



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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **498**



Introduced by Representative Crispin Diego “Ping” D. Remulla

AN ACT
TO MODERNIZE ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND STATE COLLEGES AND
UNIVERSITIES IN THE PHILIPPINES, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR,
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Many public schools and state colleges and universities in the Philippines are still using outdated equipment and lack the basic tools needed for modern learning such as computers, internet access, and multimedia classrooms. Teachers also struggle with limited support and resources to help students succeed in today’s more digital world.

Additionally, according to a report from the Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM 2), approximately 1,500 public schools in the country still lack electricity. This proposed measure aims to address this by ensuring that all schools have access to electricity.

In addition, this legislative measure aims to upgrade all public schools and state universities and colleges across the country over the next 20 years. It will provide each school with a computer laboratory and internet access, among others. Each teacher will also be given a laptop to help them teach students better using technology.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CRISPIN D. REMULLA', with a large, stylized initial 'C'.

CRISPIN DIEGO "PING" D. REMULLA



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

CHAPTER I

GENERAL PROVISIONS

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “*Public School and State University and College Modernization Act*”.

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – The State shall 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. As such, the State embraces the role of information and communications technology In Improving the learning process and shall strive to mainstream its provision and use in all public schools and state universities and colleges.

SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* – For purposes of this Act:

- a) *Committee* refers to the Coordinating Committee established under this Act;
- b) *Information and Communications Technology* or *ICT* refers to the totality of electronic means to access, create, collect, store, process, receive, transmit, present and disseminate information;
- c) *Modernization Program* refers to the Public School and SUC Modernization Program created under this Act;

d) *Public Schools* refer to all public elementary and secondary schools in the country;
and

e) *SUC* refers to all State Universities and Colleges in the country.

SEC. 4. *Public School and SUC Modernization Program.* – There is hereby created a "Public School and State University and College Modernization Program", hereafter referred to as "the Program". The Program shall have the following objectives:

- a) To provide up to date ICT hardware and software to all public schools and state universities;
- b) To ensure that the provision of ICT hardware and software is cost effective;
- c) To mainstream the use of ICT as a tool in the delivery of basic and higher education;
- d) To set standards for the introduction, utilization and maintenance of ICT in public schools and state universities and colleges;
- e) To ensure that public school teachers are adequately trained in using ICT in the learning process;
- f) To ensure that students of public schools and state universities and colleges are aware of and capable of using ICT.

CHAPTER II

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

SEC. 5. *Computerization Program.* – At least one computer laboratory with a minimum of ten (10) computers shall be established in all public schools and SUCs nationwide. The software need for the operation of this system shall be open source and shall be developed by the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT). The DICT shall also ensure that all hardware procured under this Act are well-maintained.

SEC. 6. *One Teacher One Laptop.* – Each teacher shall be provided with one (1) laptop which shall have access to the central server of each school. Teachers using their laptops shall be encouraged to use the available educational software and to develop and share their own educational modules.

SEC. 7. *Educational Software.* – The concerned members of the Committee shall develop educational software for the use of students and teachers alike. The DICT shall ensure that all educational software shall be open source.

SEC. 8. *Upgrading of Libraries.* – A well-equipped library shall be established in every public elementary and secondary high school. It shall contain at least 5 computers which shall be connected to the central server in each school.

SEC. 9. *Multimedia Classroom.* – Each public school and SUC shall be provided with a multimedia classroom package composed of one (1) interactive whiteboard and one (1) LCD projector and screen.

SEC. 10. *School Education Program.* – within one (1) year from the effectivity of this Act, Department of Education (DepEd), Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and Department of Energy (DOE) shall conduct a comprehensive inventory of public schools and SUCs which do not have access to electricity. Thereafter, the DOE shall ensure that all public schools and SUCs have access to electricity. Provided, that public schools and SUCs which are far from the transmission grid shall be included under the missionary electrification program of the National Power Corporation as established under Republic Act No. 9136, otherwise known as the "*Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001*".

SEC. 11. *Internet Connectivity.* – The DepEd, CHED and DICT, in coordination with private Internet providers, shall ensure that all public schools and SUCs shall be connected to the internet. In cities and municipalities in which there is no access to internet services, the DICT shall explore and provide alternative means of internet connectivity.

SEC. 12. *Donations.* – Private investment in this program shall be encouraged. However, all public schools and SUCs shall coordinate with the Committee before accepting any donations of hardware or software to ensure their compatibility with those installed under this Act.

SEC. 13. *Training Program.* – The DepEd and CHED shall develop a training program for teachers in public schools and SUCs to ensure their capacity to utilize ICT in the learning process.

SEC. 14. *Accessibility and Inclusion Standards.* – All ICT tools, educational software, and learning platforms developed or procured under this Act shall comply with accessibility standards for persons with disabilities (PDWs), including but not limited to screen readers, closed captioning, and adaptive input devices.

CHAPTER III

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

SEC. 15. *Coordinating Committee.* – A coordinating committee to implement the provisions of this Act shall be established. It shall be composed of the following:

- a) The DepEd Secretary or his permanent representative;
- b) The CHED Chairperson or his permanent representative;
- c) The DICT Secretary or his permanent representative;
- d) The DOE Secretary or his permanent representative; and

e) The DBM Secretary or his permanent representative.

The Committee shall be attached, for administrative and budgetary purposes, to the DICT. The Council shall meet at least once (1) every quarter. The presence of at least three (3) members shall constitute a quorum to business. The Secretary of the DICT or his permanent representative shall be the permanent chairperson of the Committee.

SEC. 16. Powers and Functions. – The Committee shall have the following powers and functions:

- a) Formulate and regularly update the twenty (20) year Public School and SUC Modernization Plan for the implementation of this Act;
- b) Coordinate, monitor and ensure timely implementation of the Public School and SUC Modernization Plan;
- c) Submit quarterly and annual reports to Congress and the Office of the President.

SEC. 17. Public School and SUC Modernization Plan. – The committee shall formulate the twenty (20) year Public School and SUC Modernization Plan. The Plan shall include the following:

- a) The standards for all hardware and software to be procured and maintained; and
- b) The operational plans and budgetary requirements of the member agencies in implementing the Act over the twenty (20) year period.

SEC. 18. Integration of Existing PPAs. – the implementation of existing computerization and internet connectivity programs of the DepEd and the Free Wi-Fi Internet Access in Public Places project of the DICT and other relevant programs, projects, and activities (PPAs) shall be integrated in the Public School and SUC Modernization Plan.

SEC. 19. Program Roll Out and Phasing. – The program shall be implemented over a span of twenty (20) years. The first six (6) years of this program shall be dedicated to the implementation of this program among State Universities and Colleges. The next six (6) years shall be dedicated to the implementation of this program in all public secondary schools. The final eight (8) years shall be dedicated to the implementation of this program in all public elementary schools. After such period, the Committee shall be functus officio unless extended by Congress through a Joint Resolution.

The DICT shall assume the coordination, monitoring, and evaluation of all PPAs previously under the Committee and ensure the full and continuing implementation of this Act. All concerned government agencies shall extend their cooperation and support to effectively transfer the functions of Committee and wind-down its affairs, which shall include, among

others, the proper inventory and transfer of its assets, equipment, and relevant documents, and the termination or return to the mother units of the Committee officers and personnel.

The DICT shall be authorized to call on the agencies formerly part of the Committee as well as any other government agency, including government owned or controlled corporations, and government financial institutions, for assistance as they may deem necessary to ensure the timely and cost-effective implementation of the priority projects.

CHAPTER IV

TRANSITORY AND FINAL PROVISIONS

SEC. 20. *Exemption from Republic Act No. 7880.* – The implementation of this Act shall be exempted from the provisions of Republic Act 7880, otherwise known as the "*Fair and Equitable Access to Education Act*".

SEC. 21. *Appropriations.* – The funds necessary to implement this Act shall be charged against the individual appropriations of the member agencies under the annual General Appropriations Act and shall be sourced from the following:

- a) The funds allocated for the DepEd Computerization Program and DepEd's Internet Connectivity Project;
- b) The funds allocated to the Free Wi-Fi Internet Access in Public Places project of the DICT;
- c) The equivalent of twenty percent (20%) of the annual gross earnings of the Philippine Amusement Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR);
- d) The equivalent of ten percent (10%) annual share on the total gross collections of the travel tax; and
- e) The equivalent of ten percent (10%) of the sales of the lotto operations of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Offices

The appropriations for the implementation of this Act shall be indicated as a separate line-item under the annual budget of the DICT.

SEC. 22. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The members of the Committee shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations of this Act within thirty (30) days from the effectivity of this Act.

SEC. 23. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity and effectivity of the other provisions hereof.

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1 **SEC. 24. *Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, decrees, executive orders and rules and
2 regulations contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or
3 modified accordingly.

4 **SEC. 25. *Effectivity Clause.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
5 publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,