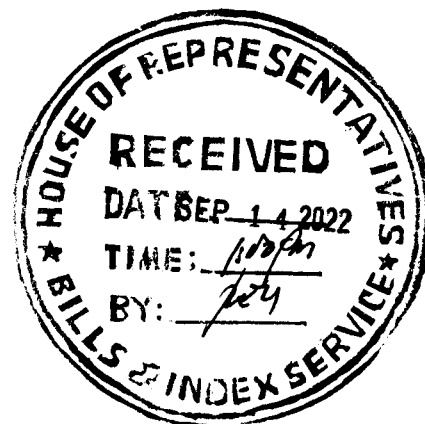




Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4827



INTRODUCED BY TUTOK TO WIN
PARTY-LIST REPRESENTATIVE SAM "SV" VERZOSA

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to establish an E-Skwela Hub in every barangay or district in the Philippines to aid the learners who have limited or no access to computers, printers and other digital learning tools and equipment as well as the internet.

The Department of Education (DepEd) has reported the following ratio of computer to the number of enrolled learners – 1:19 for Elementary Schools (ES); 1:9 for Junior High Schools (JHS); and 1:3 for Senior High School (SHS). Additionally, only a little over 80% of public schools in all levels of basic education have functional computers. Of the 1,828,196 computers provided by DepEd to public schools, only a portion is used in classroom or laboratories as aid to instruction while some are being used for administrative purposes.¹

Meanwhile, the percentage of public schools that have access to the internet are: 64.2% in ES; 72.2% in JHS; and 67.3% in SHS.²

¹ Department of Education. DepEd Data Bits: Functional Computers and Internet Connectivity. 2022. Accessed at: <https://www.deped.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/DepEd-Databits-Functional-Computers-and-Internet-Connectivity-4.pdf>

² *Id.*

Clearly, there is a gap that needs to be filled in order to elevate our education system and enhance the learners' capabilities which ardently requires the provision of learning tools and resources as well as access to the infinite knowledge found in the internet.

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



SAM "SV" VERZOSA
Representative
Tutok to Win Party-List



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HOUSE BILL NO. 4827

INTRODUCED BY TUTOK TO WIN
PARTY-LIST REPRESENTATIVE SAM "SV" VERZOSA

AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN E-SKWELA HUB IN EVERY
BARANGAY OR DISTRICT IN THE PHILIPPINES, APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR

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 "**E-Skwela Act**".

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* It is hereby declared policy of the State to provide institutional mechanisms for education to be made available and accessible for the Filipino people, without discrimination on the basis of age, sex, ethnicity, culture, religion, vaccination status, or ability.

SECTION 3. *Definition of Terms.* For the purposes of this Act, the following terms are defined:

- a. "Barangay" shall refer to the basic political unit in the country, serving as the primary planning and implementing unit of government policies, plans, programs and projects.

- b. "District" shall refer to the merged and contiguous barangays where the combined population of learners is at least 50,000. Some Metro Manila districts are consisting of several enumeration areas or numbered barangays such as those found in the City of Manila, Caloocan City, and Pasay City.
- c. "E-Skwela Hub" shall refer to a learning center which provides free use of computers, internet access and printing equipment, and other educational materials to meet the need of learners in the blended or online learning system.
- d. "Learner" shall refer to An individual who attends classes in any level of the basic education system, whether private or public.

SECTION 4. *Establishment of E-Skwela Hubs.* There shall be established at least one (1) E-Skwela Hub in every barangay or district in the Philippines; *Provided,* That additional E-Skwela Hub shall be established such that there is one E-Skwela Hub for every 50,000 learners in every barangay or district or as deemed necessary or practicable by the Department of Education (DepEd); *Provided further,* That where an E-Skwela Hub already exists, its upgrading shall be undertaken, while existing public libraries and reading centers shall be upgraded into E-Skwela Hubs.

SECTION 5. *Functions of E-Skwela Hubs.* The E-Skwela Hubs shall make available:

- a. Printed materials, such as books, journals, newspapers, magazines, posters, maps, and charts;
- b. Audio-visual aids or media, such as film, television, and radio;
- c. Digital devices, such as desktop or portable computers and electronic blackboards, equipped with appropriate software and stable internet connection to access online courses, e-books, and other online resources, as well as enable web conferencing;
- d. A space provided with free, stable, secure and high-speed wi-fi connection;

- e. A venue for alternative learning classes, training, presentations exhibitions, lectures, seminars, workshops, debates, and other learning activities.
- f. Adequate lighting and ventilation such as air-conditioning or electric fans for the comfort of the E-Skwela Hub users;
- g. Water stations, sanitation areas complete with sanitation facilities, comfort rooms, tables and chairs, and other provisions designed for the comfort of the E-Skwela Hub users;
- h. At least one dedicated E-Skwela Hub employee who will be in charge of the maintenance, management and sanitation of the E-Skwela Hubs and the accounting of the facilities;
- i. At least one dedicated Information Technology (IT) expert who will be in charge of the immediate troubleshooting and light repairs of the computers and other electronic devices of the E-Skwela Hub, and will provide the necessary assistance and training to the E-Skwela Hub users.

SECTION 6. Implementing Agencies. The DepEd, in coordination with the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), shall undertake the construction of an E-Skwela Hub or the repair and rehabilitation of existing learning centers or infrastructure according to mutually agreed specifications, criteria and details; *Provided*, That the design of the E-Skwela Hub shall ensure a conducive learning environment, as well as provide sufficient space for educational materials, equipment, and administrative services.

The National Library of the Philippines shall provide the standard set of relevant printed and audio-visual materials and shall digitize its catalog and collections to provide free and full off-site access.

The Department of Information and Communication Technology (DICT) shall provide the necessary infrastructure to ensure reliable internet connection and maximize digital technology in E-Skwela Hubs. DepEd and DICT shall jointly develop digital educational materials for use in E-Skwela Hubs, as well as mobile applications and similar software that will enable remote access to learning materials and other sources of information.

SECTION 7. *Role of Local Government Units.* Cities and municipalities shall provide the site for E-Skwela Hubs and shall undertake its operation and maintenance. Local government units (LGUs) may allocate such funds necessary for the operation and maintenance of E-Skwela Hubs, including the hiring of the dedicated E-Skwela Hub employees, from the Special Education Fund, upon approval and authorization of the Local School Board.

SECTION 8. *Appropriations.* The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be charged against the current year's appropriations of the implementing agencies and shall be thereafter included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 9. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* Within sixty (60) days from the approval of this Act, the Department of Education, in coordination with the National Library of the Philippines, Department of Information and Communication Technology, Department of Interior and Local Government, and other concerned government agencies and civil society, organizations, shall formulate and issue the necessary guidelines to effectively implement the provisions of this Act. The implementing rules and regulations shall take effect thirty (30) days after its publication in a national newspaper of general circulation.

SECTION 10. *Separability Clause.* If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or inoperative, the other provisions not so declared shall remain in force and effect.

SECTION 11. *Repealing Clause.* All laws, decrees, orders and issuances or portions thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SECTION 12. *Effectivity Clause.* This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,