

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 2343

Introduced by **HONORABLE EDCEL C. LAGMAN**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

A country that fails or neglects to give premium to the education of its people will inevitably falter in human development and lag behind in economic advancement. This is the adverse situation which the Philippines is experiencing today as its annual appropriation for education pales in comparison with that of most of its Asian neighbors.

The budget for secondary education has grown minimally. From P73.46B for school year 2007-2008, the secondary education budget rose by only 3% to P75.68B for school year 2008-2009. It increased to P89.97B for school year 2009-2010 for an encouraging 18.9% growth, only for that annual percentage growth to relapse to 2.3% for the current school year when the budget feebly increased by P2.06B to P92.03B.

While public high schools teem with students, they dismally lack in teachers and classrooms. These shortages result in unwieldy classes with an alarming average student-teacher ratio of 45:1, galloping to 70:1 in some highly urbanized areas.

The dismal access to secondary education in the country is evidenced by the fact that less than 55% of families in the lowest 10% percentile income bracket have children enrolled in high school while 75% of the families in the top 10% percentile have their children in the secondary level.

Poverty has driven poor parents to allow if not push their children to work to augment family income. The 2004 Annual Poverty Indicator Surveys (APIS) revealed that poor families are more likely to have working children 5 to 17 years old, with 23% of poor families having working children compared to only 8% among the non-poor families. An increase in child labor was seen in the lowest 30% income stratum from year 2002 to 2004.

The drop-out rate of high school students is 68%. This means that for every 100 students who enter high school only 32 would graduate.

Since the country cannot in a short period of time solve the shortages of teachers and classrooms, it has to avail itself of innovative and alternative means of delivering education to the more marginalized sectors, particularly in secondary education. This is the justification, the essence, the core and the objective of this bill that seeks to institutionalize the open high school system where the need for teachers and classrooms is minimal or almost absent, unlike in the conventional system. The open high school system utilizes print, radio, television and computer-based communications, satellite broadcasting, teleconferencing and other multi-media learning and teaching technologies that allow students to study on their own without having to regularly attend classes in conventional classrooms.

The beneficiaries of the open high school system are the following:

1. Children of high school age who are out of school because they have to stay at home during school hours to take care of younger siblings and do household chores to allow their parents and elders to earn a living or they themselves are working in order to augment the family income.
2. Children of high school age who are prevented from attending classes regularly because they are geographically distant from the nearest high school.
3. Youth offenders who cannot attend conventional classes because they are detained in correctional institutions or rehabilitation centers.
4. The youth whose secondary education is hampered by armed conflicts like in some areas in Mindanao and certain portions of Luzon and the Visayas.

The following are the salient features of the proposed open high school system:

1. The system shall be open to all youth and adults who have finished elementary education and high school qualifiers under the Philippine Educational Placement Test (PEPT).
2. Distance Learning Centers shall be established in a regular secondary school in the regional or division level where the distance learners can conduct researches or gather additional information on topics under study.
3. The DepEd and DILG shall collaborate in the implementation of the system.
4. Government broadcast stations and telecommunications networks shall provide the necessary assistance and support to the system and private stations and networks shall also be encouraged to provide the same.
5. The system shall adopt the National Secondary Education Curriculum (NSEC) using the Philippine Secondary Schools Learning Competencies (PSSC).

This proposed legislation was initially filed in the 11th Congress and reintroduced in the succeeding Congresses. It was approved by the House of Representatives in the 13th and 14th Congresses. The Senate, however failed to pass it.

Accordingly, prompt approval of this bill is earnestly requested.


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AN ACT
INSTITUTIONALIZING THE OPEN HIGH SCHOOL SYSTEM IN THE
PHILIPPINES, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES

Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Open High School System Act of 2010”.

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to broaden access to relevant quality education through the employment of an alternative learning system that would enable the youth, including adults to overcome geographical, socioeconomic and/or physical constraints to their completion of secondary education.

SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* – For purposes of this Act, the following terms are hereby defined:

(a) “Open High School System (OHSS)” is a system of delivering educational services to high school students utilizing print, radio, television and computer-based communications, satellite broadcasting, teleconferencing, and other multi-media learning and teaching technologies that allow students to study on their own without having to regularly attend classes in conventional classrooms.

(b) “Distance Learning Program” is an educational program whereby the teaching and learning processes are accomplished through self-instructional materials that allow independent study, multi-channel learning and school- family-community partnership.

(c) “Inang Paaralan or Mother High School” is a regular secondary school in the regional or division level that functions, among others, as:

(1) Headquarters of the distance learners and teachers;

(2) Center for enrollment, evaluation, direct or face-to-face instruction and promotion of distance learners;

(3) Receiver of donations, instructional materials and reports relative to distance learning; and

(4) Coordinator of the different learning centers in the community.

(d) “Guro” is a regular secondary school teacher of the ‘inang paaralan’ who is in charge of direct instruction, evaluation of student progress and keeping of the records of individual learners.

(e) “Gurong Tagapatnubay” is a regular secondary school teacher of the ‘inang paaralan’ who serves as guidance counselor to the distance learners; coordinates with the “guro” and “para guro” in evaluating the students’ progress; and prepares and submits reports to the authorities concerned.

(f) "Gurong Kadluan" is a resource person with specialized skills in practical or industrial subjects such as farming, handicraft, auto-mechanics, tailoring and other skills.

(g) "Para Guro" is a degree holder or college level citizen/resident in the community who manages a learning center and facilitates the learning process of a group of distance learners.

(h) "Tagapagpayong Pansamahan" is the adviser of a club in the community who helps learners harmonize study with community service and leisure.

SEC. 4. *Institutionalization of the OHSS.* – To carry out the above-declared policy, the OHSS, hereinafter referred to as the System, is hereby institutionalized in the Philippines in accordance with the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 5. *Coverage.* – This Act shall apply to public secondary educational institutions with existing distance learning programs and all other such institutions that shall later be authorized as qualified implementers of the System.

All existing programs and projects of the Bureau of Secondary Education (BSE) regarding dropout intervention and poverty alleviation through education shall be part of the System.

SEC. 6. *Clientele of the System.* – The System shall be open to all youth and adults who have finished elementary education and high school qualifiers of the Philippine Educational Placement Test (PEPT).

SEC. 7. *Administration and Supervision.* – The Department of Education (DepEd) shall administer and supervise the System. An OHSS Unit shall be attached to the BSE to assist the Bureau in performing the following functions:

- (a) Formulate the objectives and basic policies of the System;
- (b) Formulate, adopt and supplement programs that will make the System effective and productive;
- (c) Monitor and evaluate existing distance learning programs for integration with the System;
- (d) Develop and validate prototype instructional distance learning materials;
- (e) Consult and collaborate with other DepEd divisions, local government units (LGUs), nongovernment organizations (NGOs) and other private agencies for the effective operation of the System;
- (f) Promulgate the necessary guidelines, rules and regulations for the effective implementation of the System;
- (g) Recommend to the DepEd the annual budget of the System for inclusion in the General Appropriations Act for the year; and
- (h) Perform such other tasks as may be necessary to attain the objectives of the System.

SEC. 8. *Establishment of Distance Learning Centers.* – Pending the establishment of distance learning centers in the "inang paaralan" in the community, at least two (2) pilot centers in each Region be organized meanwhile.

The center is a room or a building where the distance learners can conduct researches or gather additional information on topics under study. It can also serve as a venue where the "gurong kadluan" can conduct hands-on exercises/activities.

SEC. 9. *Collaboration Between the Department of Education (DepEd) and the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG).* – The DepEd and the DILG shall sign a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) defining the role of the LGUs in the operation of the System in order to ensure maximum collaboration between the DepEd and the LGUs toward the success of the System.

SEC. 10. *Role of Government Broadcast Stations and Telecommunication Networks.* – Government broadcast stations and telecommunication networks shall provide the necessary assistance and support to the System: *Provided, That* private stations and networks shall also be encouraged to provide the same.

SEC. 11. *Role of Parents.* – Parents of distance learners shall be provided with adequate information on the System as well as for sharing experiences to enable them to competently assist their children in their distance learning.

SEC. 12. *Private Sector Participation.* – Private schools and educational institutions may establish their own privately-funded distance learning centers following the standards and criteria provided for in this Act for the OHSS, subject to the approval of the DepEd.

SEC. 13. *Personnel Recruitment and Incentives.* – All personnel involved in the System shall have adequate and appropriate education and training to be determined by the BSE-DepEd.

Teachers or “guros” and “gurong tagapatnubay” shall receive incentives and/or monetary compensation as determined by the BSE-DepEd, while the “para guro”, “gurong kadluan” and “tagapayong pansamahan” shall receive honoraria, to be arranged with the local school board.

It shall be the duty of the LGUs concerned to employ the “para guro”, “gurong kadluan” and “tagapayong pansamahan” in accordance with the guidelines on hiring of personnel prepared upon prior consultation with the BSE-DepEd and issued by the same LGUs.

SEC. 14. *Training of the System’s Teachers.* – The OHSS Unit attached to the BSE shall take charge of the training of the “guro”, “gurong tagapatnubay”, “para guro”, “gurong kadluan” and “tagapayong pansamahan”.

The training of the “para guro”, “gurong kadluan” and “tagapayong pansamahan” shall be in coordination with the LGUs and the NGOs concerned.

SEC. 15. *Curriculum Content.* – The System shall adopt the National Secondary Education Curriculum (NSEC) using the Philippine Secondary Schools Learning Competencies (PSSLC).

The OHSS Unit, in collaboration with the Curriculum Development Division, BSE-DepEd, shall modify the herein adopted curriculum, devise a rating system, instructional strategies and materials that will suit the psycho-social needs and physical condition of conduct disordered and antisocial learners who are detained in correctional institutions. In the discharge of this function, the BSE shall consult with professional psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers and other related experts who manage or deal with youth offenders who are undergoing rehabilitation.

SEC. 16. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The DepEd, through the Curriculum Development Division of the BSE, upon prior consultation with the Committees on Basic Education of the Senate and the House of Representatives, shall issue the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act within a period of ninety (90) days after its approval.

SEC. 17. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year’s appropriation of the Distance Learning Program of the BSE-DepEd. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for

its continued implementation shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 18. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not so declared shall remain in force and effect.

SEC. 19. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 20. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette*.

Approved,