

Transformation of Education Quality through the Implementation of School-Based Management

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the application of School-Based Management (SBM) as a strategy to improve the quality of education at SD Ma'arif Ponorogo, a private basic education institution under LP Ma'arif NU that combines general and religious curriculum. Using a qualitative approach with a descriptive design, research data was collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and document analysis, then analyzed through the stages of data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. The results of the study show that the implementation of SBM at SD Ma'arif Ponorogo runs effectively through participatory planning practices, school autonomy in curriculum and financial management, collaborative leadership of school principals, transparency in fund management, and continuous evaluation. The participation of stakeholders, teachers, parents, school committees, foundations, and the community is a key factor in success, which is evident in their active involvement in program formulation, funding, and implementation of school activities. Nevertheless, schools still face a number of challenges, such as limited infrastructure, technological gaps, the need to improve teacher competencies equally, and differences in perceptions between organizational structures.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The quality of education in Indonesia has become a central issue in efforts to develop human resources and increase national competitiveness. According to Tilaar, the quality of education is the foundation for creating knowledgeable, skilled, and able individuals who are able to contribute to the development of the nation. (Tilaar, 2002, hlm. 45) The quality of education is essentially the main pillar in forming superior human resources. Quality education not only produces intellectually intelligent students, but also has life skills, positive attitudes, and strong character. Tilaar also emphasized that the quality of education is an important foundation in creating knowledgeable, skilled, and able human beings to play an active role in nation building. (Tilaar, 2002) This means that quality education must be managed with high standards, both in terms of curriculum, educators, facilities, and management systems that support the achievement of overall learning goals. Unfortunately, many educational institutions in Indonesia face challenges in meeting ideal quality standards, such as teacher competency

gaps(admin, 2025), infrastructure availability(Negara, t.t.), and student learning outcomes(GoodStats, t.t.). These issues highlight the urgency of improving the overall quality of education.

One of the significant problems in the Indonesian education system is the inequality of access to quality education. As Mulyasa noted, the lack of equitable distribution of resources and opportunities between schools, especially between urban and rural, has resulted in a gap in learning outcomes.(Mulyasa, 2013, hlm. 78) Addressing these gaps requires an effective management strategy that focuses on optimizing available resources while maintaining a commitment to academic excellence. Another important factor in achieving the quality of education is the professional development of teachers. As highlighted by Suparlan, teachers are at the forefront of the learning process, and their competence, motivation, and teaching methods directly impact student achievement.(Suparlan, 2007, hlm. 102) Professional development programs that focus on continuous learning, innovative teaching strategies, and technology integration are essential to equip teachers with the skills needed for education.

The quality of education in schools is closely related to the implementation of effective management practices, especially School-Based Management (SBM). According to Mulyasa, SBM gives schools greater autonomy and flexibility to manage their resources, curriculum, and policies in a way that directly meets the needs of their students and communities.(Mulyasa, 2013, hlm. 56) By encouraging the participation of all stakeholders (including teachers, parents, and the community), SBM ensures that decisions are made collaboratively and transparently, which ultimately contributes to improving the quality of education.

School-Based Management (SBM) is a decentralized management model that shifts decision-making authority from the central government to individual schools(Mulyasa, 2013, hlm. 67). This approach emphasizes regional autonomy, accountability, and participation in managing resources, policies, and processes within schools. SBM encourages schools to identify and prioritize their unique needs, allowing them to tailor solutions that optimize learning outcomes.

In the context of managing educational institutions, School-Based Management (SBM) is present as an ideal strategy to realize the quality of education. SBM emphasizes the autonomy of schools in managing resources and making decisions according to local needs, while fostering the active participation of various stakeholders. According to Mulyasa, SBM allows schools to be more flexible, accountable, and innovative because decisions are no longer centered on bureaucracy, but on the school community that understands the real conditions.(Mulyasa, 2013) Ideally, SBM is an instrument to strengthen a *sense of belonging* and shared responsibility in achieving the expected quality of education.

Furthermore, ideally, the implementation of SBM should not only be oriented towards managerial efficiency, but must also be able to create a democratic, transparent, and sustainable learning atmosphere. Wahyudin emphasized that with school empowerment through SBM, each element of education can work collaboratively in identifying problems, formulating solutions, and conducting joint evaluations.(Wahyudin, 2012) This makes the school a dynamic *learning organization*, continues to adapt to global challenges, and is ultimately able to produce superior quality education. Thus, the ideals of education in Indonesia can be realized through a combination of high-quality education with participatory and continuous improvement-oriented SBM practices.

One of the core principles of SBM is to empower schools to take charge of their performance. As Suparlan notes, this empowerment involves the creation of a system in which schools are held accountable not only for their achievements but also for addressing any challenges that arise.(Suparlan, 2007, hlm. 92) Thus, SBM allows schools to function as dynamic entities capable of making continuous improvements.

SBM is considered an important strategy to improve the quality of education because of its ability to foster a sense of ownership and accountability among school stakeholders. Wahyudin highlighted that through SBM, schools can respond more effectively to the needs of students and their communities, leading to more relevant and impactful educational practices.(Wahyudin, 2012, hlm. 115) This responsiveness is especially important in a diverse country like Indonesia, where schools face a variety of local challenges and opportunities.

SD Ma'arif Ponorogo, is one of the institutions that adopts School-Based Management (SBM) as a strategic approach to improve the quality of education. The institution, which is under the auspices of the Ma'arif Nahdlatul Ulama Education Foundation, is an exemplary model in integrating Islamic values with modern educational practices (Ponorogo, t.t.). This decentralized management model allows SD Ma'arif Ponorogo to independently design and implement educational programs that meet the needs of its students while involving various stakeholders in the decision-making process.

The implementation of School-Based Management (SBM) at SD Ma'arif Ponorogo is proven in its strategic efforts to improve the quality of education through various community involvement programs and initiatives, such as *Tour to Hospital* ((2) *Hospital Tour Kids Kelas V SDNU MA'ARIF PONOROGO - YouTube, t.t.*) activities and other activities involving all stakeholders and the community. The school's active use of digital platforms such as YouTube and Facebook ((20+) *Facebook, t.t.*) provides valuable insights into its practices and achievements, demonstrating its commitment to transparency, collaboration, and continuous improvement.

This research is important because SBM is seen as an effective strategy in improving the quality of education by fostering a sense of ownership and accountability among schools. As Wahyudin said, SBM allows schools to be more responsive to the needs of students and society, which is very relevant in the context of diversity and local challenges in Indonesia. (Wahyudin, 2012) By examining SD Ma'arif Ponorogo, this research is expected to contribute to providing a real picture of how SBM can be used as a strategic framework to improve the quality of education, as well as a reference for other schools in dealing with similar problems.

2. METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive-qualitative type of research (Moleong, 2021, hlm. 30) to explore in depth the implementation of School-Based Management (SBM) as a strategy to improve the quality of education at SD Ma'arif Ponorogo. This approach was chosen because it is able to describe phenomena naturally according to the field context, without manipulating variables, and allows researchers to understand the perspectives, experiences, and dynamics of interaction of school stakeholders. (Sugiyono, 2008, hlm. 25) The research data was collected through three main techniques, namely participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. (Sari dkk., 2024, hlm. 184) Observation was carried out with the direct involvement of researchers in school activities to observe the practice of SBM in real terms, starting from the planning process, program implementation, to evaluation. In-depth interviews were conducted with school principals, teachers, foundation chairs, school committees, and parents of students using the purposive sampling technique (Creswell, 2017, hlm. 90), which is the selection of informants who are considered to understand the implementation of SBM best. Meanwhile, document analysis includes searching for BOS reports, School Work Plans (RKS), activity documentation, and other relevant administrative archives.

The data analysis in this study follows Huberman and Saldaña's interactive model which includes data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification. (Miles dkk., 2014, hlm. 12-14) In the condensation stage, the data from interviews, observations, and documents are reduced, coded, and grouped into relevant themes related to the implementation of SBM, challenges, and the role of stakeholders. Furthermore, the data is presented in the form of structured narratives, matrices, and thematic summaries to facilitate pattern identification. The final stage is the drawing of conclusions which is carried out gradually through repeated verification by comparing findings from various data sources. To ensure the validity of the data, the research applied triangulation of sources and techniques, *member checking*, and prolonged involvement of researchers in the field. With the design of this method, the research was able to provide a holistic understanding of how SBM is implemented, its supporting and inhibiting factors, as well as the contribution of stakeholders to improving the quality of education at SD Ma'arif Ponorogo.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of School-Based Management (SBM) is an important aspect in efforts to improve the quality of education, especially in institutions that seek to balance academic demands, character, and community needs. As a private elementary school under LP Ma'arif NU, SD Ma'arif Ponorogo faces complex managerial dynamics with large student numbers, diverse academic and religious programs, and demands for continuous quality improvement. To understand how SBM is implemented in this context, a thorough presentation of the real conditions on the ground is needed, including planning mechanisms, program implementation, resource management, and stakeholder engagement. Therefore, the following results and discussion section presents a comprehensive overview of the implementation of SBM at SD Ma'arif Ponorogo, the challenges faced, and its contribution to improving the quality of education in the institution.

Implementation of SBM as a Strategy to Improve the Quality of Education

The implementation of School-Based Management (SBM) at SD Ma'arif Ponorogo is not only visible on the surface, but it is really "alive" in the daily life of the school. The policy formulation process is carried out in an inclusive manner: teachers, staff, committees, parents, and even foundations are all involved in developing School Work Plans (RKS) that are in line with the Islamic vision. This illustrates the application of the principle of autonomy and participation, as Mulyasa affirmed, that the effectiveness of SBM is born when policies are formulated democratically by involving various stakeholders. In terms of capacity *building*, schools encourage professional development of teachers through training, workshops, and technological assistance. Although limited resources make training uneven, this effort is consistent with Sagala's view that improving the quality of education must start from increasing the capacity of human resources. (Sagala, 2013, hlm. 43)

The principle of stakeholder involvement also appears to be strong. Teachers do not only teach, but are involved in policy formulation; parents attend parenting days and committee meetings; the community participates in mutual cooperation with infrastructure facilities; while foundations maintain the direction of the Islamic vision. This multi-stakeholder involvement is in accordance with *the theory of education governance* (Tilaar, 2002, hlm. 60) which emphasizes that the success of schools is the result of coordination of all stakeholders. Furthermore, evaluation and monitoring are carried out regularly through monthly meetings and financial accountability reports. Each program is evaluated together, then followed up with an improvement strategy. This shows the implementation of the principles of accountability and transparency, as underlined in the concept of *continuous quality improvement*. (Suaeb, 2022).

The implementation of School-Based Management (SBM) at SD Ma'arif Ponorogo shows that participatory principles are not only applied in the formal aspects of administration, but have become the culture of school organizations. The involvement of school principals, teachers, education staff, school committees, parents, and foundations in the preparation of the School Work Plan (RKS) reflects democratic school governance. This participation strengthens the legitimacy of each policy while increasing the sense of ownership of school programs. These findings are in line with the results of a study by Andriyan and Yoenanto (2022) which concluded that the implementation of SBM will be more effective if all stakeholders are involved in the process of planning, implementing, and evaluating school programs (Andriyan & Yoenanto, 2022).

Teacher capacity development carried out through training, workshops, technology mentoring, and good practice sharing forums is a form of school investment in improving the quality of learning. Although the opportunities for training are not fully evenly distributed due to budget constraints, the school's commitment to improving teacher competence shows that the success of SBM depends not only on the availability of resources, but also on human resource development strategies. Firmadani's research (2021) shows that the sustainable development of teachers' professional competencies contributes to improving the quality of learning, the ability to innovate, and the professionalism of teachers in dealing with changes in education policies (Firmadani, 2021).

The involvement of parents, school committees, the community, and foundations in various school programs shows that the implementation of SBM at SD Ma'arif Ponorogo has applied the principle of

collaborative governance. The presence of parents in parenting day activities, community participation in the provision of infrastructure, and the role of foundations in maintaining the direction of Islamic education policies show that schools do not work independently, but build collaborative networks that strengthen each other. These findings are in line with the research of Askan and Kusmanto (2022) which affirms that synergy between schools, committees, and the community is an important factor in increasing the effectiveness of SBM implementation.

The accountability aspect shown through routine evaluation meetings, submission of financial accountability reports, and follow-up to each program illustrates the application of the principle of continuous quality improvement. Periodic evaluations allow schools to identify weaknesses in program implementation while developing more targeted improvement strategies. Thus, evaluation not only functions as a monitoring tool, but also becomes an organizational learning instrument to improve the quality of educational services on an ongoing basis. These results are in line with the research of Sati et al. which states that a culture of continuous evaluation is one of the indicators of the success of SBM implementation in schools that implement the Independent Learning paradigm (Sati et.al., 2022).

The findings of this study also show that the implementation of SBM at SD Ma'arif Ponorogo has distinctive characteristics in the form of integration between modern governance and Islamic values that are the identity of the institution. The vision of Islam is not only a normative document, but is internalized in the process of planning, program implementation, and decision-making. The integration strengthens the school organizational culture so that each policy is not only oriented towards improving academic quality, but also the formation of students' religious character. This condition shows that the implementation of SBM can be adjusted to the characteristics of educational institutions without compromising the basic principles of good school governance.

Overall, the results of the study indicate that the implementation of SBM at SD Ma'arif Ponorogo has developed into a strategic instrument in building sustainable quality of education. School autonomy, stakeholder participation, teacher capacity development, and accountability that are consistently applied form a school management system that is adaptive to changes in the educational environment. Thus, the success of the implementation of SBM is not only reflected in administrative achievements, but also in the school's ability to build a collaborative culture, improve the quality of human resources, and strengthen public trust in educational institutions.

These results are in line with recent research that found that SBM practices that integrate participatory policy formulation, teacher capacity building, and continuous evaluation (Anwar, 2025) contribute significantly to improving the quality of primary schools in Indonesia. The implementation of SBM at SD Ma'arif Ponorogo has gone beyond the administrative aspect, becoming a strategic instrument in improving the quality of education, both academic and character, with the principles of autonomy, participation, capacity building, and accountability that are carried out consistently.

Challenges in the Implementation of SBM to Improve Educational Outcomes

Despite SBM's well-run, real challenges remain. Limited funds and facilities make some programs unable to be realized immediately. Limited technology facilities also hinder the optimization of digital-based learning. In addition, teacher training is not evenly distributed, so the competency gap still occurs. Another challenge that is quite prominent is the difference in perception between organizational structures – between teachers, staff, and committees – who sometimes have different views on school program priorities. This condition reflects the theory of contingency, that there is no one-size-fits-all management model. (Hariro dkk., 2024) The effectiveness of SBM is determined by the school's ability to adjust the strategy to existing limitations. Efforts to establish partnerships with the community and alumni to increase resources are a tangible form of adaptive management.

These findings are consistent with the research of Sabila et al. which stated that the main challenges in the implementation of SBM in elementary schools are limited resources and lack of common perception among stakeholders. (Sabila dkk., 2025) The proposed solution is to establish regular communication forums and maximize external partnerships. These challenges are not absolute

obstacles, but opportunities to strengthen adaptive strategies, improve internal communication, and expand partnership networks.

However, the success of the implementation of School-Based Management (SBM) is largely determined by the leadership capacity of the principal in managing organizational change. The principal not only plays the role of administrator, but also as an instructional leader who is able to build a collaborative culture, encourage the participation of all school residents, and integrate various interests into a common goal. From a change management perspective, open communication, participatory decision-making, and human resource empowerment are important factors to increase the commitment of all stakeholders to the school program. (Andriyan & Yoenanto, 2022)

On the other hand, strengthening teacher capacity through continuous professional development is a strategy that cannot be ignored. Equitable teacher competence will strengthen the effectiveness of SBM implementation, especially in the face of the demands of education digitalization and increasingly dynamic policy changes. Therefore, schools need to develop training programs that are sustainable, needs-based, and involve the learning community of teachers and various educational partners. This approach not only enhances individual competence, but also strengthens an adaptive and quality-improvement organizational culture. (Firmadani, 2021a)

Overall, the challenges of SBM implementation cannot be seen solely as operational constraints, but rather as opportunities to strengthen school governance through innovation, collaboration, and continuous evaluation. Schools that are able to build synergy between principals, teachers, education staff, school committees, and the community will have better organizational resilience in dealing with changes in the educational environment. (Cecep dkk., t.t.)

The findings of the study show that limited financial resources are still the main challenge in the implementation of School-Based Management (SBM) at SD Ma'arif Ponorogo. This condition shows that the decentralization of school management is not automatically followed by an increase in financing capacity. Schools are required to have the ability to manage various funding sources creatively through partnerships with the community, alumni, the business world, and other institutions without compromising the principles of accountability and transparency. The results of this study are in line with the findings of Andriyan and Yoenanto (2022) who stated that the success of SBM is greatly influenced by the school's ability to optimize its resources through collaboration with various stakeholders (Andriyan & Yoenanto, 2022)

The limitations of facilities and infrastructure found in this study also show that the improvement of the quality of education is not only determined by the quality of the learning process, but also by the adequacy of supporting facilities. Inadequate classrooms, limited learning media, and the lack of realization of several programs in the School Work Plan show the need for more systematic and sustainable planning for the procurement of facilities. From the perspective of education management, the management of infrastructure facilities is an integral part of improving the quality of educational services because it affects the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process (Wiswandewi dkk., 2023)

Findings regarding the limitations of technology show that digital transformation in the elementary school environment still faces various obstacles, both in terms of the availability of devices and internet access for students. In fact, the implementation of the Independent Curriculum and 21st century learning requires the use of technology as part of the learning process. Therefore, school digitalization needs to be carried out in stages by considering the readiness of infrastructure, teacher competence, and the socio-economic conditions of students so that they do not cause gaps in educational services. These results are in line with the research of Sati et al. (2022) which confirms that the successful implementation of SBM in the Merdeka Learning era requires adequate digital infrastructure support and the involvement of all school residents in the educational transformation process (Sati dkk., 2022).

In addition to infrastructure support, improving teacher competence is an important aspect in optimizing the implementation of SBM. The competency gap that is still found shows that the opportunity to participate in training is not completely even. In fact, continuous professional development is one of the important strategies to improve the quality of learning and strengthen the

capacity of schools in dealing with changes in education policies. School principals need to develop a systematic teacher development program through in-house training activities, learning communities, academic supervision, and partnerships with universities. This finding is supported by Firmadani (2021) who states that the sustainable development of teachers' professional competencies affects the improvement of learning quality and school performance (Firmadani, 2021).

The difference in perception between principals, teachers, education staff, and school committees as found in this study shows that the implementation of SBM is a collaborative process that requires effective organizational communication. Differences in program priorities are normal in school organizations, but if not managed properly, they can hinder decision-making. Therefore, regular communication forums, participatory deliberations, and information transparency are important mechanisms in uniting the perceptions of all stakeholders. These findings are in line with the research of Askan and Kusmanto (2022) who concluded that the success of SBM is strongly influenced by the active participation of school committees and the effectiveness of communication between schools and communities (Askan & Kusmanto, 2022).

Overall, the various challenges found in this study show that the implementation of SBM is not only related to administrative aspects, but also reflects the ability of school organizations to adapt to changes in the environment. The perspective of contingency theory explains that there is no one school management model that can be applied uniformly to all educational units. The effectiveness of SBM is strongly influenced by the school's ability to adapt strategies to organizational characteristics, resource availability, and external environmental support. Therefore, strengthening partnership networks, increasing teacher capacity, optimizing the use of technology, and strengthening organizational communication are adaptive strategies that need to be developed so that the implementation of SBM can produce sustainable improvements in the quality of education (Andriyan & Yoenanto, 2022; Firmadani, 2021).

The Role of Stakeholders in the Success of SBM

The success of SBM at SD Ma'arif Ponorogo cannot be separated from the participation of various stakeholders. Teachers are the main driving force, not only as teachers but also program planners. Parents support from a moral and material perspective, both through *parenting days*, mutual cooperation, and contributions to committee meetings. The school committee becomes a bridge of communication between the school and the community, ensuring that aspirations are conveyed properly. The Ma'arif Foundation/LP plays a role in maintaining the direction of the vision, providing policy direction, as well as controlling quality. The surrounding community also supports through participation in social activities and the construction of facilities.

The success of the implementation of SBM at SD Ma'arif Ponorogo cannot be separated from the involvement of various stakeholders. Each party has a specific role that complements and strengthens each other.

1. Teachers as the main drivers of learning.

Teachers are not only in charge of teaching, but are also involved in the planning of school programs. One teacher said, "We are involved in the preparation of the annual program, the selection of learning methods, and extracurricular activities." Observations show a variety of teaching methods, while training documentation proves increased teacher capacity. The researcher assessed that teachers' involvement in the strategic realm made them feel like they owned the school and encouraged loyalty.

2. Parents as support partners and social supervisors.

The student's guardian said, "I was invited several times to committee meetings, parenting days, and participated in school bazaars. We feel part of the school." Observations show the presence of parents in mutual cooperation activities and competitions, while photo documentation of activities reinforces this role. The researcher sees that parental support is not only in the form of material, but also moral, thus strengthening the legitimacy of the program.

3. School committees as a bridge of communication.

The principal said, "The committee helps bridge the needs of the school with the ability of parents, including in fundraising." Observations of committee meetings show intensive discussions on funding

priorities, while documentation of committee reports record parents' contributions. The researcher concluded that the committee has a strategic function in ensuring that school policies are financially and socially supported.

4. The Ma'arif Foundation and LP as a value support and quality supervisor.

The chairman of the foundation emphasized, "LP Ma'arif provides direction, monitors, and encourages schools to be active in social activities." The documentation of the management decree and the foundation's monitoring report show structural involvement in supervising the school. The researcher assessed that the role of the foundation is not to limit, but to ensure the direction of the Islamic vision and maintain the quality of the school.

5. The wider community as a supporter of sustainability.

The community is involved in various activities, both through mutual cooperation to improve facilities and support in school social activities. Documentation of photos of activities with residents and reports of social activities show close interaction between schools and communities. The researcher concluded that good relations with the community foster trust which is an important asset for the sustainability of the school.

From the perspective of the SBM framework, their contribution is distributed in four important aspects: (1) participating in policy formulation through committee meetings, (2) playing a role in *capacity building*, for example parents supporting teacher training, (3) being active in the implementation of programs such as mutual cooperation and religious activities, and (4) participating in evaluations by attending accountability meetings. All of this proves that SBM in this school runs according to the principles of participatory governance.

A similar study by Sumarsono confirmed that the participation of parents, teachers, and the community in school management is positively related to improving student achievement and overall school quality. (Sumarsono dkk., 2019) The participation of teachers, parents, committees, foundations, and the community proves that SBM is a collective strategy. This multi-stakeholder collaboration confirms the theory of participation and social capital, where the success of schools is determined by the synergy of all stakeholders.

The role of teachers as core actors is not only limited to learning activities, but also to the school policy planning process. Teachers at SD Ma'arif play the role of *co-creators* of the program, especially in the preparation of an integrative curriculum. Anwar affirmed this position by stating that "teacher empowerment is the main indicator of SBM's success". (Anwar, 2024) Teachers' involvement in planning has been shown to increase motivation and a sense of responsibility for the quality of learning.

The role of parents and school committees is also very important, especially in supervision and financial support. School committees function as a bridge between the community and the school, as well as a counterweight in the decision-making process. Waluyo stated that "the school committee functions as a mediator between the school and the community in optimizing SBM". (Waluyo & Hadi, 2014) SD Ma'arif practices this consistently, as can be seen from the committee's involvement in the procurement of religious facilities and activities.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the implementation of School-Based Management (SBM) at SD Ma'arif Ponorogo has been effective as a strategy to improve the quality of education through the implementation of participatory planning, autonomy in curriculum and resource management, collaborative leadership of school principals, financial transparency, and continuous evaluation involving various stakeholders. The involvement of teachers, parents, school committees, foundations, and the community has proven to be a key factor in ensuring the successful implementation of SBM while strengthening the legitimacy and sustainability of school programs. However, a number of challenges such as limited infrastructure, technology gaps, the need to improve teacher competence, and differences in perceptions between organizational structures still need to be overcome through strengthening communication, capacity building, and external partnerships. Overall, this study confirms that SBM can be an effective strategic approach in improving the quality of education if it is

carried out with the principles of autonomy, participation, accountability, and strong collaboration in the school environment.

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