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PSS Lack of Funding (Rebuilding Schools after Disastrous Events)

 Is the new learning environment affecting the Public School System or better known as the PSS Student’s learning progress? I find this important to talk about because as a former student of PSS, I’ve seen it first hand. Previously, I served as an AmeriCorp Tutor and some of my duties were to guide students into their new learning environment. After Typhoon Yutu struck Saipan, many schools were damaged. Schools from the south area of Saipan were damaged the most and it took almost a year for them to repair it. Although, within that year there wasn’t any progress being made right away. This academic essay explores the question on why it took a long time for PSS to rebuild their schools after Typhoon Yutu and to discuss how difficult it is for the students to learn in an environment they’re not used to. Start off with why it is important to prioritize them.

 Public Schools that were damaged in disastrous events should be a priority because students should be able to learn in a safe and learning environment. It’s hard for students to be motivated to get work done if they’re surrounded by the difficult memory that caused their school to be damaged. I’ve seen students struggle with sharing classrooms with other grade levels. How they’re not allowed to be comfortable because that wasn’t the classroom they were in during the first day of school. A teacher from WSR has told me how difficult it is to share classrooms with another grade level. The teacher has told me that they usually preferred to do grading in the comfort of their own classroom, but because of Typhoon Yutu it wasn’t possible because another class is occupying the classroom. Many things would be misplaced in the classroom and there only could be so much to do. The teacher has told me that if there is something that should’ve been done, it would be providing learning tents as soon as possible. Therefore no one would be struggling with the fact of sharing classrooms. Due to PSS lack of funding, PSS was not able to provide learning tents to those classrooms that were damaged. Let’s move on to the many meetings about rebuilding schools.

 PSS had gone through many meetings about rebuilding schools and it took them a while to finalize them due to low funds. According to a Marianas Variety article that was published on June 2, 2020, PSS may lose a $24M grant if it fails to come up with a plan on how they can rebuild Hopwood Middle School. This middle school is by far the most damaged public school here in the CNMI. I have reached out to a former AmeriCorp member who served at Hopwood Middle School. The former member told me about the times the students talked to them about how fun it would be if the members were in the actual campus instead of the tents in Kobler Elementary. The member had also told me about the lack of shelter in the “Kobler Campus” when it rains, causing the students to go into class soaking wet because of the rain. Let’s move on to the schools that had to implement Morning and Afternoon sessions.

 Most schools also had to implement the Morning and Afternoon session classes. William S. Reyes was one of the schools who had to implement this change since they lost a few classrooms as well. Kindergarten, 1st grade and 2nd grade students attend school from 7:30am to 11:30 am. While 3rd grade, 4th grade, and 5th grade students attend school from 12:30pm to 4:30 pm. According to a Marianas Variety article that was published on December 24, 2019, they would discontinue the Morning and Afternoon sessions and start with Full-day sessions by March 2020. Although, due to COVID-19 announcements it was not continued. As a former AmeriCorp member, I served at WSR and I noticed the change in students when it comes to the Morning and Afternoon Sessions. I had tutees who just decided not to come to school because they woke up late. Mind you, they were Afternoon Session students. As you can see, the Morning and Afternoon session messed up students' sleeping schedules. It shouldn’t be that way, students should be able to wake up early and healthy to learn. This Morning and Afternoon Session could’ve been resolved if there was an act to start rebuilding or providing tent classrooms.

 To conclude this essay, we now know why PSS took a while to rebuild their schools and how difficult it is for students to learn in an environment that they’re not used to. PSS took a while to rebuild their schools causing teachers to have difficulties with sharing classrooms with one another. We also know how difficult it is for students to learn in an environment that they’re not used to because I was once an AmeriCorp tutor and I’ve seen students struggle with that. Also with how the Morning and Afternoon Sessions affected students’ sleeping schedules. Causing them to sleep late and not being able to make it to class. Even when schools are not fully working and somewhat rebuilt, this is a serious issue we should be focusing on. Schools are supposed to be a student’s second home, a school without a roof is not a second home.

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