

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 930



Introduced by Representative Roman T. Romulo

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to reintroduce the Literacy Coordinating Council as the National Literacy Council, strengthening its powers and functions, as well as expanding its membership structure and support mechanisms, repealing Republic Act No. 7165, as amended, for this purpose.

The Literacy Coordinating Council was established in 1991 for the "*total eradication of illiteracy*" through the formulation of policies and implementation of programs on non-formal, informal, and indigenous learning systems, as well as self-learning, independent, and out-of-school study programs particularly those that respond to community needs,¹ with priority to the adoption of measures for the universalization of literacy.

Pursuant to Executive Order No. 352, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) has been conducting the Functional Literacy, Education, and Mass Media Survey (FLEMM) every five (5) years.² In this survey, *Simple or Basic Literacy* is defined as "*the ability of a person to read and write with understanding a simple message in any language or dialect.*" Going further to state that the simple literacy status of an individual is determined based on the respondent's answer to the question "*Can read and write a simple message in any language or dialect?*"³ Functional Literacy, on the other hand, is a "*significantly higher level of literacy which includes not only reading and writing skills but also numeracy skills.*" The skills must be sufficiently advanced to enable the individual to participate fully and efficiently in activities commonly occurring in his life situation that require a reasonable capability of communicating by written language.

Through the aforementioned Survey, the National Statistics Office, now PSA, determined that the Basic Literacy Rate of the country for the year 1994 was 93.9% for Filipinos 10 years old and over. In the recently conducted FLEMM Survey in 2019, the Basic Literacy Rate improved to 96.5% or a mere 2.6 percentage points. In 1994, the functional

¹ Section 1, Republic Act No. 7165.

² Exec. Order No. 352 (1996)

³ National Statistics Office, 1994 Functional Literacy, Education, and Mass Media Survey.

literacy rate was at 83.8%. In 2019, 91.6% of Filipinos aged 10-64 are functionally literate at varying degrees.⁴ Looking closely at the data, however, it shows that only half or about 53.4% are those who have completed at least 4 years of secondary education — and of this category, 76.7% are aged 20-24. Clearly there are gaps that need to be filled. These gaps represent the individual lives of Filipinos that are frustrated by their inability to adequately cope with the daily demands of life. Let us make sure that no Filipino is left behind.

Through this measure, we will effectively strengthen our efforts towards the universalization of literacy. We will ensure that each and every Filipino will be equipped with the necessary tools for the quality of life that they deserve— through the provision of quality, relevant, and equitable education for all local communities, especially the marginalized and vulnerable sectors.

The National Literacy Council, as proposed, will now be mandated to closely coordinate with the Department of Education's Bureau of Alternative Education on programs and projects that are geared towards the universalization of literacy. Local Literacy Councils will now be established at the city and municipal levels, which shall serve as the coordinating and advisory body at the local level on matters pertaining to the adoption and implementation of measures for the propagation of literacy. Through this, the literacy programs that are to be adopted will be faithfully implemented with the necessary support and expertise of those on the ground.

In view of the foregoing, the approval of the proposed measure is earnestly requested.



ROMAN T. ROMULO
Lone District, Pasig City

⁴ Philippine Statistics Authority, 2019 Functional Literacy, Education, and Mass Media Survey.

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AN ACT

RENAMING THE LITERACY COORDINATING COUNCIL TO NATIONAL LITERACY COUNCIL, STRENGTHENING ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS, EXPANDING ITS MEMBERSHIP STRUCTURE AND SUPPORT MECHANISMS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, REPEALING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7165, AS AMENDED

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “National Literacy Council”

SECTION 2: *Declaration of Policy* – Pursuant to Article II, Section 17 of the Constitution, it is the declared policy of the state to give priority to education to foster patriotism and nationalism, accelerate social progress, and promote total human liberation and development. Article XIV, Section 2(4) likewise mandates the State to encourage non-formal, informal, and indigenous learning systems, as well as self-learning, independent, and out-of-school study programs particularly those that respond to community needs. To this end, the State shall give priority to the adoption of measures for the universalization of literacy.

SEC. 3. *Renaming of the Literacy Coordinating Council.* – The nomenclature of the Literacy Coordinating Council, established pursuant to Republic Act No. 7165, as amended, is hereby changed to National Literacy Council, hereinafter referred to in this Act as the “Council”.

The Council shall serve as the lead inter-agency coordinating and advisory body to the various agencies of the national government, the local government units (LGUs), and the private sector, on matters pertaining to the formulation of policies and the adoption and implementation of measures for the universalization of literacy. The Council shall be attached solely for budgetary coordination and

related purposes to the Department of Education (DepEd).

SEC. 4. Composition. – The Council shall be composed of the following members:

- a) Secretary of the DepEd, as Chairperson, who may designate an undersecretary as permanent representative;
- b) Secretary of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), as co- Chairperson, who may designate an undersecretary as permanent representative;
- c) Secretary of the National Economic and Development Authority, or a duly designated permanent representative;
- d) Director General of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, or a duly designated permanent representative;
- e) Chairperson of the Commission on Higher Education, or a duly designated permanent representative;
- f) Director General of the Philippine Information Agency, or a duly designated permanent representative;
- g) President of the Philippine Normal University, or a duly designated permanent representative;
- h) National Statistician and Civil Registrar General of the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), or a duly designated permanent representative;
- i) Director of the DepEd's Bureau of Alternative Education (BAE);
- j) A representative from the non-government organizations (NGOs), who is a citizen of the Philippines with a demonstrated personal or professional commitment and advocacy in the propagation of literacy; and
- k) a representative from the associations of private educational institutions, who is a citizen of the Philippines with a demonstrated personal or professional commitment and advocacy in the propagation of literacy.

The Council shall approve and confirm the appointment of the representative from the NGOs and the representative from the associations of private educational institutions through the adoption of a resolution. Such representatives shall serve for a term of three (3) years, and may be reappointed only once for another three (3) years on the basis of merit and performance.

SEC. 5. Meetings. – The Council shall conduct its regular meetings quarterly at any agreed location within the Philippines and may hold special meetings to consider urgent matters upon the call of the chairperson or a majority of its members. A majority of all its incumbent members shall constitute a quorum, the presence of which is necessary to transact business.

A meeting may be conducted virtually only in circumstances when meeting in person is impossible or impractical and when all the Council members are able to communicate adequately during the meeting.

Members of the Council shall serve without compensation, but shall be entitled to appropriate honoraria for attendance in meetings as well as appropriate allowances and reimbursement of expenses related to their participation in the official activities of the Council, in accordance with pertinent laws, rules and

1 regulations. The duly designated representatives to the Council shall be afforded equal
2 opportunity to participate in the meetings of the Council, and shall be allowed to vote
3 on any matter in the agenda of the Council. Likewise, they shall be afforded,
4 whenever necessary, reimbursement of any actual expense incurred during Council-
5 related functions and duties, subject to the provisions of existing laws, rules and
6 regulations.

7
8 **SEC. 6. Powers and Functions.** – The Council shall be vested with the
9 following powers and functions:

- 10 a) Act as the lead advisory and coordinating body of the government
11 and initiate, promote and recommend the adoption of policy and
12 program directions for all literacy endeavors in the country;
- 13 b) Evaluate the literacy situation in the country, propose ways and
14 means for expanding educational opportunities to citizens of varied
15 socio-economic origins, and adopt modern communications and
16 educational technology and other innovative modes of transmitting
17 knowledge to support literacy endeavors at the national and local
18 levels;
- 19 c) Support and assist the BAE on matters concerning community mapping
20 activities for the maintenance of a centralized database for out-of-
21 school children and adults, including persons with disabilities,
22 indigenous peoples, and other marginalized and vulnerable members of
23 society, who may not have availed of or completed their basic
24 education and who may need intervention and support;
- 25 d) Strengthen support structures identified as literacy advocates of LGUs
26 in the city, municipal, and barangay levels, by adopting strategies that
27 maximize private sector support for, cooperation, and involvement
28 in literacy development programs, projects, and related activities;
- 29 e) Promote and support initiatives for the conduct of research studies
30 and similar undertakings aimed at enhancing and strengthening the
31 crafting of relevant and timely policy recommendations, and for the
32 effective implementation of literacy-related programs, projects, and
33 other activities;
- 34 f) Organize periodic assemblies, such as literacy conferences and giving of
35 awards to increase awareness on and help strengthen good literacy
36 practices, and engage close partnerships with literacy advocates
37 throughout the country;
- 38 g) Establish the organizational structure of the Council secretariat and
39 determine the secretariat's staffing pattern, qualifications, duties and
40 responsibilities, and other administrative policies including, among
41 others, those pertaining to hiring and promotion, subject to the
42 guidelines set forth by the Department of Budget and Management
43 (DBM) and the Civil Service Commission;
- 44 h) Prepare an annual budget proposal and ensure that the allotted annual
45 appropriation shall be spent in accordance with the purposes as

1 specified in the General Appropriations Act;

- 2 i) Formulate necessary guidelines for business continuity, disaster
3 recovery and backup capabilities and facilities to ensure continued
4 operation and delivery of services, including the conduct of
5 meetings, workshops and conferences, and National Literacy Awards
6 in times of public health emergency, occurrence of calamity and any
7 other threat that requires public safety and protection; and
8 j) Perform such other functions as may be necessary in furtherance of the
9 purposes of this Act.

10 **SEC. 7. The Secretariat.** – The secretariat shall be headed by an Executive
11 Director, who shall assist the Council in the performance of its functions.

12 The salaries of the Executive Director and other officers and employees of the
13 Council secretariat shall be in accordance with the Revised Compensation and
14 Position Classification System and other existing laws.

15 The existing organizational structure and staffing pattern of the secretariat
16 shall be revised so as to integrate appropriately the provisions of this Act subject to
17 the evaluation and review by the DBM: *Provided*, that no officer or employee of the
18 existing secretariat shall be removed from the service except for a valid cause, in
19 accordance with Republic Act No. 6656, or the “Government Reorganization Law”.

20
21 **SEC. 8. Duties and Responsibilities of the Secretariat.** – In the performance
22 of its duties and responsibilities, the Council secretariat shall:

- 23 a) Provide administrative and technical support and assistance to the
24 Council, including the preparation of policy recommendations, plans
25 and programs, and other Council priorities and measures necessary for
26 the advancement of basic and functional literacy, and other basic
27 capabilities of out-of-school children and adults, including persons with
28 disabilities, indigenous peoples, and other marginalized and vulnerable
29 members of society, who may not have availed of or completed their
30 basic education and who may need intervention and support;
- 31 b) Consult and coordinate with national government agencies, LGUs,
32 NGOs, academic institutions, and other stakeholders on matters relating
33 to the functions of the Council and on other matters pertaining to the
34 propagation of literacy endeavors;
- 35 c) Provide technical assistance to the implementers of the programs and
36 projects on literacy;
- 37 d) Initiate, organize, and promote the conduct of research activities,
38 workshops, conferences, national literacy awards and the like, subject to
39 the approval of the Council;
- 40 e) Set up, maintain, and update a management information system on
41 literacy programs and projects, policies, best practices, research studies,
42 statistical data and other relevant information relative to the literacy
43 situation in the country;
- 44 f) Coordinate with the PSA in the conduct of the functional literacy

1 education and mass media survey (FLEMMS) for purposes of providing a
2 quantitative framework that shall serve as one of the bases in the
3 formulation of policies and programs on the improvement of literacy and
4 education status in the country;

5 g) Recommend programs, projects, and other activities to be included for
6 funding in the annual budget proposal of the Council, including
7 support services in the preparation of the Council's annual budget
8 proposal; and

9 h) Perform other tasks as may be directed by the Council.
10

11 **SEC. 9. Collaboration and Linkages with the BAE.** – The Council shall
12 closely coordinate with the BAE concerning the management of ALS programs,
13 projects and other activities, especially those that are geared towards the
14 universalization of literacy, particularly among out-of-school children and adults,
15 including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and other marginalized and
16 vulnerable members of society. It shall also collaborate with the BAE on matters
17 pertaining to literacy concerns for policy formulation, knowledge management,
18 advocacy, social mobilization, and partnerships, among others.
19

20 **SEC. 10. Establishment of Local Literacy Councils.** – The Council shall promote
21 the establishment of Local Literacy Councils (LLCs) as support structures at the city,
22 municipal, and barangay levels, which shall serve as the coordinating and advisory
23 body at the local level on matters pertaining to the adoption and implementation of
24 community-based measures for the propagation of literacy.

25 The LLCs shall work with the LGUs in the implementation of literacy
26 programs and endeavors at the local level, including the identification of priority
27 literacy programs, provision of technical assistance to literacy volunteer workers,
28 program monitoring and evaluation, and coordination with government and non-
29 government partners for program support activities.

30 The LLCs shall closely coordinate, support and assist the BAE to
31 ensure the implementation of community literacy mapping activities within the local
32 level. The Council shall, upon consultation with the DILG and DepEd, issue the
33 general guidelines for the establishment, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of
34 LLCs.

35 An LGU may, *motu proprio* or upon the recommendation of the Council,
36 establish its LLC within its jurisdiction in accordance with the guidelines set forth by
37 the Council.
38

39 **SEC. 11. National Literacy Awards.** – The Council shall organize the National
40 Literacy Awards for the purpose of recognizing, commending, and awarding
41 deserving LGUs and NGOs for implementing outstanding literacy programs in their
42 respective jurisdictions within the country.

43 The National Literacy Awards shall be held once every two (2) years
44 and shall encourage the participation of all literacy advocates and stakeholders
45 nationwide. The event shall serve as the venue to exhibit, discover, share, and help

strengthen good literacy practices and thus, engage partnerships with various literacy advocates and stakeholders.

The Council shall formulate the guidelines on the conduct of the National Literacy Awards, including the criteria for the creation of a board of judges per category and the selection of winners.

The board of judges for each category shall be chosen from a panel of experts in the field of literacy and education.

SEC. 12. Subsidy for Qualified Outstanding Literacy Programs; Outstanding Individual Awards. – The Council shall award appropriate financial subsidies to the top awardees of the Search for Outstanding Literacy Programs for both LGU and NGO categories to fund their chosen literacy programs in their respective localities: *Provided*, That the NGO awardees are non-stock, non-profit, and established for educational purposes. The Council shall formulate and issue guidelines on the release of this financial subsidy including the amount of the award, period and frequency of release of such amounts to the awardees, and conditions or qualifications for entitlement thereto. The amounts of the financial subsidy to qualified awardees may be subject to periodic adjustments, as deemed necessary by the Council.

The Council shall also designate awardees for the Outstanding Individual Literacy Workers and Outstanding ALS Mobile Teachers whose qualifications for entitlement to a financial award and the amount thereof shall be included in the guidelines.

SEC. 13. Assistance from Special Education Fund. – Notwithstanding the provisions of Republic Act No. 7160, otherwise known as the “Local Government Code of 1991”, as amended, the LGUs shall be authorized to use a portion of the Special Education Fund to augment the funds appropriated by the LGUs for the purpose of implementing literacy related programs and activities at the local level.

SEC. 14. Annual Report. – The Council shall submit to the Philippine Senate’s Committee on Basic Education, Arts and Culture and to the House of Representatives’ Committee on Basic Education and Culture a detailed annual report of its accomplishments which shall include its accomplishments, programs and projects, and policy recommendations and, if necessary, propose legislation for the universalization and continuing improvement of literacy rate and numeracy skills of learners.

SEC. 15. Appropriations. – The initial amount for the implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year’s appropriations of the DepEd. Thereafter, the funding of which shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 16. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – Within one hundred twenty (120) days after the effectivity of this Act, the Chairperson of the Council shall, in consultation with the Council members and other concerned stakeholders,

1 promulgate the rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.
2

3 **SEC. 17. *Separability Clause.*** – If any provision of this Act is held
4 invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not so declared shall remain in force
5 and effect.
6

7 **SEC. 18. *Repealing Clause.*** – Republic Act No. 7165, entitled, “AN ACT
8 CREATING THE LITERACY COORDINATING COUNCIL, DEFINING ITS POWERS AND
9 FUNCTIONS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES,” as
10 amended by Republic Act No. 10122, entitled, “AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE
11 LITERACY COORDINATING COUNCIL BY AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7165,
12 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS ‘AN ACT CREATING THE LITERACY COORDINATING COUNCIL,
13 DEFINING ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND
14 FOR OTHER PURPOSES’,” is hereby repealed.
15

16 All other laws, decrees, orders, and rules and regulations contrary to or
17 inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.
18

19 **SEC. 19. *Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days
20 after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general
21 circulation.
22

23 Approved