

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Batasan Hills, Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 1946



Introduced by

HON. YEDDA MARIE K. ROMUALDEZ
and
HON. JUDE A. ACIDRE

AN ACT
PROMOTING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PUBLIC MATH AND SCIENCE
HIGH SCHOOLS IN PREVIOUSLY UNDERSERVED AREAS, AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Science and Technology are key drivers in the national economy and crucial for development and progress. The Constitution expressly mandates the State to give priority to research and development, invention, innovation, and their utilization; and to science and technology education, training, and services.

Aligned with the foregoing mandate of the Constitution, this bill seeks to establish at least one (1) public math and science high school in each province. These schools shall be devoted to teaching advanced curriculum focused on science, mathematics, and technology subjects, for grade 7-12 qualified students.

Students who graduate in the program are enjoined to enroll in a four or five-year bachelor's degree in Science program at an accredited college or university. Said graduate must enroll in a course-of-study in one of the following

fields: pure and applied sciences, mathematics, engineering, technology, or any other field deemed appropriate by regulators.

This bill aims to provide a more equitable access to quality education in the pure and applied sciences, mathematics, and technology for all Filipinos to nurture future generations of scientists, mathematicians, engineers, and other professionals who will serve the nation as catalysts for scientific, technological, and industrial progress.

In view of the foregoing, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



Rep. YEDDA MARIE K. ROMUALDEZ
Representative, Tingog Sinirangan



Rep. JUDE A. ACIDRE
Representative, Tingog Sinirangan

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

Section 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “*Equitable Access to Math and Science Education Act.*”

Section 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is hereby declared a policy of the State to provide equitable access to quality education in the pure and applied sciences, mathematics, and technology for all Filipinos to nurture future generations of scientists, mathematicians, engineers, and other professionals who will serve the nation as catalysts for scientific, technological, and industrial progress.

Pursuant to this declaration, the State shall work together with local government units (LGUs) to eliminate economic and geographical barriers that restrict the access of otherwise willing and qualified students to said education.

Section 3. *Coverage.* – All provinces of the Republic of the Philippines which do not have at least one (1) public math and science high school currently operating within their respective geographical boundaries at the time this Act takes effect shall be required to fulfill the establishment requirements prescribed by Section 4 of this Act.

For purposes of this Act, the term *public math and science high school* shall refer to a school principally financed through national or local government funds that implements an advanced curriculum focused on science, mathematics, and technology subjects, for grade 7-12 students.

Section 4. *Establishment of Schools.* - All provinces covered by the preceding Section of this Act are hereby mandated to work with the Department of Education (DepEd) to establish at least one (1) public math and science high school within their respective provincial capitals.

Schools established in compliance with this Act may be established through the construction of new school facilities, the conversion and/or reorganization of an existing school, or the renovation and re-opening of currently non-operational school facilities or other idle government-owned property: *Provided*, these schools must be fully operational by the next Academic Year following the effectivity of this Act: *Provided, further*. That any utilization of idle government-owned assets shall follow pertinent procedures as prescribed by law: *Provided, finally*. That schools which have been designated by the DepEd as fully compliant under this Act may start operations earlier than the prescribed deadline.

Section 5. *School Operations.* - Schools established in compliance with this Act shall be operated by the DepEd, with the proper participation of the applicable LGUs and other community shareholders as prescribed by law. Said schools shall be funded in full under the budget of the DepEd and shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

Section 6. *Admissions.* – Schools established in compliance with this Act shall accept applicants based on the results of a competitive entrance examination. A student may be eligible to apply for admission to said school only if he or she has established continuous residence within the establishing province for at least one (1) year from the date of examination.

Section 7. *Curriculum.* – Schools established in compliance with this Act shall implement a six-year integrated junior-senior high school curriculum that focuses on advanced science, mathematics, and technology subjects under the guidance of the DepEd and the Department of Science and Technology (DOST). The revised curriculum of the Philippine Science High School system for Grades 7-12 shall be used as a basis for the formulation of said curriculum.

Section 8. *Higher Education Bond.* – A graduate of a school established in compliance with this Act shall be required to enroll in a four or five-year bachelor's degree in Science program at an accredited college or university. Said graduate must enroll in a course-of-study in one of the following fields: pure and applied sciences, mathematics, engineering, technology, or any other field deemed appropriate by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). A graduate who shifts or transfers to a course in any unrelated field prior to completion of the degree program shall pay a fine equivalent to the total full cost incurred by the government in subsidizing the secondary education program of said graduate, as calculated by the DepEd. Any fine collected under the terms of this provision shall be allocated to any government program that promotes the advancement of science, mathematics, and technological education in the Philippines.

Section 9. *Appropriations.* – The amount of One Hundred Million pesos (Php100,000,000.00) shall be appropriated for the initial implementation of this Act which shall be incorporated in the Annual Budget of the DepEd.

Thereafter, the amount necessary to carry out the implementation of the Program as determined by the Executive Committee of the DepEd shall be incorporated in the General Appropriations Act.

Section 10. *Implementing Agencies.* – The DepEd, in coordination with the DOST and the CHED, shall be responsible for implementing the provisions of this Act. Within (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the implementing agencies shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations as may be necessary to ensure the efficient and effective implementation of this Act.

Section 11. *Separability Clause.* – Should any part of this Act be declared unconstitutional, the rest of the provisions of this Act shall continue to be in effect and subsisting.

Section 12. *Repealing Clause.* - The provisions of other laws, decrees, executive orders, rules, and regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

Section 13. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette and/or in at least two (2) national newspapers in general circulation.

Approved,