

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 3721



Introduced by Representative Rex Gatchalian

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING AN ACADEMIC RECOVERY AND ACCESSIBLE LEARNING
PROGRAM, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

It is the declared policy of the State to protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all. Unfortunately, the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has created more challenges for the State to deliver quality education for all. Prolonged school closures has caused learning loss and missed learning opportunities. To make things worse, the negative effects caused by learning loss will not be limited to the duration of the pandemic – meaning that it will extend well beyond the current crisis we are facing and will affect the entire lifetime of Filipino school children.

The World Bank reports that learning poverty – or the percentage of 10 year old children who are unable to read and understand a simple story – has become worse. Pre-COVID-19, learning poverty in the Philippines was already estimated at 69.5% in 2019 and we would be able to reduce learning poverty to 27% by 2030. However, because of prolonged school closures implemented as a direct result of the pandemic, the Philippines can now only reduce learning poverty to 43% by 2030.

Another analysis shows how much Philippine education has been affected by COVID-19. Previously, the country's Learning-Adjusted Years of Schooling (LAYS) – or the country's actual quality of learning for 12 years of schooling – was at 7.5 years.

Unfortunately, this has now gone down by 1.4-1.7 years which translates to a LAYS of only 5.7-6.1 years.

All these translate to huge economic losses for the country. It is estimated that these learning losses will result to an annual average loss of earning of P62,000.00 per year for each average student or an individual lifetime loss of earnings by as much as P1,100,000.00.

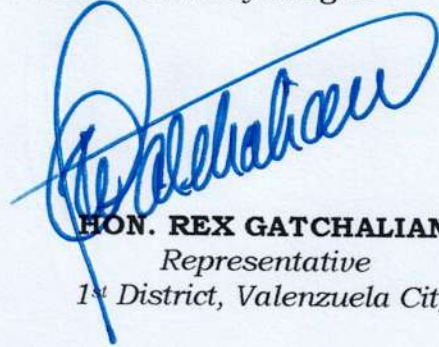
Thus, we need to file this bill because there is an urgent need for a learning intervention program to reverse, or at least, contain the effects caused by the COVID-19 pandemic on education. This bill establishes the ARAL Program which will ensure that learners who did not enroll in school year 2020 to 2021, are lagging academically, or those who are only just marginally above the minimum level of mastery required in Language, Mathematics, and Science, are given optimal instructional time to ensure mastery of essential competencies to make up for such learning loss. Reading, which is included in the most essential learning competencies in Language, shall be prioritized to develop the critical and analytical thinking skills of learners. Kindergarten learners, on the other hand, shall focus on building foundational skills aimed at strengthening their literacy and numeracy competencies.

Tutors under the ARAL Program will be teachers and para-teachers who shall be provided with appropriate remuneration. Tertiary students will also be encouraged to volunteer as tutors for the ARAL Program by crediting their service as part of their Literacy Training Service under the National Service Training Program in accordance with the provisions of Republic Act No. 9163, otherwise known as the "National Service Training Program (NSTP) Act of 2001".

This program is accessible as it widens the reach of tutorial sessions through the implementation of different delivery modes such as face-to-face, online, or blended learning. This measure promotes the use of high-quality instructional materials that are aligned with core classroom content or grade level standards to enable tutors to reinforce and support teachers' classroom instruction, provides capacity building to tutors, and assesses the ARAL Program and its tutors and learners to make a positive impact on the improvement of learning outcomes.

Given the very grim outlook on education provided by the World Bank on the effects of school closures, the ARAL Program is our answer to mitigate the damage. The ARAL Program will allow learners to catch up with the rest of the world and ensure that long-term economic losses are kept at a minimum.

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



HON. REX GATCHALIAN
Representative
1st District, Valenzuela City

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

1 **SECTION 1. Short Title.** – This Act shall be known as the “*Academic Recovery*
2 *and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program Act.*”
3

4 **SEC. 2. Coverage.** – This Act shall apply to the following learners under the
5 Department of Education (DepEd): (a) those who did not enroll in School Year 2020
6 to 2021; (b) those who are lagging academically; and (c) those who are at and
7 marginally above the minimum level of mastery required in Language, Mathematics,
8 and Science.
9

10 **SEC. 3. Declaration of Policy and Objectives.** – It is the declared policy of the
11 State to protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels
12 and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all.

13 Towards this end, the State shall endeavor to support learners by establishing
14 a free and effective national remedial program to provide learners who experienced
15 learning loss as a result of the pandemic school closures, with supplemental lessons
16 to close learning gaps and enable them to catch up to their cohorts.
17

18 **SEC 4. Establishment of the ARAL Program.** – The ARAL Program is hereby
19 established to provide a national learning intervention program which shall be
20 grounded on the following areas:

- a) Well-systematized tutorial sessions which demonstrate higher achievement gains;
- b) Well-designed remediation plans tailored fit to the learning needs of learners;
- c) Careful assessment and evaluation of the progress of learners;
- d) Well-chosen and trained remedial instruction facilitators; and
- e) Adequate provision of nutritional, social, emotional, and mental health support to ensure the holistic well-being of learners, and for them to prosper academically, build resilience against adversity, and be equipped with skills and confidence to seek help for early intervention during their educational journey.

The program shall further ensure that learners shall be provided optimal instructional time to ensure mastery of essential competencies and make up for learning loss.

SEC. 5. *Most Essential Learning Competencies in Language, Mathematics, and Science.* – The ARAL Program shall cover the most essential learning competencies under the K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum covering the subjects of Language and Mathematics for Grades 1 to 10, and Science for Grades 3 to 10.

Reading, which is included in the most essential learning competencies in Language, shall be prioritized to develop the critical and analytical thinking skills of learners.

For Kindergarten learners, the ARAL Program shall focus on building foundational skills aimed at strengthening their literacy and numeracy competencies.

SEC. 6. *Determination of Learners under the ARAL Program.* – The DepEd shall determine the learners to be covered by this program using its Learner Information System (LIS) and other relevant databases.

The DepEd may likewise use the learners' academic performance in school years prior to School Year 2020-2021 to determine those who are at and marginally above the minimum mastery requirements of the subjects covered by this Act.

Priority shall be given to younger learners.

SEC. 7. *Tutors under the ARAL Program.* – Teachers and para-teachers shall be responsible for tutoring learners under the ARAL Program. Tertiary level students

1 may volunteer as tutors provided that they are at or above the 75th percentile of their
2 respective school cohorts in the subject that they will be teaching and have passed
3 a mock tutoring session to be administered by the DepEd.

4 The tutors shall employ a step-based approach which provides corrective
5 feedback on each question or problem faced by learners. They shall be supportive
6 and empathetic of their needs, motivation, and behavior. To facilitate positive tutor-
7 learner relationships, a stronger understanding of the learners' learning needs, and
8 greater academic, social, and motivational outcomes, the ARAL Program shall strive
9 to pair a learner or learners with the same tutor for the entire duration of the
10 program.

11 For purposes of this Act, teachers refer all persons engaged in teaching at the
12 elementary and secondary levels, whether on full-time or part-time basis, including
13 technical-vocational teachers and all other persons performing supervisory or
14 administrative functions, or both, in all schools in the aforesaid levels and qualified
15 to practice teaching under existing laws. Para-teachers are those who have taken the
16 Licensure Examination for Teachers but were unable to qualify, and have been
17 issued by the Board for Professional Teachers a special permit indicating their area
18 of assignment.

19
20 **SEC. 8. *Conduct of Tutorial Sessions; Group Size of Learners.*** – Tutorial
21 sessions may be held on weekends during the school year or semestral breaks, as
22 may be deemed necessary. Learners may be grouped according to their assessed
23 learning needs. One-on-one tutorial may also be provided to learners taking into
24 consideration their particular learning needs.

25
26 **SEC. 9. *Instructional Materials.*** – The ARAL Program shall use high-quality
27 instructional materials that are aligned with core classroom content or grade level
28 standards to enable tutors to reinforce and support teachers' classroom instruction.
29 The instructional materials shall address concepts and build foundational skills
30 which are most critical to the improvement of learning outcomes.

31
32 **SEC. 10. *Delivery Modes for Tutorial Sessions.*** – Tutorial sessions shall be
33 conducted using any of the following delivery modes to ensure that the sessions are
34 accessible to or within the reach of learners:

- 35 a) Face-to-face tutorials where tutors and learners are physically present in
36 the same place;

1 b) Online tutorials where tutors facilitate the tutorial sessions and engage the
2 learners' active participation by using various technologies so that learning
3 can be accessed anytime while they are geographically remote from each
4 other; and

5 c) Blended learning where a specified number of tutorial sessions include
6 online and face-to-face tutorials.

7 In determining the venue for the tutorial sessions, the DepEd shall consider
8 accessibility, cost-effectiveness and health-safety risk. The DepEd, in collaboration
9 with the local government unit, shall provide a safe learning environment for face-
10 to-face tutorials by investing in hygiene facilities and supplies and establishing safety
11 health protocols therein.

12
13 **SEC. 11.** *Assessment of the ARAL Program and its Learners.* – To ensure the
14 effectiveness and success of the ARAL Program, the determination of the learning
15 status and progress of learners, the establishment of appropriate tutoring strategies
16 and interventions, and the evaluation of teaching effectiveness shall be grounded on
17 evidence-based practices.

18 In addition to pre- and post- assessments, tutors shall conduct formative
19 assessments of their learners to allow them to provide timely feedback on each
20 learner and effectively tailor their instruction based on the learners' individual
21 learning needs.

22
23 **SEC. 12.** *Capacity Building and Assessment of Tutors.* – To successfully
24 improve learning outcomes as envisioned by the ARAL Program, tutors shall receive
25 adequate training, focusing on innovative instructional techniques, interpersonal
26 skills, social-emotional learning, and cultural competency, among others, as may be
27 deemed necessary.

28 To engage learners effectively during online tutorials, the ARAL Program shall
29 further support and develop tutors to incorporate online tools into their tutoring
30 practices and methods and help learners overcome their online learning difficulties.

31
32 **SEC. 13.** *Campaigns for Learners to Return to School.* – The ARAL Program
33 shall create mass awareness campaigns on media and through community
34 engagement to encourage learners to re-enroll and return to school through the
35 following strategies:

36 a) Flexible enrollment dates;

- b) Accessible physical or digital enrollment forms. Digital enrollment forms shall be available on the website of the DepEd, while physical enrollment forms shall be made available at accessible locations to be established in schools and barangay halls;
- c) Extension of deadlines for submission of required enrollment documents;
- d) Presence of health and sanitation facilities;
- e) Establishment of public health and safety protocols upon resumption of face-to-face classes; and
- f) Continuous implementation of school feeding programs.

SEC. 14. *Updated Learner Information System (LIS).* – The DepEd shall update its LIS which shall contain the following additional information:

- a) Name and academic background of tutors;
- b) Name, grade level, and school of learners and their corresponding scores and grades in their remedial subjects;
- c) Performance of learners on tasks and activities administered during the tutorial sessions;
- d) Assessment of learners; and
- e) Tutorial materials, lectures, or modules used.

SEC. 15. *Free Access to All of DepEd’s Learning Platforms; Special Services for Learners and Tutors.* – Public Telecommunications Entities (PTEs) shall provide free access to all of DepEd’s learning platforms, including online educational platforms, digital libraries, and other online knowledge hubs without any additional financial burden on all learners and tutors. No data charges shall also be incurred in the download of data from these sites and applications. Learners and tutors shall also be provided subsidized data plans by the DepEd for the use of these learning platforms.

SEC. 16. *Allotment of Air Time for Educational Tutorial Programs.* – Pursuant to Republic Act No. 8370, otherwise known as “Children’s Television Act of 1997”, a portion of the daily total air time of each broadcasting network shall be allotted for educational tutorial sessions within the regular programming of all networks granted franchises or as a condition of renewal of broadcast licenses hereinafter, to be included as part of the responsibility of the network in serving the public.

1 In addition to the most essential learning competencies under the K to 12
2 Basic Education Curriculum covering the subjects of Language, Mathematics, and
3 Science, the programs may include Storytelling, Wellness, Mother Tongue-Based
4 Multilingual Education, Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao, and Health for a
5 comprehensive learning experience for all learners.
6

7 **SEC. 17. *Remuneration of Teachers and Para-teachers Who Serve as Tutors.***

8 – Teachers who serve as tutors shall be compensated subject to the existing rules
9 and regulations of the DepEd and the Department of Budget and Management.

10 Para-teachers who serve as tutors under this Act shall be compensated from
11 the budget of the DepEd and the Special Education Fund of the Local School Board
12 of the local government unit where the schools of the learners are located.
13

14 **SEC. 18. *Incentives for Tertiary Level Students Who Serve as Tutors.*** – Tertiary
15 level students who serve as tutors under the ARAL Program for a period of two (2)
16 semesters shall be deemed to have completed the Literacy Training Service under
17 the National Service Training Program, in accordance with Republic Act (RA) No.
18 9163, otherwise known as the “National Service Training Program (NSTP) Act of
19 2001”.

20 Under RA No. 9163, the Literacy Training Service is a program designed to
21 train students to become teachers of literacy and numeracy skills to school children,
22 out-of-school youth, and other segments of society in need of their service.
23

24 **SEC. 19. *Parental Involvement.*** – Tutors shall develop linkages and maintain
25 regular communication with the parents of the learners. The parents, being a
26 primary resource and essential support in the education of their children, shall
27 enhance their parental roles by assisting their children through home learning
28 activities and making significant contributions in their educational development at
29 home.
30

31 **SEC. 20. *Implementing Agencies.*** – The DepEd shall coordinate with the
32 Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) in the
33 implementation of the provisions of this Act and the continuous delivery of quality
34 online tutorial sessions.
35

1 **SEC. 21. *Tax Incentives.*** – Any donation, contribution, or grant, in cash or in
2 kind, made by individuals or organizations, public or private, local or foreign, shall
3 be exempt from the donor's tax and the cost of which shall be considered as an
4 allowable deduction from the gross income of the donor in accordance with the
5 provisions of the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997, as amended.
6

7 **SEC. 22. *Mandatory Review and Impact Assessment.*** – The DepEd shall
8 conduct a mandatory review of the implementation of this Act, and submit an
9 assessment report to Congress on its impact and effectiveness, not later than one (1)
10 year from the effectivity of this Act.
11

12 **SEC. 23. *Joint Congressional Oversight Committee.*** – There is hereby created
13 a Joint Congressional Oversight Committee to oversee, monitor and evaluate the
14 implementation of this Act. The Oversight Committee shall be composed of five (5)
15 members each from the Senate and from the House of Representatives, including the
16 Chairmen of the Committees on Education, Arts and Culture, and Finance of both
17 Houses. The membership of the Committee for every chamber shall have at least one
18 (1) minority member.
19

20 **SEC. 24. *Appropriations.*** – The amount of Twenty Billion Pesos (PhP 20B) for
21 the implementation of this Act shall be charged against those authorized in the
22 current appropriations of the DepEd.
23

24 **SEC. 25. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** – Within sixty (60) days from
25 the effectivity of this Act, the DepEd, in consultation with the DICT and other relevant
26 government agencies and private stakeholders, shall issue the necessary rules and
27 regulations for its effective implementation. The rules and regulations issued
28 pursuant to this section shall take effect thirty (30) days after its publication in a
29 newspaper of general circulation.
30

31 **SEC. 26. *Separability Clause.*** – If any provision or part of this Act is declared
32 invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining provisions or parts not affected shall
33 remain in full force and effect.
34

35 **SEC. 27. *Repealing Clause.*** – All other laws, executive orders, presidential
36 decrees, administrative orders, rules and regulations, issuances, or parts thereof

1 inconsistent with or contrary to the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or
2 amended accordingly.

3
4 **SEC. 28. Effectivity.** – Notwithstanding the non-issuance of the IRR, this Act
5 shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a
6 newspaper of general circulation.

7
8 *Approved,*