

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 2619

Introduced by **Hon. Joseph Emilio A. Abaya**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article XIV, Section 1 of the 1987 Constitution mandates the State to protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and to make quality education accessible to all. The sad fact, however, is that Philippine education is now in crisis.

Out of 100 children who enroll in Grade 1, only 68 complete Grade 6 and only 43 complete high school. The greatest drop-out rates occur between grades 1 and 3, where more than 65% of children are actually already over-age. For children who remain in school, only 23% students in Grade 6 achieve reading with comprehension and only 7%, 2% and 16% of 4th year high school students achieve the required mastery of English, Science and Math respectively. Of the college graduates who apply for jobs in the ICT sector, only 2% to 7% are accepted.

These numbers clearly show that the education provided to our children has been substandard and incomplete. While the global norm is 1 year of preschool and 12 years of basic education, Filipino public school children receive only 10 years of basic education, while private school children receive 11 years. The Philippines is the only country in the region still following a 10-year basic education cycle. Worse, the competency of our youth in English, Science and Math – the core subjects crucial for communication and competition – have been impaired by our bias for English as a medium of learning, even as the *lingua franca* has been proven to be the best medium of learning in East Asia.

Average class sizes in elementary and high school in the Philippines are 55% and 80% larger than the international average. These averages further hide wide disparities across the country. Our education spending of 2.5-3% is far below global standards of 5-6% of GNP and, with only 7-8% allocated to MOOE, is not enough to ensure the provision of inputs that are critical to the teaching-learning process. Despite the fact that the single most influential factor determining how well schools perform and students learn is the quality and performance of

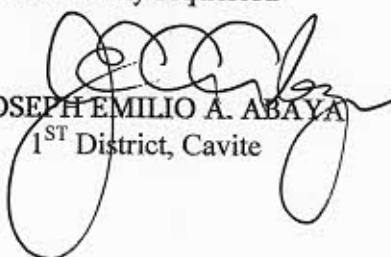
teachers, there are no measures in place which will ensure the continuing updating and development of teachers.

Clearly now is the time to put Philippine education back on track. Thus, this bill seeks to identify strategic education reforms aimed at specific quality and quantity targets for each stage of education. Access to quality elementary education is widened by requiring the use of the lingua franca as a mode of instruction in the early years of elementary schooling, investing in teacher training so this can be done effectively, and providing nutrition interventions that will help young children overcome the health problems that hinder them from attending and completing their education. Access to quality and relevant high school education is improved by establishing a two-track curriculum that will equip students for either academic or business pursuits. Basic education is expanded to a full twelve (12) years through a process of diagnostic testing and bridge years at key junctures of the series, and pre-school is made universal and compulsory. To further ensure that quality outcomes benchmarked to international norms are achieved, this bill provides for intensive in-service teacher training especially in the sciences and mathematics.

Education is a building blocks system. Employability cannot be assured if college education is flawed. College outcomes cannot be fixed if high school education is flawed. High school outcomes cannot be improved if elementary school fundamentals are lacking. Any authentic attempt to reform our education system must therefore begin at the lowest levels and work upwards. There can be no shortcuts.

As a basic right, each child should have access to quality education. Quality education provides each child with a fair and equal opportunity to a secure future, which is in turn a prerequisite to our future as a nation. The reforms needed to address the educational gaps we are now facing requires a long-term engagement. If we aspire to see the results and reforms delivered, it is incumbent upon us to take the initial step now.

In view of the foregoing, approval of this bill is earnestly requested


JOSEPH EMILIO A. ABAYA
1ST District, Cavite

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AN ACT
MANDATING ATTAINMENT OF GLOBALLY COMPETITIVE EDUCATION
OUTCOMES, ADOPTING AN OMNIBUS EDUCATION REFORM PROGRAM,
IDENTIFYING FOR THAT PURPOSE THE STRATEGIC COMPONENTS OF SUCH
PROGRAM, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

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

CHAPTER 1

GENERAL PROVISIONS

SECTION 1. Short Title. - This Act shall be known as the "*Omnibus Education
Reform Act of 2010.*"

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. - The State recognizes the primacy of basic
education to secure the future of the youth and to achieve the development of our nation.
Towards this end, it is hereby declared a policy of the State to establish and maintain a
more responsive system of education designed to ensure that education outcomes
benchmarked to international standards in basic education are achieved, specifically that
every child be literate and numerate by the third year of elementary school; that every
child have a solid foundation in Math and Science by the last year of elementary school;
that every child be proficient in English and Filipino by the second year of high school;

and that every high school graduate will have the competencies to pursue a higher degree of learning or be prepared to enter the world of work by establishing a two-track secondary education program that allows for both academic and practical fields.

In pursuance to the State's mandate under Article XIV, Section 2(1) of the 1987 Constitution to establish, maintain, and support a complete, adequate and integrated system of education relevant to the needs of the people and society, the State shall give priority to educational reforms that address gaps in the country's education program by establishing a twelve (12) year basic education system in recognition of the global norm; investing in teacher updating, training and specialization to ensure the quality of teaching in the country; institutionalizing the use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction for young school children and adopting nutritional and other cost-effective interventions that will ensure the enrollment in and retention of young children in the first three years of schooling.

The State also declares as a policy the imperative to broaden access of the youth to quality education through appropriate prioritization of education spending in order to ensure that inputs critical to the teaching and learning process are provided for.

SECTION 3. Coverage. – The strategic education reform program established by this Act shall be applicable to all public and private schools nationwide with primary and secondary education programs.

SECTION 4. Strategic Education Reform Program. – Within sixty (60) days from the enactment of this Act, Department of Education, through the Secretary, in consultation with the appropriate government agencies and experts in the field of

education management and administration, shall formulate a ten (10) year operational education investment plan that will achieve the mandatory targets identified in Section 2 above through the use of the education reform program components set forth in Chapter 2 hereinafter.

CHAPTER 2

STRATEGIC EDUCATION REFORM PROGRAM COMPONENTS

SECTION 5. Mother Tongue as Medium of Instruction. – The mother tongue or first language shall be used as the medium of instruction for Grades 1, 2 and 3 for all subjects. Filipino and English shall be taught as separate subjects.

As used in this Act, mother tongue shall refer to the language first learned by the child and customarily used at home.

SECTION 6. School-Feeding Program. – The implementation of an in-school direct feeding program shall henceforth be mandatory for Grades 1 and 2 in all public schools located in food poor provinces and food poor municipalities as identified by the National Nutrition Council. The School-Feeding Program shall be implemented by the Department of Education as the lead agency, together with the Department of Social Welfare and Development and the Local Government Unit concerned.

All public schools shall be encouraged to continue the implementation of the in-school feeding program beyond the required Grade levels to sustain the health and nutrition of school children.

SECTION 7. Performance Standards. – A diagnostic test shall be conducted for every student at the end of Grades 3 and 6 for purposes of identifying those individuals who will require special learning assistance as they proceed to the next grade level, *provided that*, such diagnostic tests shall be designed and administered by a third-party non-governmental consortium or organization of experts in the field of education, to be identified or organized by the President for this purpose. The diagnostic tests shall measure performance standards in conformity with the following guidelines:

- (1) Every student, having completed Grade 3, shall be reading independently based on international reading tests and be numerate ;
- (2) Every student, having completed Grade 6, shall be reading independently in English and Filipino, with comprehension, and have solid science and math competencies;

SECTION 8. Twelve (12) Years of Basic Education. The Department of Education shall prescribe a twelve (12) year basic education curriculum for all public and private schoolchildren nationwide, including the number of years to be assigned to the elementary and high school levels, to be implemented on the sixth year of the effectivity of this Act.

SECTION 9. Revision of Secondary School Curriculum. – All high school institutions shall employ a curriculum, duly approved by the Department of Education, designed to ensure that every student will be provided an opportunity for either qualifying for university education or being prepared for the world of work. The curriculum for the early years of high school shall be aimed to reinforce the Science,

Math, English, and Filipino competencies of the student. Thereafter, a two-track curriculum, duly approved by the Department of Education, shall be used for the latter years of high school. There shall be integrated in this two-track curriculum various elective courses which will equip the student with the knowledge and skills to meet his/her more advanced academic goals or work goals, such as but not limited to business, agribusiness, information technology and other specialized fields, *provided however*, that the Regional Offices of the Department of Education shall certify that the business or trade-oriented elective courses offered by secondary schools within their jurisdiction are relevant and valuable to the respective local economies and will provide the student an opportunity for gainful employment.

SECTION 10. Teacher Qualifications, Education and Development –

- A. Licensure Examinations. – A certification of proficiency in English shall be mandatory for all applicants for the Teachers Licensure Examination, *provided that*, all teachers with a license duly issued by the Professional Regulation Commission at the time of the effectivity of this Act shall be required to show the same certification of proficiency in English as a requirement for any promotion, position upgrading or change of assignment or post.
- B. In-service Training. – All primary school teachers who handle classes for Grades 1 to 3 shall undergo an intensive teacher training program which will focus on teaching methods using the mother tongues as medium of instruction. An in-service training program to upgrade the quality of English, Science and

Math teaching shall be completed by all Non-Majors teaching English, Science and Math in high school within the next five (5) years.

Thereafter, all primary and secondary school teachers involved in the teaching of science, math and specialized subjects shall undergo a continuous teacher training program that concentrates on their field of specialization and elective courses handled once every five (5) years.

The results of the foregoing training programs and examination requirements shall also be the basis for any promotion and amount of teaching load to be given.

C. Hiring of Part-time Teachers. – The Department of Education, within sixty (60) days from the implementation of this Act, shall provide the mechanisms for hiring of part-time secondary school teachers qualified to teach in Science and Math which will implemented as part of this Act.

SECTION 11. Compulsory Year of Pre-School Education. – The Department of Education, in consultation with other government agencies and experts in the field of education administration, shall develop and implement a comprehensive plan and budget which will make attainment of critical readiness-for-school indicators among children entering Grade 1 universal and compulsory beginning the sixth year from the effectivity of this Act. Towards attaining this goal, the Department shall work with local governments and other community-based organizations to universalize the population coverage of a compulsory year of pre-school education.

Pre-school center teachers shall undergo training in order to teach reading and writing using the mother tongues as the medium of instruction.

CHAPTER 3

IMPLEMENTING MECHANISM

SECTION 12. Schedule of Implementation. The implementation of the strategic education reform components identified in Chapter 2 of this Act shall be programmed so as to achieve the specific quality targets embodied in Section 2 above within ten (10) years from the effectivity of this Act, *provided that* the following quantitative outcomes shall be accomplished within ten (10) years:

- (1) Grades 1-6 cohort survival rate of 83%;
- (2) Grade 6 to 1st year high school transition rate of 99%;
- (3) High school cohort survival rate of 85%
- (4) Overall completion rate, from Grade 1 to last year of high school, of 70%.

SECTION 13. Education Planning and Budgeting –

A. The Department of Education shall henceforth formulate rolling budget plans with continuous five (5) year planning horizons, consistent with both quantity and qualitative target outcomes, enabled by multi-year budget ceilings established by the Department of Budget and Management, Department of Finance and the National Economic Development Authority which will provide for a specific annual increase in the education budget ceiling, allocating majority of the increase to the Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses and Capital Outlay.

B. The Commission on Higher Education shall earmark such amount as the Chairman may determine for the following priority areas:

- (1) Science and Math courses;
- (2) Engineering courses; and
- (3) Education courses.

The Department of Education and the Commission on Higher Education shall also develop a system of matching grants in order to leverage increased and focused local school board spending toward outcomes and programs set forth in Sections 2, 6, 8, 9 and 10 above as well as reward quality parent voluntarism in communities.

SECTION 14. Reportorial Requirements. – The Secretary of Education shall submit an annual report of its performance on the implementation of this Act to the Office of the President and to the Congressional Oversight Committee hereinafter created, *provided that*, the report shall have been subjected to an independent validation and evaluation by the consortium or organization identified in Section 7 above. It shall also submit all other reports and information as may be required by the Congressional Oversight Committee.

The annual report shall contain the status of the following:

- (1) Reading and Numeracy skills of Grade 3 pupils;
- (2) Science and Math competencies of graduating elementary school students;
- (3) English and Filipino proficiency of 2nd year high school students;
- (4) Tertiary school acceptance rates of graduating high school students;
- (5) Year to year cohort survival rate of elementary and high school students;

(6) Such other information or data that may be required by the Office of the President or the Congressional Oversight Committee.

The Department of Education shall also keep and maintain records and a database containing the above-enumerated information, which shall be made readily available to the public.

SECTION 15. Rules and Regulations. – The Department of Education, in consultation with the Department of Social Welfare and Development and other relevant government agencies, shall, within one hundred twenty (120) days from the effectivity of this Act, promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to effectively implement the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 16. Congressional Oversight Committee. – For the effective implementation of this Act, there shall be created a Congressional Oversight Committee, hereinafter referred to as the Congressional Oversight Committee for Education Reforms, to be composed of four (4) members each from the Senate and the House of Representatives, which shall meet bi-annually to oversee implementation of this Act. The Congressional Oversight Committee for Education Reforms shall be jointly chaired by the Chairpersons of the Senate Committee on Education, Arts and Culture and the House Committee on Basic Education and Culture.

CHAPTER 4

MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

SECTION 17. Appropriations. For the initial implementation of this Act, the amount of Nineteen Billion Pesos (Php 19,000,000,000.00) shall be appropriated to the

Office of the Secretary of Education, in addition to the budget of the Department of Education. Such amount as may be necessary for the effective implementation of the ten (10) year education investment plan formulated under Section 4 hereof and for the continued implementation of this Act shall thereafter be provided for in the General Appropriations Act, consistent with the budget plan created pursuant to Section 12 of this Act.

SECTION 18. Separability Clause. - If, for any reason, any section or provision of this Act shall be held unconstitutional or invalid, the other section or provision not otherwise affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 19. Repealing Clause. - All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, proclamations, rules and regulations which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 20. Effectivity Clause. - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days from its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,