



## Legal and Logistical Challenges in the Titling of Public-School Sites

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### ABSTRACT

Land tenure security is essential for ensuring institutional stability, infrastructure development, and the continuity of educational services. In the Philippines, public-school land titling is governed by the Regalian Doctrine and Republic Act No. 10023 (New Free Patent Act). However, despite these legal mechanisms, many public-school sites remain untitled. Unlike other areas in the Cordillera Administrative Region where ancestral domain claims are the primary challenge, Sta. Marcela District, Apayao faces issues mainly related to documentary deficiencies and administrative delays.

This study examined the legal and logistical challenges in the titling of public-school sites in Sta. Marcela District, Division of Apayao. Specifically, it profiled participating schools, assessed the status of land titling applications, identified legal and logistical barriers, evaluated stakeholder perceptions of program effectiveness, and proposed process improvements. A descriptive-evaluative mixed-methods design was employed using complete enumeration of 42 respondents, including school heads, teachers, land donors/heirs, and representatives from DepEd, DENR, LGUs, LUSA, and the Registry of Deeds. Data were collected through a structured 5-point Likert scale questionnaire and documentary analysis, with quantitative data analyzed using frequencies, percentages, and weighted means, while qualitative responses were subjected to thematic analysis.

Results revealed that most schools (83.33%) are elementary institutions, 75.00% occupy 1,000–15,000 square meters of land, and 75.00% acquired their sites through private donations. Two-thirds (66.67%) of school sites still have pending titling applications, with half stalled during document preparation. Stakeholders identified legal challenges as a **Very High** barrier (Overall Mean = 4.36), particularly unresolved ownership issues and complex regulatory requirements. Logistical challenges were rated **High** (Overall Mean = 3.41), primarily due to slow administrative processes and geographic constraints. Despite these challenges, respondents strongly agreed (Overall Mean = 4.58) that the land titling program is effective and essential for preventing future property disputes.

The study concludes that delays in school land titling are driven more by documentary deficiencies and bureaucratic processes than by technical capacity or ancestral domain conflicts. It recommends simplifying documentary requirements, standardizing inter-agency procedures, adopting digital tracking and centralized databases, integrating GIS for boundary verification, and designating dedicated Land Titling Coordinators to expedite the titling process.

**Keywords:** *Public-School Site Titling, Legal Challenges, Logistical Bottlenecks, Land Tenure Security, New Public Management, Sta. Marcela District, Apayao.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Background of the Study**

Education is universally recognized as a fundamental driver of sustainable national development, social equity, and economic growth. Central to the delivery of quality education is the availability of secure and legally protected school infrastructure. Globally, land tenure security for public educational institutions has been identified as a critical factor in ensuring continuity of educational services, long-term infrastructure investment, and institutional stability. Recent studies by international development organizations emphasize that schools operating on untitled or contested land are exposed to legal disputes, encroachment, and displacement, which adversely affect educational access and planning efficiency. The World Bank and UNESCO further stress that unresolved land ownership issues undermine public investment, delay school improvement projects, and weaken governance accountability, particularly in developing countries where land administration systems remain complex.

Empirical studies conducted in Asia and Africa after 2020 reveal that weak coordination among land administration agencies, unclear property rights, and bureaucratic constraints significantly delay the formalization of school land ownership. These studies highlight that legal ambiguity and logistical inefficiencies not only increase government costs but also compromise learners' right to safe and stable learning environments. Despite the existence of land governance reforms in many countries, the gap between policy intent and actual implementation persists, underscoring the need for localized, case-based analyses that capture on-the-ground challenges.

In the Philippine context, the state's authority over land is anchored in the Regalian Doctrine, which dictates that all lands of the public domain belong to the State. This doctrine necessitates formal titling to transition land into protected public use. To facilitate this, the government enacted Republic Act No. 10023, or the New Free Patent Act, which provides a streamlined mechanism for issuing Special Patents for public-school sites and residential sites. Despite these legal instruments, land tenure insecurity remains a persistent issue. A significant number of public schools nationwide continue to operate on untitled lands, donated properties without perfected deeds, or areas subject to overlapping claims.

Recognizing these challenges, the Department of Education (DepEd) institutionalized the Public-School Site Titling Program. This program is anchored on key policy issuances, including DepEd Order No. 43, s. 2011, DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2014, and DepEd Memorandum No. 58, s. 2016, which mandate the inventory, validation, acquisition, and titling of public-school lands in coordination with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), and Local Government Units (LGUs). Furthermore, local initiatives like the Land Utilization and Stakeholders' Assistance (LUSA) program at the provincial level have been introduced to augment national titling efforts.



Regionally, the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) presents distinct challenges due to its complex land tenure systems and the strong presence of ancestral domain claims. While ancestral domain claims are a significant legal barrier across most of CAR, Sta. Marcela District deviates from this typical context. Unlike its mountainous neighbors, the district's challenges are primarily rooted in documentary deficiencies and logistical bottlenecks rather than ancestral domain disputes, largely due to its specific geographic and historical land classification.

At the local level, Sta. Marcela District, Apayao, reflects the urgency of these challenges. Out of a total population of 17 public schools in the district, 12 school sites remain untitled, while only five have successfully secured titles. This high ratio of untitled sites highlights a significant implementation gap. Many schools continue to operate on untitled lands, exposing them to risks of ownership disputes, encroachment, and delays in the construction of essential facilities.

At the institutional level, the implementation of the program in Sta. Marcela District is constrained by a range of legal and logistical challenges, including overlapping land claims, incomplete ownership documents, limited financial resources, and weak inter-agency coordination. While national policies provide a clear legal basis for school site titling, there is limited empirical research examining how these policies are operationalized at the district level. This gap underscores the need for a focused case study that analyzes the specific legal and logistical barriers encountered in Sta. Marcela District, with the end goal of informing policy improvement, strengthening inter-agency collaboration, and enhancing the effectiveness of the Public-School Site Titling Program.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

This study aims to examine the legal and logistical challenges encountered in the titling of public-school sites. The findings will serve as basis for proposing improvements that will expedite the titling process.

Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the schools in Sta. Marcela District in terms of:
  - 1.1 School Level (Elementary, Secondary or Integrated)
  - 1.1. Location
  - 1.2. Land Area
  - 1.3. Current land status
  - 1.4. Mode of land acquisition
  - 1.5. Year of school establishment
2. What is the current status of public-school site titling in Sta. Marcela District in terms of:
  - 2.1. Stage of the titling process; and



- 2.2. Length of time required for land titling?
3. What legal challenges affect the titling of public-school sites in Sta. Marcela District in terms of:
  - 3.1. Land ownership and claims;
  - 3.2. Completeness and validity of documentary requirements;
  - 3.3. Land classification and survey issues; and
  - 3.4. Compliance with existing laws and provincial programs?
4. What logistical challenges affect the titling process in terms of:
  - 4.1. Inter-agency coordination among DepEd, LGUs, DENR, and the Registry of Deeds;
  - 4.2. Administrative procedures and processing timelines;
  - 4.3. Availability of technical and human resources; and
  - 4.4. Geographical and accessibility constraints?
5. How do key stakeholders perceive the effectiveness of the current titling process for public-school sites?
6. What strategies can be proposed to include standardized documentation frameworks, legal simplification measures and digital tools?

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study employs a descriptive survey design to systematically examine the legal and logistical challenges affecting public-school site titling in the Sta. Marcela District. Moreover, it will describe the profile of the different school sites in terms of location, land area and the mode of acquisition of the site. Further, it directs the study to generate evidence-based process improvement recommendations.

This study employs a descriptive-evaluative research design to systematically investigate the legal and logistical barriers affecting the titling of public-school sites within the Sta. Marcela District. The descriptive component will be utilized to establish a comprehensive profile of the school sites, specifically categorized by geographic location, land area, and primary mode of acquisition.

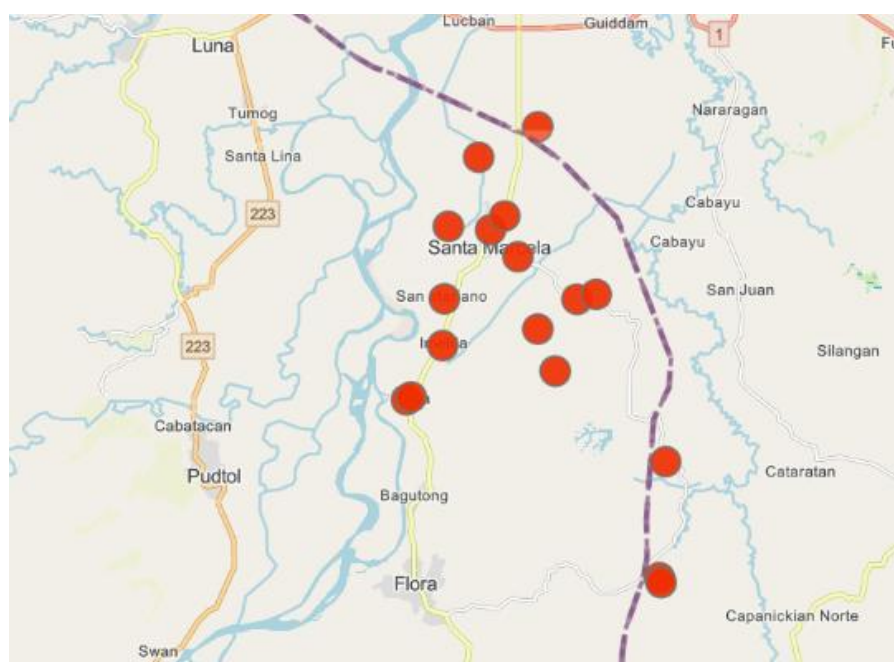
The evaluative aspect of the design analyzes the hindering factors present within the current titling workflow. By integrating these two approaches, the study aims to triangulate qualitative and quantitative data to generate an evidence-based framework for process improvement, ensuring that the resulting recommendations are both legally sound and operationally feasible for the Department of Education.

## **Locale of the Study**

The research will be conducted in Sta. Marcela District, Apayao, focusing on the public schools within the district. Sta. Marcela is specifically selected as the locale of the study due to the high concentration of untitled educational properties; out of the 17 public schools in



the district, 12 remain untitled (75%), representing a significant gap in land tenure security. Furthermore, the district offers a unique geographical and administrative context—while it is part of the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), it deviates from typical regional challenges as ancestral domain claims are not the primary barrier to titling. Instead, the area presents a complex mix of documentary deficiencies and logistical bottlenecks that necessitate localized study. The research period will span from December 2024 to February 2026.



### **Respondents and Sampling Procedure**

The respondents of the study are individuals directly involved in the titling of school sites of Sta. Marcela District. These include the Teacher-in-Charge, teachers, donors/heirs, and line agencies involved in land titling. There are 12 school heads, 12 teachers, 12 donors and 8 representatives from line agencies identified to participate in the study. Complete enumeration will be utilized as the sampling method as the population is small. Below is the distribution of respondents of the study:

| <b>DepEd-Schools Division of Apayao<br/>(Sta. Marcela District)</b> | <b>Line Agencies</b> | <b>No. of donors</b> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|



|                                        |    |                   |   |    |
|----------------------------------------|----|-------------------|---|----|
| Elementary Teacher-in-Charge/ Teachers | 10 | Register of Deeds | 1 | 10 |
| High School Teacher-in-Charge/Teachers | 2  |                   |   | 1  |
| Elementary Teachers                    | 10 | LGU               | 1 |    |
| High School Teachers                   | 2  | LUSA              | 1 |    |
| DepEd Technical Assistants             | 3  | DENR              | 1 |    |
| Total                                  | 27 |                   | 4 | 11 |

### Research Instruments

The research instrument for your study is a **structured survey questionnaire** designed through a **descriptive-evaluative lens**. Based on the Statement of the Problem (SOP) and the methodology provided, the instrument is divided into six critical parts to ensure it captures all legal and logistical variables.

### Research Instrument: Structured Survey Questionnaire

#### 1. Data Gathering Technique:

The study uses a Self-Administered Questionnaire as the primary tool. It is designed to be distributed to a specific group of stakeholders (School Heads, Teachers, Donors, and Agency Representatives) through complete enumeration (census).

#### 2. Parts of the Instrument:

- Part I: School Profile (Descriptive Component)
  - Focus: Gathers baseline data including School Level, Location, Land Area, Current Status, and Year of Establishment.
- Part II: Status of School Site Titling
  - Focus: Identifies the current stage of the process and the timeline/length of time required.
- Part III: Legal Challenges (Evaluative Component)
  - Scale: Uses a 5-point Likert Scale (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree).



- Variables: Measures awareness and impact of the Regalian Doctrine, RA 10023, land classification issues, and provincial programs like LUSA.
- Part IV: Logistical Challenges
  - Scale: 5-point Likert Scale.
  - Variables: Evaluates inter-agency coordination (DepEd, LGUs, DENR, Registry of Deeds), administrative bureaucracy, human resources, and geographical constraints.
- Part V: Perceived Effectiveness
  - Focus: Stakeholder assessment of whether the current program meets its objectives and protects schools from future disputes.
- Part VI: Proposed Process Improvements (Qualitative/Output Component)
  - Focus: Open-ended or checklist-based questions seeking feedback on standardized documentation, legal simplification, and the implementation of digital tools.

### **Statistical Analysis**

The data to be gathered will be processed statistically using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Primarily, frequency counts and percentage distribution will be used for the profile of the schools. On the other hand, weighted mean will be employed to study the legal and logistical challenges as well as the perception of respondents on the titling process. Thematic analysis will also be used to study the forwarded recommendation on the process improvements.

### **Results and Discussion**

This presents results from the data gathered. Discussion and thorough analysis of the results are also reflected.

*Table 1. Profile of the Schools in Sta, Marcela District*

| School Level | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Elementary   | 10        | 83.33      |
| Secondary    | 2         | 16.67      |
| TOTAL        | 12        | 100%       |

| School Location | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| Consuelo        | 2         | 16.67      |
| Emiliana        | 1         | 8.33       |
| Imelda          | 1         | 8.33       |
| Malekkeg        | 1         | 8.33       |
| Marcela         | 1         | 8.33       |



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|             |    |       |
|-------------|----|-------|
| Nueva       | 1  | 8.33  |
| Panay       | 2  | 16.67 |
| San Antonio | 1  | 8.33  |
| San Carlos  | 2  | 16.68 |
| TOTAL       | 12 | 100%  |

| Land Area            | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|----------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1,000 – 15,000 sq.m  | 9         | 75.00      |
| 15,001 – 30,000 sq.m | 2         | 16.67      |
| 30,001 – 45,000 sq.m | 1         | 8.33       |
| TOTAL                | 12        | 100%       |

| Current Land Titling Status  | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Pending Titling              | 8         | 66.67      |
| School Site has no documents | 1         | 8.33       |
| Titled (Privately Owned)     | 2         | 16.67      |
| Untitled                     | 1         | 8.33       |
| TOTAL                        | 12        | 100%       |

| Mode of Land Acquisition | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|--------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Deed of Exchange         | 1         | 8.33       |
| Donation                 | 9         | 75.00      |
| Purchased                | 1         | 8.33       |
| Special Patent           | 1         | 8.34       |
| TOTAL                    | 12        | 100%       |

| Year of School Establishment | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1946 – 1966                  | 4         | 3.33       |
| 1967 – 1986                  | 2         | 16.67      |
| 1987 – 2006                  | 4         | 33.33      |
| 2007 – 2026                  | 2         | 16.67      |
| TOTAL                        | 12        | 100%       |

| Types of Respondents | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|----------------------|-----------|------------|
|----------------------|-----------|------------|



|                                        |    |       |
|----------------------------------------|----|-------|
| Elementary Teacher-in-Charge           | 10 | 23.81 |
| High School Teacher-in-Charge/Teachers | 2  | 4.76  |
| Elementary Teachers                    | 10 | 23.81 |
| High School Teachers                   | 2  | 4.76  |
| DepEd Technical Assistants             | 3  | 7.14  |
| Donor                                  | 11 | 26.19 |
| LGU                                    | 1  | 2.38  |
| Registry of Deeds                      | 1  | 2.38  |
| DENR                                   | 1  | 2.38  |
| LUSA                                   | 1  | 2.38  |
| TOTAL                                  | 42 | 100%  |

The profile of the schools in Sta. Marcela District provides an overview of the characteristics of the respondent schools in terms of school level, location, land area, current land status, mode of land acquisition, and year of establishment.

In terms of the school level, the table reveals that among the 12 schools included in the study, majority were elementary schools with a frequency of 10 or 83.33% of the total population while Secondary schools comprised 2 schools or 16.67%.

The data also indicate that Sta. Marcela District is predominantly composed of elementary schools, suggesting that basic primary education services are widely distributed across the district. The relatively smaller number of secondary and integrated schools implies that land titling concerns may be more concentrated among elementary institutions because they constitute the largest portion of the school population.

In terms of school location, Consuelo, Panay and San Carlos recorded the highest frequency with 2 schools each or 16.67%. Other location recorded only 1 school or 8.33% each.

The data reveal that schools are geographically dispersed throughout the district. Areas with larger concentrations of schools may experience greater administrative demands in processing school-site titling due to the number of institutions requiring documentation and technical assistance. Moreover, the geographical distribution suggests that accessibility and coordination among agencies may vary across barangays, potentially influencing the efficiency of titling procedures.



With respect to land area, 9 schools or 75.00% occupied land areas ranging from 1,000 to 15,000 square meters. Only 2 schools or 16.67% each fell within the ranges of 15,001–30,000 square meters and only 1 school or 8.33% has a land area of 30,001–45,000 square meters.

The data indicate that most schools in the district occupy relatively small land areas. This finding suggests that majority of public-school sites were established primarily for basic educational operations rather than large-scale campus development.

Regarding the current land titling status, only 1 school or 8.33% was untitled, which represented the smallest proportion. Eight schools or 66.67% had pending titling processes, while 2 schools or 16.67% were titled but privately owned. There is also 1 school or 8.33% that is reported no supporting land documents.

The data further indicate that a significant number of public-school sites in Sta. Marcela District remain without legal land titles. This condition exposes schools to potential ownership disputes, administrative complications, and uncertainties regarding long-term land security. The presence of schools without supporting documents further highlights the seriousness of documentation deficiencies and the need for stronger institutional coordination to secure legal ownership of school properties.

In terms of the mode of land acquisition, donation was the most common method, accounting for 9 schools or 75.00%. One school each or 8.33% acquired land through deed of exchange, purchased their sites, and acquired land through special patent.

The findings imply that most public-school sites were obtained through community or private land donations, reflecting strong community participation in educational development. However, reliance on donated lands may also contribute to titling complications, especially when formal transfer documents are incomplete or absent.

As to the year of school establishment, the largest group of schools was established from both 1946–1966 and 1987 – 2006, with 4 schools or 33.34%. Two schools each or 16.67% were established between 1967–1986 and 2007–2026.

The findings view that many schools in Sta. Marcela District have existed for several decades. Older schools may face greater challenges in securing titles because historical land records and ownership documents may already be incomplete, lost, or outdated. Conversely, newer schools may have relatively better opportunities to comply with modern land registration requirements due to improved government policies and documentation systems.

In terms of the types of respondents, there were 42 total respondents, however, not all of them have given their responses during the gathering of the data. To maintain the reliability and validity of the data gathered and its analysis, those who did not participate were not included in the analysis.

The data viewed that the respondents were mainly composed of the Donors with 11 respondents or 26.19%. DepEd personnels and Teachers ranked second with a total number of 10 each or 23.81%. There were also three (3) or 7.14% DepEd Technical Assistants, 2 Or



4.76% each for Elementary and Secondary Teacher – in – charge and 1 or 2.38% each for LGU, DENR and LUSA.

Current Status of Public-School Site Titling in Sta. Marcela District

*Table 1.1. The Stage of Titling Process*

| Indicators                           | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1. Inventory and Validation          | 1         | 8.33       |
| 2. Not Yet Started                   | 2         | 16.67      |
| 3. Preparation of Required Documents | 6         | 50.00      |
| 4. Survey and Mapping                | 3         | 25.00      |
| TOTAL                                | 12        | 100%       |

*Table 1.2 Estimated Length of Time Required for the Titling*

| Indicators                | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|---------------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1. Less Than one (1) Year | 3         | 9.09       |
| 2. 1 – 3 Years            | 21        | 63.64      |
| 3. More Than 6 Years      | 9         | 27.27      |
| TOTAL                     | 33        | 100%       |

Table 1.1 and table 1.2 show the Current Status of Public-School Site Titling in Sta. Marcela District across two (2) specific categories, the stage of titling process and the estimated length of time required for the titling.

The data on the stage of the titling process, as shown in table 1.1 revealed that 3 schools or 25.00% were currently in the survey and mapping stage, which represented the second to the highest proportion. Two schools or 16.67% had not yet started the titling process, while 6 schools or 50.00% were in the preparation of required documents stage, constituting the highest proportion. There is only 1 school or 8.33% had reached the inventory and validation stage.

The findings indicate that most schools are still undergoing preliminary technical procedures before title issuance can be completed. Survey and mapping activities appear to be the most common stage because these are essential requirements for land identification and boundary verification. The very limited number of schools that have successfully obtained titles demonstrates that the titling process remains slow and complex. Furthermore, the relatively high percentage of schools that have not yet started the process reflects possible institutional, financial, or technical constraints.

In terms of the estimated length of time required for titling, Table 1.2 shows that the majority of respondents—21 individuals, consisting of 14 Teacher-in-Charge and High School Teachers, 5 Donors, 1 Technical Assistant II, and 1 Technical Assistant IV (63.64%)—



believed that the process requires one to three years. Meanwhile, 9 respondents, composed of 5 Teachers and 4 Donors (27.27%), perceived that titling takes more than six years. Only 3 respondents—comprising 1 DENR Representative, 1 Technical Assistant, and 1 School Head (9.09%)—believed that the process could be completed in less than one year.

The findings suggest that stakeholders perceive school-site titling as a lengthy administrative undertaking. The expectation that titling commonly requires one to three years reflects procedural complexity, documentary requirements, and inter-agency coordination challenges. The perception that some cases extend beyond three years further emphasizes delays caused by legal disputes, incomplete documents, and technical survey concerns.

**Table 2. Legal Challenges Affecting the Titling of Public-School Sites in Sta. Marcela District**

| Indicators                                               | Category Mean | Descriptive Value |
|----------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| 1. Land Ownership and Claims                             | 4.55          | Very High         |
| 2. Completeness and Validity of Documentary Requirements | 4.25          | Very High         |
| 3. Land Classification and Survey Issues                 | 4.27          | Very High         |
| 4. Compliance with Existing Laws and Provincial Programs | 4.36          | Very High         |
| Overall Mean                                             | 4.36          | Very High         |

Table 2 presents the legal challenges affecting the titling of public-school sites in Sta. Marcela District. The overall mean of 4.36, interpreted as “Very High,” indicates that respondents strongly perceived legal factors as major barriers to the successful titling of school properties.

Among the indicators, “Land Ownership and Claims” obtained the highest category mean of 4.55, interpreted as “Very High.” This indicates that overlapping claims, unclear ownership histories, and disputes between private individuals and public institutions significantly affect titling efforts.

“Compliance with Existing Laws and Provincial Programs” obtained a mean of 4.36, also interpreted as “Very High.” This finding suggests that schools experience difficulty complying with legal requirements, government regulations, and procedural standards necessary for title processing.

Similarly, “Land Classification and Survey Issues” registered a mean of 4.27, interpreted as “Very High.” This implies that inconsistencies in land classification, technical descriptions, and boundary surveys contribute significantly to titling delays.

Lastly, “Completeness and Validity of Documentary Requirements” garnered a mean of 4.25, interpreted as “Very High.” This indicates that incomplete, missing, or invalid documents remain major obstacles in securing school land titles.



Overall, the findings reveal that legal concerns constitute serious barriers to school-site titling in Sta. Marcela District. These challenges highlight the need for stronger legal assistance, proper documentation management, and intensified collaboration among government agencies.

**Table 3. Logistical Challenges Affecting the Titling Processes**

| Indicators                                                                       | Category Mean | Descriptive Value |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| 1. Inter – Agency coordination among DepEd, LGUs, DENR and the Registry of Deeds | 3.06          | Moderately High   |
| 2. Administrative procedure and processing timelines                             | 4.36          | Very High         |
| 3. Availability of technical and human resources                                 | 2.56          | Low               |
| 4. Geographical and accessibility constraints                                    | 3.61          | High              |
| Overall Mean                                                                     | 3.41          | High              |

Table 3 presents the logistical challenges affecting the titling process. The overall mean of 3.41, interpreted as “High,” indicates that respondents generally experienced considerable logistical difficulties during the titling process.

Among the indicators, “Administrative Procedures and Processing Timelines” obtained the highest mean of 4.36, interpreted as “Very High.” This finding suggests that lengthy bureaucratic procedures, multiple documentary requirements, and slow processing systems are major sources of delay.

“Geographical and Accessibility Constraints” recorded a mean of 3.61, interpreted as “High.” This indicates that remote school locations, transportation difficulties, and limited accessibility hinder coordination and technical fieldwork activities.

“Inter-agency Coordination among DepEd, LGUs, DENR, and the Registry of Deeds” yielded a mean of 3.06, interpreted as “Moderately High.” This implies that communication and coordination among concerned agencies remain challenging and may contribute to inefficiencies in processing.

Meanwhile, “Availability of Technical and Human Resources” obtained the lowest mean of 2.56, interpreted as “Low.” This suggests that respondents perceived resource limitations as less severe compared to procedural and coordination concerns.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that logistical challenges significantly affect the efficiency of the school-site titling process, particularly in relation to administrative delays and geographical barriers.

**Table 4. Stakeholders Perception on the Effectiveness of the Current Titling Process for Public-School Sites**

| Indicators | Mean | Descriptive Value |
|------------|------|-------------------|
|------------|------|-------------------|



|                                                                           |      |                |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|----------------|
| 1. The Public – School site titling program meets its intended objectives | 4.64 | Strongly Agree |
| 2. The existing process protects stakeholders from future land disputes   | 4.52 | Strongly Agree |
| Overall Mean                                                              | 4.58 | Strongly Agree |

Table 4 presents the stakeholders' perception regarding the effectiveness of the current titling process for public-school sites. The overall mean of 4.58, interpreted as "Strongly Agree," indicates that respondents generally view the titling program as effective despite existing legal and logistical challenges.

The indicator "The Public-School Site Titling Program Meets its Intended Objectives" obtained the highest mean of 4.64, interpreted as "Strongly Agree." This finding suggests that stakeholders recognize the importance and relevance of the titling initiative in securing school properties and supporting educational development.

Likewise, the statement "The Existing Process Protects Stakeholders from Future Land Disputes" garnered a mean of 4.52, also interpreted as "Strongly Agree." This indicates that respondents believe land titling provides long-term legal protection and minimizes future conflicts over school-site ownership.

Overall, the findings imply that stakeholders maintain a positive perception of the current titling process. Although numerous challenges persist, respondents acknowledge the effectiveness and long-term benefits of securing legal titles for public-school sites in Sta. Marcela District.

The table below identifies the recurring ideas, recommendations, and concerns expressed by the respondents regarding the improvement of school site titling processes. Specifically, it seeks to determine the strategies that can be proposed in terms of standardized documentation frameworks, legal simplification measures, and the utilization of digital tools. Through coding and categorization of participants' responses, seven major themes emerged that highlight the need for streamlined legal procedures, strengthened legal assistance, standardized documentation systems, centralized records management, digitalization of processes, utilization of GIS technologies, and continuous capacity building among stakeholders. These themes collectively provide practical and policy-oriented strategies that may contribute to a more efficient, transparent, and accurate school site titling process.

| Coding Framework | Relevant Information / Sample Verbatim Statements | Patterns and Themes | Description |
|------------------|---------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------|
|------------------|---------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------|



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|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Simplification of Legal Procedures and Requirements   | “simplifying requirements”; “Streamlining of requirements under RA10023 and other related laws by removing redundant or unnecessary documents”; “strengthening inter-agency coordination and reducing redundant documents”; “Allow electronic filing of Free Patents and Special Patents applications through DENR and Registry of Deeds” | Theme 1: Legal Simplification and Streamlining of Processes         | Respondents emphasized the need to simplify and streamline legal requirements related to school site titling. Participants identified redundant documentary requirements, lengthy procedures, and overlapping agency processes as barriers to efficient land titling. The findings suggest that simplifying RA 10023 requirements, reducing unnecessary documents, and allowing electronic filing systems may accelerate processing and improve accessibility for schools. |
| Need for Legal Assistance, Guidance, and Coordination | “More staff should be deployed to legal office”; “Technical assistance to school personnel”; “We really need the guidance of Legal Office”; “We need legal officer legal advice”; “Land Titling must be handled with                                                                                                                      | Theme 2: Strengthening Legal Support and Inter-Agency Collaboration | Many responses highlighted the lack of legal expertise and manpower in schools. Respondents proposed assigning more legal personnel, strengthening coordination among agencies, and providing technical assistance to school personnel. This indicates that legal                                                                                                                                                                                                          |



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|                                                 | diligence with the help of other agency”                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                            | support systems and collaborative governance are essential strategies in ensuring efficient and accurate school site titling processes.                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Use of Standardized Templates and Uniform Forms | “Template should be provided to be submitted online”; “Provision of pre-filled out template”; “Clear legal templates for land donation and MOA”; “by adopting uniform templates checklist and survey forms”; “Develop DepEd-DENR-Registry of Deeds joint templates” | Theme 3: Adoption of Standardized Documentation Frameworks | Respondents consistently recommended the development of standardized templates, checklists, and uniform documentation formats to reduce errors and inconsistencies. Standardization was viewed as a mechanism for ensuring clarity, minimizing misinterpretation, and facilitating faster processing of legal documents across agencies. |



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| Centralized Records and Document Management Systems | “utilizing document management system”; “Centralized repository or database where all files are organized”; “Google drive folder of forms”; “Documents be save in a Google drive”; “when standardized documentation frameworks is implemented it can provide easier, faster and accurate process of documents”    | Theme 4: Centralized and Organized Document Management | Participants recognized the importance of centralized repositories and document management systems in improving efficiency and reducing errors. The use of shared databases and cloud storage systems was perceived to facilitate easier retrieval, verification, and monitoring of records while promoting transparency and accuracy in documentation. |
| Digitalization and Online Tracking Systems          | “online tracking system”; “Real-Time Status Tracking System”; “Online Tracking”; “A centralized system where applicants can monitor the status of their titling requests in real time”; “These tools like online tracking or GIS mapping turn a paper-heavy legal maze into a transparent, digital assembly line” | Theme 5: Digital Tracking and Automation of Processes  | Respondents strongly supported the use of digital platforms and online tracking systems to expedite school site titling. Real-time monitoring and automated updates were viewed as effective tools for enhancing transparency, accountability, and efficiency while reducing delays and uncertainty among applicants.                                   |



|                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
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| Integration of GIS Mapping and Modern Survey Technology  | “online tracking, GIS mapping”; “GIS mapping”; “Modernized Survey Equipment To Be Used During Surveys”; “These tools like online tracking or GIS mapping...”                                                        | Theme 6: Utilization of GIS Mapping and Modern Survey Technologies | The findings revealed a growing recognition of GIS mapping and modernized survey equipment as important technological innovations in land titling. Respondents perceived these tools as capable of improving land verification, mapping accuracy, and overall efficiency in resolving land disputes and validating school site boundaries.                                            |
| Capacity Building, Orientation, and Innovation Readiness | “Proper orientation to landowners or donees”; “Provide simple procedural manuals”; “Regular training for personnel involved in titling school site”; “Introduce one and I will try to learn”; “Need for innovation” | Theme 7: Capacity Building and Readiness for Innovation            | Several participants expressed the need for orientations, procedural manuals, and continuous training to improve understanding of titling procedures and digital systems. The responses indicate that successful implementation of standardized documentation frameworks and digital tools requires capacity building, user readiness, and openness to innovation among stakeholders. |

**Table 5. Proposed Strategies to Include Standardized Documentation Frameworks, Legal Simplification Measures and Digital Tools**

## Conclusions

Based on the findings, the following conclusions are drawn:



1. **Systemic Delay:** The high rate of pending applications and the long duration of the process indicate that the current titling framework is hindered by bureaucratic complexity and a lack of streamlined workflows.
2. **Vulnerability of Donated Lands:** Because most school sites were acquired through donations, the absence of perfected deeds and formal transfer documents is the primary root of legal insecurity.
3. **Documentary and Procedural Bottlenecks:** The primary barriers are not lack of personnel (technical resources were rated as a low challenge) but rather the legal maze of ownership claims and the inefficiency of administrative procedures.
4. **Localized Context:** Sta. Marcela presents a unique case where typical regional issues like ancestral domain claims are not the primary obstacle; instead, the challenges are purely documentary and logistical.
5. **Digital Necessity:** There is a clear consensus among stakeholders that transitioning from "paper-heavy" manual processes to digital tracking and GIS mapping is the most viable path toward transparency and speed.

#### **Recommendations**

To expedite the titling process and enhance land tenure security, the following are recommended:

##### **1. Policy and Legal Simplification**

- **Streamline Requirements:** DepEd, in coordination with DENR and the Land Registration Authority (LRA), should reduce redundant documentary requirements under RA 10023.
- **Standardized Templates:** Develop and distribute uniform "joint templates" for deeds of donation, MOAs, and survey forms to minimize errors and misinterpretation.

##### **2. Administrative and Logistical Enhancements**

- **Digitalization & GIS Integration:** Implement an online tracking system to allow school heads to monitor titling status in real-time. Use GIS mapping for more accurate boundary verification and to resolve overlapping claims.
- **Centralized Repository:** Create a cloud-based or centralized digital database (e.g., Google Drive or a dedicated portal) for school land records to ensure documents are not lost or outdated.

##### **3. Inter-Agency and Technical Support**

- **Strengthen Legal Assistance:** Deploy more legal staff or "Land Titling Coordinators" at the district level to provide direct technical assistance to school heads.
- **Institutionalize Coordination:** Formalize regular inter-agency meetings between DepEd, LGUs, DENR, and the Registry of Deeds to synchronize timelines and resolve "bottlenecks" collectively.

##### **4. Capacity Building**



- Stakeholder Training: Conduct regular orientations and training for school heads and donors on land registration laws and the use of new digital tools.
- Procedural Manuals: Develop simple, localized procedural manuals that outline the step-by-step titling process specific to the province of Apayao

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