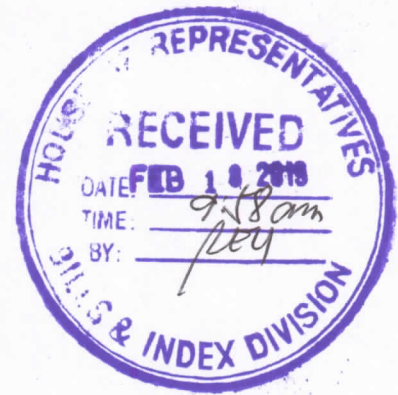


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
Third Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 9142



Introduced by **Representative JOEY SARTE SALCEDA**

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING THE SCHOOLS OF THE FUTURE IN TECHNOLOGY (SOFT),
PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

It is projected that by 2025 half of today's work activities could be digitally enabled. Even now, digital technology has become an indispensable tool in almost all facets of human activity. The reach of technology has become pervasive, with computers and other devices of digital technology becoming ubiquitous. It is predicted that 65 percent of current work skills will become obsolete in two years due to technological innovations and this trend will only intensify in the years ahead. These emerging technologies are ushering in the Fourth Industrial Revolution which is expected to disrupt traditional business and employment models, and thus, result in the obsolescence of certain professions and the displacement of some sectors of the workforce whose jobs will soon be automated. Our future workers' inability to adapt to the requirements of digital economy will lead to higher unemployment rates, slower economic growth, and worse, inequality. Access to digital technology and the skills to leverage it will increasingly influence our children's future ability to earn a living.

There is, therefore, an urgent need for the Philippines to close the existing technological and knowledge gaps in relation to digital technology. The best way to prepare for the disruptive technologies that the Fourth Industrial Revolution will bring is through the basic education level where students can be equipped with ICT skills for a digital economy. Aside from preparing our future work force, trainings on digital technology will bring equal opportunities for children in remote areas, conflict areas and even those who have disability to be present physically in the traditional schools. Digital technology can also increase motivation for learning by making it more fun and by providing our children with access to high quality educational content, including textbooks and video materials.

To realize all these, we will need the SCHOOLS OF THE FUTURE TECHNOLOGY (SOFT) where a student can finish his/her studies with the use of school-based digital facilities. Each student will be provided with a laptop, have access to the internet, and receive instruction in a digital classroom complete with a digital board and such other digital tools and devices which will allow them to be at par with their peers in other parts of the world. This imaginary School of the Future operates seven (7) days a week, 24 hours a day where a student can access his "classroom"

in the comfort of his home at any anytime of the day with the use of a computer or mobile device. The computer will be the student's library, data bank, writing pad, and communication facility. Teachers will give instructions or answer student queries and academic issues via computer, digital device and/or teleconferencing whichever technology is most convenient and would facilitate teaching and learning processes. However, the student will still be required to go to school to acquire social skills or undertake some physical activity. The learners' engagement in a face-to-face setting is still an important part in the development of the student's responsiveness to command and affective skills by promoting the development of their interpersonal relationships. This is especially true for such subjects as Physical Education/Sports, the Arts, and Technology and Livelihood.

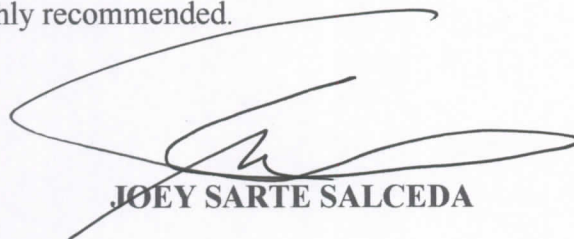
Additionally, teachers will also be trained and re-trained to equip them with the requisite aptitude and competencies that will enable them to perform their parts under the SOFT program. They have to acquire computer skills and be familiarized with technology-aided teaching programs.

The School of the Future in Technology is guided by the following basic principles, namely:

- a. Technology is a tool to improve learning and teaching processes and facilitate the advancement of knowledge. As such, the capacity of teachers and students alike shall be enhanced by the appropriate and meaningful use of technology.
- b. Personalized learning modules and flexible schedules are designed to achieve the best learning results;
- c. Connectivity with fellow students and institutions of learning is raised to an optimum level;
- d. Interdisciplinary teaching modalities shall be adapted to allow a student to study a wide variety of subjects in complex situations; and
- e. While long distance education is the convention, a holistic approach will be undertaken to take into account all aspects of human development.

This bill seeks to establish a SOFT platform aimed at providing Filipino students with the benefits of technological innovations which will prepare them for the challenges of future economic and employment realities. This arrangement is also most beneficial to all concerned because they need not go through the rigors of daily commute, not to mention the cost of a boarding house, transportation fares and daily allowance.

In view of the foregoing, the passage of this bill is highly recommended.



JOEY SARTE SALCEDA

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

SECTION 1. Title. – This Act shall be known as the “*Philippine Schools of the Future in Technology Act (PSOFTA) of 2019.*”

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. – The State gives the highest priority to quality education and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all. Accordingly, the 1987 Constitution makes it a policy of the State to protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels. Towards this end, the State shall harness all resources, including technological processes and tools, in order to facilitate teaching and learning processes to enhance the performance of students and teachers. It shall harness technological innovations to give every Filipino ample opportunity, regardless of social and economic status, affordable access to high quality education.

SEC. 3. Principal Objectives. – The Philippine Schools of the Future (“SOFT”) contemplated under this Act aims to:

- a. Allow Filipino students to gain access to quality education from premier learning centers and the vast academic resources available online;
- b. Provide Filipino students a more economical but effective, alternative to traditional in-campus formal education;
- c. Provide equal opportunities for access to high quality education to all irrespective of socio-economic status or political platforms;
- d. Prepare the present generation of Filipino youth to the emerging Fourth Industrial Revolution and socio-economic realities being shaped by shifting employment, demographic, cultural and other internal and external forces which may be spurred by fast-paced technological progress; and,

- e. Help students and teachers to become responsible digital learners that will contribute to the overall development and progress of the nation.

SEC. 4. *Establishment of the Philippine Schools of the Future in Technology (SOFT).* – In accordance with the declared policy as set forth in Sec. 2 hereof, there is hereby created a School of the Future in Technology (SOFT) in all public schools at basic education cycle (between preschool and K to 12) insofar as it may be practicable under existing conditions taking into account the availability of mainstream technology. The SOFT shall be established by the Department of Education (*DepEd*), which shall properly and regularly carry out the programs, projects and other initiatives of SOFT.

SEC. 5. *Program Structure, Components and Sequencing.* – SOFT development should begin with mandating teachers training or retraining program.

5.1. *Training of Teaching Instructors.* To ensure that teaching instructors of the SOFT are well equipped with the right competencies, DepEd shall implement teaching programs to develop computer skills, use of instructional aids with technology and other programs for the development of necessary aptitudes and competencies that will enable them to effectively and efficiently perform their tasks under the SOFT.

5.2. *Hybrid Intranet Connectivity.* DepEd, in collaboration with DITC and other concerned agencies, shall establish its own stable and reliable intranet connectivity in all public schools.

5.3. *Personal Laptop Units.* Each student shall be provided a laptop at grade 4, another in Grade 8, and another in Grade 11, to facilitate the learning process.

5.4. *Digital Classrooms.* There shall be a digital classroom equipped with digital board, and such other digital tools and devices.

5.5. *Training Program for Students.* Public schools shall offer a hands-on training program to allow students, particularly the marginalized and the disadvantaged, to acquire the necessary skills in the use of technology for them to fully participate in the SOFT.

SEC. 6. *Authority of the Secretary to Enter into Cooperative Arrangements.* – The Secretary of the Department of Education is hereby granted the authority to enter into cooperative and collaborative arrangements with the other government institutions, local government units and other public or non-profit private entities for the proper and effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 7. *Financial Assistance to the Marginalized and the Disadvantaged.* – To give the marginalized and the disadvantaged students an equal opportunity to participate fully in the SOFT, the DepEd shall formulate a program extending financial assistance to the marginalized and disadvantaged students.

SEC. 8. *Appropriations.* – The DepEd shall immediately include SOFT in their respective programs, incorporating a budget for the implementation of this Act, to be included in the Annual Appropriations Act.

SEC. 13. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

SEC. 14. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, is hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

SEC. 15. *Effectivity Clause.* –This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved.