needs, Academic Needs, Social Needs, Financial/Material Needs, Family Support Needs, and Teachers/School Support Needs were categorized as High Need. The highest mean scores were recorded for Family Support Needs ($\bar{x} = 3.70$), Teachers/School Support Needs ($\bar{x} = 3.63$), Social Needs ($\bar{x} = 3.61$), and Academic Needs ($\bar{x} = 3.60$), while Financial/Material Needs obtained the lowest mean ($\bar{x} = 3.43$), though still within the high need range.
2. Students at risk of dropping out in MAPEH experienced challenges to a moderate extent, with an overall mean of 3.15. All six areas- Personal Challenges, Academic Challenges, Social Challenges, Financial Challenges, Family-Related Challenges, and School Environment/Teacher Challenges were rated at the Moderate Extent level. The highest mean scores were observed in Academic Challenges ($\bar{x} = 3.37$) and Personal Challenges ($\bar{x} = 3.22$), while Social Challenges posted the lowest mean ($\bar{x} = 2.95$).

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the significant findings, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. The students at risk of dropping out in MAPEH exhibit a high level of needs across personal, academic, social, financial/material, family support, and teachers/school support dimensions.
2. The students experience a moderate extent of challenges in personal, academic, social, financial, family-related, and school environment/teacher factors.
3. The proposed Student Retention Strategy is a comprehensive, data-driven, and learner-centered intervention designed to address the multidimensional needs and challenges of students at risk of dropping out in MAPEH. By focusing on personal development, academic support, social integration, financial assistance, family involvement, and school support, the strategy aims to prevent disengagement and promote sustained participation in education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Implement the developed Student Retention Strategy in MAPEH to address the high personal, academic, social, financial/material, family support, and teacher/school support needs of students at risk of dropping out.

2. Provide targeted academic and performance support, such as remediation sessions and guided practice, to help learners manage moderate academic challenges in MAPEH.
3. Incorporate confidence-building and motivation activities to reduce anxiety and improve learners' participation in performance-based tasks.
4. Strengthen teacher support by ensuring clear instructions, regular feedback, and timely assistance during MAPEH activities.
5. Promote positive peer interaction through cooperative learning and group activities to enhance social support among learners.
6. Extend school-based material and financial support by making shared equipment and affordable alternatives available for MAPEH activities.
7. Encourage active parent and guardian involvement to support learners' attendance, motivation, and school engagement.
8. Future researchers to conduct follow-up studies to evaluate the effectiveness of the Student Retention Strategy in MAPEH and explore similar interventions in other learning areas.

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