



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Nineteenth Congress
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 9770



Introduced by REPRESENTATIVE STELLA LUZ A. QUIMBO

EXPLANATORY NOTE

In recent years, the Philippine education system has undergone a significant transformation with the implementation of the K to 12 program under Republic Act No. 10533. This educational reform has extended basic education to thirteen years, including two years of Senior High School (SHS), to produce graduates better equipped for the demands of the 21st-century workforce. However, challenges remain as the country grapples with a significant youth unemployment issue. Among the 2,090,000 individuals currently without employment, 37.5% fall within the 15-24 age group. This underscores the gravity of the situation and the imperative need for strategic interventions to enhance the employability of the youth, particularly those transitioning from the K to 12 program.

On August 22, 2023, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) shared in a House Committee on Basic Education hearing that 180,000 local jobs are open for high school graduates. However, DOLE also emphasized the critical concern raised by employers regarding the skill readiness of current SHS graduates. This concern necessitates a targeted SHS curriculum that aligns with industry needs and fosters strand-specific competencies essential for the contemporary job market.

Further, advocacy groups such as the Philippines for Business Education (PBEd) emphasize the importance of work-based training opportunities to enhance their employability. The sentiment is clear: SHS graduates are indeed employable, provided they receive the right training and exposure to workplace dynamics.

"Batang Magaling Act" directly addresses these concerns by providing a holistic approach to bridge the gap between education and employment. The bill's focus on strengthening multi-stakeholder collaboration, incorporating Work Immersion Programs, conducting labor market demand studies, establishing a centralized skills database, and encouraging affirmative hiring aligns with the needs of our youth. By fostering collaboration,

aligning curriculum with industry needs, and incentivizing businesses to invest in the workforce, the "Batang Magaling Act" is a strategic step towards empowering the youth, reducing unemployment rates, and maximizing the economic potential of the Philippines in a globalized context.

This bill is not merely a response to the current challenges but a proactive initiative to reshape the future trajectory of K to 12 SHS graduates, empowering them with the skills and knowledge demanded by the evolving labor market. By passing the "Batang Magaling Act," the Philippines can position itself as a global leader in producing a workforce that is not only academically proficient but also practically equipped to meet the demands of the 21st-century job landscape.

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


STELLA LUZ AQUIMBO



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Nineteenth Congress
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 9770

Introduced by REPRESENTATIVE STELLA LUZ A. QUIMBO

**AN ACT ENSURING THAT SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES
UNDER THE K TO 12 PROGRAM ARE EQUIPPED WITH THE
KNOWLEDGE, TRAINING AND SKILLS DEMANDED IN THE
LABOR MARKET, ENHANCING THEIR EMPLOYABILITY AND
COMPETITIVENESS, CREATING THE BATANG MAGALING
COUNCILS TO STRENGTHEN MULTI-STAKEHOLDER
COLLABORATION AND SUPPORT FOR THEIR EMPLOYMENT,
ALLOWING FULL DEDUCTION OF TRAINING EXPENSES
INCURRED FOR THEIR SKILLS DEVELOPMENT, APPROPRIATING
FUNDS THEREFOR**

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 “Batang Magaling Act.”

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* — It is the policy of the State to establish, maintain, and support a complete, adequate, and integrated system of education relevant to the needs of the people and society.

This Act likewise reiterates a declared State policy that every graduate of basic education shall be an empowered individual who has learned, through a program that is rooted in sound educational principles and geared towards excellence, the foundations for learning throughout life, the competence to engage in work and be productive, the ability to coexist in fruitful harmony with local and global communities, the capability to engage in autonomous,

creative, and critical thinking, and the capacity and willingness to transform others and one's self.

SECTION 3. *Objective.* — This Act shall ensure that the Philippine basic education system, as enhanced under Republic Act (R.A.) No. 10533 or the “Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013”, will produce Senior High School (SHS) graduates who are equipped with knowledge, training and skills demanded in the labor market, whether they have chosen the higher education, middle-level skills development, or employment or entrepreneurship exit, thereby enhancing their employability and competitiveness in the workforce.

SECTION 4. *Strengthening Multi-Stakeholder Linkages and Collaboration; The Batang Magaling National and Local Councils; The Batang Magaling Roadmap.* — To align the tracks and strands of the K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum under R.A. No. 10533 with the needs of the labor market, a National Batang Magaling Council (National Council) shall be created composed of the Department of Education (DepEd), the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), three (3) national industry partners, one (1) national labor group, and the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines. Local Batang Magaling Councils (Local Councils) shall likewise be formed at the provincial, city and municipal levels to ensure that K to 12 SHS graduates are equipped with education, training and skills demanded by the industry partners. The Local Councils shall be composed of the provincial, city or municipal local school boards (LSBs), at least two (2) industry partners in the locality, a representative of the TESDA provincial office, and a local employee organization or association. Every education institution offering the SHS Program shall regularly consult with the Local Council at least twice a year to be guided by the actions of the council especially the roadmap in paragraph e hereunder and to establish a mechanism for active collaboration and meaningful communication for the following purposes:

- (a) to provide information to the education institutions for the updating and alignment of the work component of the SHS program with the market needs as identified by the industry partners;
- (b) to convince industry partners and government agencies to accept learners in Work Immersion Programs (WIPs), ensure that their deployment is done according to their tracks or specialization courses, and enable them to acquire specialized skills and competencies to advance in their chosen path;
- (c) to enable the LSBs to provide relevant data and information to the stakeholders, increase their awareness of their mutual issues and concerns on the employability of SHS graduates in the locality, and give local incentives to recognize best practices on collaboration;
- (d) to craft the WIPs of all education institutions offering the SHS Program within a province, city or municipality and ensure that the curriculum is aligned with industry needs, learners meet the minimum requirements of the work immersion industry partners, and learners develop competencies and acquire skills that are industry-based to improve their work readiness and employability; and

- (e) to develop a local Batang Magaling Roadmap in the province, city or municipality that shall introduce interventions and set measurable goals on enhancing the employability and competitiveness of SHS graduates, including but not limited to an increase or improvement in the following: the number of industry partners and government agencies participating in the WIPs; the number of SHS learners deployed under the WIPs according to their tracks or specialization courses; and the rate of employment of K to 12 SHS graduates. As such, the local roadmap shall include the skills demanded by industry partners and government agencies in the locality vis-à-vis the needed knowledge, training and skills of K to 12 SHS graduates to match the said demand, using the labor market demand forecast under Sec. 6, and the skills database under Sec. 7 hereof.

Taking into consideration the local roadmaps developed at the provincial, city and municipal levels, the National Council shall craft a parallel National Batang Magaling Roadmap to fulfill the objective under Sec. 3 of this Act. The provincial Local Councils shall similarly craft their respective Provincial Batang Magaling Roadmaps based on the Municipal Batang Magaling Roadmaps, while the city Local Councils shall base their respective City Batang Magaling Roadmaps on the WIPs within the locality under their jurisdiction.

SECTION 5. *Work Immersion Programs.* — The WIPs that are mandated to be offered by education institutions offering the SHS Program shall develop in learners the competencies, skills, work ethic and values relevant to pursuing further education or joining the world of work.

The WIP shall be based on the Batang Magaling Roadmap and designed to match the needs of the learners and the capabilities of the education institutions vis-à-vis the demands of the work immersion industry partners and government agencies.

The Schools Division Office of the DepEd shall approve the WIP as proposed in these provinces, cities or municipalities, with due compliance to legal and administrative prescriptions on the number of hours and delivery models, among others.

SECTION 6. *Integration of the Government Internship Program.* — To drive the Batang Magaling Roadmap towards public service and acquaint the youth with government programs, projects, and activities, the Government Internship Program (GIP) shall be part of the WIP.

SECTION 7. *Work Immersion Guidelines.* — The following shall be the guidelines for the implementation of the WIP:

- a) Participants of WIP shall be Filipino citizens and are of 18 to 25 years of age at the time of the application period; SHS students aged 15 to below 18 years of age are permitted to participate provided that they work for not more than eight (8) hours a day and in no case beyond forty (40) hours a week;

- b) Institutions, both public and private, shall designate an employee who will serve as the WIP Desk Officer who will oversee the implementation of WIP within the institution;
- c) Participants of WIP shall render at least two hundred (200) hours;
- d) WIP period shall be for a period of at least one (1) month to three (3) months at most and must be implemented on a year-round basis;
- e) Participants of WIP shall graduate from the program before their SHS graduation;
- f) Upon entry into WIP, participants shall be provided with a stipend amounting to 75% of the existing rate of step 1, Salary Grade 1 of the government salary standardization law and shall be non-taxable. The amount of the stipend shall be based on the trainee's actual attendance, absences, tardiness incurred. It shall be paid in accordance with existing labor laws and civil service laws, rules and regulations;
- g) The institutions, as provided by law, and subject to budgeting, accounting and auditing rules and regulations, shall provide additional entitlements such as:
 - i) Transportation and meal provisions during activities that are held outside of the day to day office trainings;
 - ii) Compensatory time off in case of activities held during weekends/holidays and/or beyond office hours; and
 - iii) Incentives and regards in acknowledgement of remarkable achievements (i.e., punctuality, perfect attendance);
- h) WIP shall not be considered as employment. Thus, there is no employer-employee relationship between the beneficiary and the institution. WIP graduates shall be given preference in the hiring of workers in the institutions. After career coaching, the institution shall assess and determine whether the WIP graduate may be recommended for contractual or regular work;
- i) Participants of WIP become part of economic institutions in partnership with education institutions, and thus prohibited from completing tasks which go beyond official duties;
- j) Institutions shall conduct trainings, seminars and other developmental interventions for the participants of WIP including, but not limited to mentoring, coaching, and performance evaluation; and
- k) Social protection incentives shall be provided to the interns and are encouraged for consideration by the institutions such as accident insurance, as they may be applicable. The process can be facilitated with either public or private insurance entities, and public insurance entities like GSIS, subject to budgetary requirements of the institution.
- l) Upon graduation from SHS, WIP graduates may continue with their internship through the Special Program for Employment of Students (SPES) of DOLE, provided that their total stay in the institution is a maximum of six (6) months.

SECTION 8. Labor Market Demand Forecasting. — To align the WIP with market demand and ensure that the knowledge, training and skills of K to 12 SHS graduates match the

in-demand and projected in-demand jobs of industry partners in the locality, the Councils are hereby mandated to conduct labor market demand studies every three (3) years.

The data derived from such demand forecast shall serve as the basis for the work components of the SHS Program, the Batang Magaling Roadmaps, the WIPs, the training to be conducted, the resources to be procured, and the skills to be developed among the learners, among others. The demand forecast will also allow education institutions to focus on employable skills as determined by medium- to long-term labor market demand.

SECTION 9. *Batang Magaling Database; Centralized Skills Database.* — The DepEd, in collaboration with the National and Local Councils, shall develop, maintain, and update a centralized nationwide database of skills information to serve as a one-stop shop for all matters related to the employment of K to 12 SHS graduates.

The Batang Magaling Database shall help strengthen the educational institutions' linkages and collaboration with industry partners, facilitating the meeting of skills demand within the province, city, municipality, and the country as a whole.

The Batang Magaling database shall register the demographic profile of learners including, but not limited to, their educational background, track and strand completed in SHS, training, skills, competencies, work immersion performance, course taken after SHS, work experience and employment history. It shall also contain the profiles, demands, and vacancies, among others, of industry partners. The Implementing Rules and Regulations shall prescribe the process to be followed in ensuring that the Local Councils themselves provide and register such demographic information as required to be included in the centralized database.

SECTION 10. *Affirmative Hiring of K to 12 SHS Graduates; Civil Service Commission; Industry Partners.* — The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), in coordination with the DepEd, shall conduct studies and research for the crafting of strategies and guidelines to minimize the impediments to K to 12 SHS employment, and promote the affirmative hiring of K to 12 SHS graduates.

The Civil Service Commission (CSC) is hereby mandated to review the eligibility requirements for government employment and revise its policies to integrate the K to 12 qualifications in the CSC qualification standards to fulfill the employability of K to 12 SHS graduates in the government sector. Such K to 12 qualification standards may include, among others, one's education as a SHS graduate, experience, training, and eligibility.

The industry partners are likewise enjoined to rethink and review their hiring policies and job requirements to provide employment opportunities, such as entry-level positions, to K to 12 SHS graduates.

SECTION 11. *Fully Deductible Training Expenses from Taxable Income; Additional Item of Deduction.* — Industry partners shall be allowed an additional item of deduction from their taxable income of the full value of training expenses incurred for the skills development of K to 12 SHS graduates hired pursuant to this Act, hereby amending Sec. 34

(A) (1) (a) (v) of R.A. No. 8424 or the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997, as amended by R.A. No. 11534 or “CREATE”.

SECTION 12. *Mandatory Review and Impact Assessment.* — The DepEd shall conduct a mandatory review of the implementation of this Act and submit an assessment report to Congress on its impact and effectiveness, not later than two (2) years from its effectivity and every two (2) years thereafter.

SECTION 13. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* — Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DepEd, CSC, DOLE, TESDA, and other public and private stakeholders, including industry partners, shall issue the rules and regulations implementing its provisions. The IRR issued pursuant to this section shall take effect thirty (30) days after its publication in a newspaper of general circulation.

SECTION 14. *Appropriations.* — The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against those authorized in the current appropriations of the DepEd. Thereafter, the amount necessary for its continued implementation shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 15. *Separability Clause.* If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 16. *Repealing Clause.* All laws, decrees, orders, rules, and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SECTION 17. *Effectivity.* This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,

