

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 713



Introduced by **REP. JAVIER MIGUEL "JAVI" L. BENITEZ**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Quality education is the cornerstone of progress and wealth of a nation. Corollary to this is finding that the quality of the education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers.¹ The wisdom of these statements are enshrined in the 1987 Philippine Constitution. It clearly provides that it shall give priority to education, science and technology, arts, culture and sports to foster patriotism and nationalism, accelerate social progress, and promote total human liberation and development.²

Article XIV of the 1987 Philippine Constitution pushes this further as it highlights that 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. It likewise provides that the State shall enhance the right of teachers to professional advancement. Thus, in establishing, maintaining, and supporting the complete, adequate and integrated system of education relevant to the needs of the people and society, it is important to uplift the image of the teaching profession and encourage and attract the best to teach.

For our elementary school students, the 2019 TIMSS report showed the marked decline in scores in mathematics and science achievement measuring Grade 4 students of the Philippines, which are the lowest scores among the 58 countries involved in the study.³ The SEA-PLM 2019 Main Regional Report revealed that

¹https://www.mckinsey.com/~/media/mckinsey/industries/public%20and%20social%20sector/our%20insights/how%20the%20worlds%20best%20performing%20school%20systems%20come%20out%20on%20top/how_the_world_s_best-performing_school_systems_come_out_on_top.pdf

² 1987 Philippine Constitution, Article II, Section 17.

³ In the 2019 TIMSS report, the Philippines score decreased by 61 points (from 358 in 2003 to 297) and 83 points (from a score of 332 in 2003 to 249) in mathematics and science achievement, respectively.

only ten percent (10%) of our Grade 5 students met the proficiency standards of reading, two percent (2%) in writing, and seventeen percent (17%) in mathematics. The same report showed that more than half of our Grade 5 students are taught by teachers who got training in the language of instruction from in-service trainings or none at all.

For fifteen-year old students, the OECD 2018 PISA Country Note for the Philippines summarized that - *“Fifteen-year-old students in the Philippines scored lower in reading, mathematics and science than those in most of the countries and economies that participated in PISA 2018. xxx No country scored lower than the Philippines and the Dominican Republic. xxx Over 80% of students in the Philippines did not reach a minimum level of proficiency in reading, which is one of the largest shares of low performers amongst all PISA-participating countries and economies.”*⁴ Notably, even the highest performing Filipino students assessed scored only around OECD average.

Following PISA 2018’s findings that teacher certification appears to make little difference in students’ learning outcomes, the World Bank recommended strengthening the enrollment requirements and providing merit-based scholarships for students entering pre-service teacher training institutions.⁵

It can reasonably be foreseen that this cycle of underperformance will only be aggravated further in light of the state of public health emergency that was declared in March 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic that continues to plague the world. Under the new normal, minimum health standards and protocols require minimal to zero face-to-face interaction, and students are made to rely on learning materials to continue their education. This has resulted to a crisis in learning, where poor content quality in modules and distance learning materials are prevalent and continue to surface for all grade levels.

According to UNESCO, research⁶ has shown that teachers, more than any other constituent group in education, determine educational quality and student achievement. In particular: *“Research studies have shown positive associations between student achievement and teachers’ academic skills, level of content knowledge, years of experience and participation in content-related professional development opportunities.”*⁷

The Education Commission of 1991 (EDCOM) reported that at the heart of the problem in our education system is that our teachers are poorly trained. The

⁴https://www.oecd.org/pisa/publications/PISA2018_CN_PHL.pdf?fbclid=IwAR35Uhcq2t2Si7zm1aC9vO8gSRSXGhc-ThSQCMttGpRrPX5BQWhEBkmVaU

⁵ World Bank Group (2020) PISA 2018 Country Report.

⁶ http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/teachers-and-educational-quality-monitoring-global-needs-for-2015-en_0.pdf

⁷ *Ibid.*

Commission recommended, among others, to strengthen pre-service teacher education. It called for higher admission requirements in teacher education programs, which included aptitude and motivation.⁸

Among the policies enacted, following the EDCOM, was Republic Act No. 7784 or “An Act to Strengthen Teacher Education in the Philippines by Establishing Centers of Excellence, Creating a Teacher Education Council for the Purpose, Appropriating Funds Therefor, and for Other Purposes.” This law provided for a system of incentives, including strengthening the education and training of teachers nationwide through a national system of excellence for teacher education.

While there have been initiatives granting financial assistance to targeted beneficiaries, such as scholarships under (1) Technical Education and Skills Development Authority TESDA, the (2) Indigenous Peoples Rights Act, the (3) National Agriculture and Fisheries Education System, (4) Agriculture Competitiveness Enhancement Fund Scholarship, the (5) Science and Technology Scholarship Act of 1994, the (6) Fast-Track Scholarship Act of 2013, the (7) Expanded Government Assistance to Students and Teachers in Private Education Act, (8) Student Grants-in-Aid Program for Poverty Alleviation of the CHED and the (9) Department of Social Welfare and Development, which shall be harmonized and strengthened under the (10) Unified Student Financial Assistance System for Education (UNIFAST) established under Republic Act No. 10687, as amended by Republic Act No. 10931, the cycle of underperformance of Filipino students remain. Moreover, these initiatives are not focused on the production of high-quality teachers for primary and secondary public school education.

On 15 May 2013, attempts to address teacher education and training (§7, RA 10533) as well as hiring of graduates and other specialists in subjects with a shortage of qualified applicants (§8, RA 10533) were incorporated into Republic Act No. 10533 or the Enhanced Education Act of 2013. However, as can be gleaned from the continued underperformance of young Filipino students in international rankings, improving teacher quality through teacher education and training still lacks the widespread support and prioritization that it requires.

Thus, there is a need to not only attract the best to teach but also to uplift the image of teaching professionals and to support the job placement of qualified teachers, especially in the primary and secondary public education system. The Teacher Education for Achievers (TEACH) Program, which this bill seeks to enact, implements the recommendations of above-mentioned international and local studies. It brings incentives to develop high-achiever students as effective

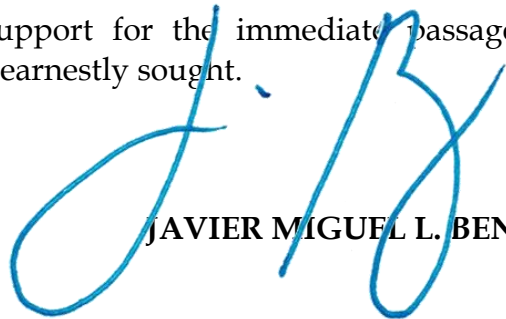
⁸ Congressional Commission on Education (1991) Making Education Work: An Agenda for Reform

teachers. The TEACH Program is a merit-based program where applicants have to pass competitive examinations, both in partner schools and in the program application. It follows a fast-tracked model of teacher education program recruitment. It recruits career-shifters to pursue a Certificate in Teaching Program (CTP) and junior-level undergraduates to complete teacher education programs.

Prospective teachers have to be prepared academically, socially, and psychologically, too. A proven means to do this is through mentorship, which is at the heart of the TEACH Program, where grantees will be guided by vetted and qualified mentors. The SEAMEO Innotech study on Teacher Motivation showed that mentors inspired students to take up a similar path of teaching. In turn, the students, when they become teachers, have more commitment in staying in the teaching profession.

This crisis in learning is a strong and urgent call for the state to respond and address the quality of learning outcomes through policies and practices that have been successfully applied in best-performing school systems of other countries where pre-service and in-service teacher education is prioritized.

Change needs to happen now. Support for the immediate passage and approval of this timely legislation is earnestly sought.



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Introduced by **REP. JAVIER MIGUEL “JAVI” L. BENITEZ**

AN ACT IMPROVING TEACHER QUALITY THROUGH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A TEACHER EDUCATION FOR ACHIEVERS PROGRAM, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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 “*Teacher Education for Achievers (TEACH) Act of 2021.*”

SECTION 2. **Declaration of Policy.** – The State recognizes the invaluable role of teachers as agents of constructive social, economic, moral, intellectual, cultural and political change in school and the community, within the context of national policies. To this end, the State promotes and uplifts the image of teaching professionals as a source of national pride. It is likewise declared that in order to protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels, the State shall prioritize accessible and quality teacher education, learning and development, and placement and professionalization of teaching professionals.

To implement this, the State shall provide scholarships to qualified applicants to enable them to pursue education and training in the areas of learning and education and to provide incentives for them to be teachers in the public primary and secondary school system, including TVET, SHS, SPED, wherever public interest may require.

CHAPTER II ESTABLISHING THE TEACHER EDUCATION FOR ACHIEVERS PROGRAM

SECTION 3. *Establishment of the Teacher Education for Achievers Program.* – The Teacher Education for Achievers Program (the “TEACH Program”) is hereby established. The Program shall provide the quality pre-service teacher education to the best and brightest. It shall ensure that future teachers are classroom-ready and contributors to improved learning outcomes by providing the best training, full financial and psychosocial support, and employment assistance.

SECTION 4. *Approved Courses and Priority Programs.* Recipients shall pursue degrees in teacher education in the partner Teacher Education Institution (“TEI”), as identified and approved by the Department of Education (the “DepEd”) as priority education degrees. For its initial implementation, the TEACH Program shall offer two tracks: (1) Certificate in Teaching Program (CTP) track – for those who are graduates of any bachelor’s degree except in Education; and (2) Undergraduate Level track – for incoming third year college students. Recipients may pursue the completion of the appropriate degree from any of the following:

- (a) Bachelor of Early Childhood Education;
- (b) Bachelor of Special Education;
- (c) Bachelor of Elementary Education;
- (d) Bachelor of Secondary Education (major in any of the following: English, Biology, Chemistry, General Science, Mathematics, or Physics);
- (e) Bachelor of Science in Chemistry for Teachers;
- (f) Bachelor of Science in Mathematics for Teachers;
- (g) Bachelor of Science in Physics for Teachers;
- (h) Bachelor of Science in Biology for Teachers;
- (i) Certificate in Teaching Program or its equivalent;
- (j) Similar degrees, as may be approved by the DepEd.

SECTION 5. *Qualifications.* –The minimum qualifications that the applicants must possess to apply for the TEACH Program are:

- (a) Must be a Filipino citizen residing in the Philippines;
- (b) Must pass the qualifying examination system, comprised of the selection process and the aptitude test for teachers as well as the appropriate examination and assessment by the TEI;
- (c) Must have at least an 85% general weighted average or its equivalent in the degree that he or she is currently enrolled in or graduated from;

- (d) Must not have service obligations under other programs in conflict with the TEACH Program obligations.

The DepEd shall promulgate and periodically review the qualification criteria of applicants for the TEACH Program.

CHAPTER III

PROGRAM COMPONENTS, INCENTIVES AND RETURN OF SERVICE

SECTION 6. *Key Components of the Program.* – The TEACH Program is designed and structured to provide holistic support for the grantees, whether it be physical, psychosocial and academic, to help them towards their career as future teachers. This includes the following: (1) scholarship package outlined in Section 7 hereof, (2) the provision of continuous mentorship and training and development to the TEACH Program grantees, based on their actual needs, (3) teaching position upon graduation, and (4) other incentives outlined in Section 10 hereof.

The DepEd and CHED, through the Teacher Education Council, shall provide screening guidelines for highly competent faculty and professionals from the TEIs who will qualify and serve as mentors under this Program.

SECTION 7. *Scholarship Component of the TEACH Program.* – TEACH Program grantees shall be eligible to receive the following:

- (a) Tuition, laboratory, miscellaneous and other related school fees,
- (b) Allowance for prescribed books, supplies, equipment;
- (c) Clothing or uniform allowance;
- (d) Transportation allowance or allowance for dormitory or boarding house accommodation, whichever is appropriate;
- (e) Graduation and related miscellaneous fees;
- (f) Relocation allowance, if applicable;
- (g) Professional Teachers board review fees and licensure fees: *Provided*, that the support shall only be limited to the first licensure examination of the scholar, taken within five years from graduation;
- (h) Annual medical and accident insurance, and related health reimbursements; and
- (i) Monthly living allowance.

DepEd shall be responsible for the proper implementation and disbursement of the monies arising from this Section. Guidelines on proper disbursement of funds shall be issued within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act.

SECTION 8. *Conditions for the Grant of Scholarship.* – Scholars accepted to the TEACH Program must execute a service contract, subject to the following:

- (a) Commitment to immediately pursue his or her pre-service teacher education program and must finish the entire program within the prescribed time frame and subject to the retention policies of the TEI; *Provided*, that the scholar may be allowed, for valid and justifiable reasons, to file for a leave of absence for one (1) academic period;
- (b) Commitment to teach full-time in the public primary and secondary education system, where public interest requires;
- (c) Commitment to repay the amounts disbursed pursuant to the terms of their service contract, if the grantee drops out from the approved degree program where grantee is currently enrolled in; and
- (d) Commitment to all the other terms and conditions of the scholarship, as provided under this Act and as may be prescribed in the implementing rules and regulations.

Failure to comply with the terms and conditions of the service contract will result in the full repayment of the scholarship monies and penalties, as applicable, within an approved period.

SECTION 9. *Service Obligations.* – As their Return of Service (“ROS”), the TEACH Program grantees shall teach full-time in the public primary and secondary education system, where public interest requires. The Program scholar’s ROS shall be at least three (3) years for each year of the scholarship or a fraction thereof, in a public school primary or secondary school, as may be approved by the DepEd; *Provided*, that the DepEd shall not consider practicum teaching as return service under this provision. These service obligations may be amended, subject to the service contract, as approved by the DepEd.

SECTION 10. *Incentives.* – Successful TEACH Program grantees are entitled to the following incentives:

- (a) Scholarships in identified TEIs for the approved courses and priority programs under Section 4 of this Act;
- (b) Pass the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) within five (5) years after their date of hiring;
- (c) A teacher position in a public primary or secondary school with a starting salary grade equivalent to Teacher III;
- (d) Receipt of appropriate salaries and other benefits for services rendered under the mandatory job placement as ROS under Section 10 (c) of this Act; and
- (e) A one-time relocation allowance, should he/she be assigned in a place other than his/her permanent residence.
- (f) Continued teacher education and training through the scholarships granted under Republic Act No. 10533 or the “Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013”.

CHAPTER IV IMPLEMENTATION

SECTION 11. ***Program Recruitment Plan.*** – The DepEd and CHED, through the Teacher Education Council (“TEC”) created under Republic Act No. 7784, shall develop an annual implementation plan which will include a thorough teacher demand analysis and recruitment campaign to attract incoming undergraduate students and program shifters to the Program.

SECTION 12. ***Selection of Eligible Teacher Education Institution.*** – TEACH Program grantees may only complete their approved course/program under Section 4 of this Act through eligible partner TEIs. A public or private TEI may be eligible for partnership/coverage under this Program, subject to compliance with any of the following conditions:

- (a) must have its teacher education program accredited as a Center of Excellence level, or
- (b) must have its teacher education program accredited as a FAAP Level IV, or
- (c) must have a BLEPT passing rate of at least 75% passing rate in six of the last ten years.

The TEI shall be subject to a service partnership contract that will outline the terms and conditions of its coverage under this Program.

SECTION 13. ***Department of Education (DepEd).*** – The DepEd shall be the lead implementing agency of the provisions of this Act. It shall establish a TEACH Program Management Unit that shall be responsible for the evaluation, award-giving, and monitoring and evaluation of all scholarship grants and awardees; *Provided that*, administrative expenses must not exceed five percent (5%) of the total budget per year.

DepEd shall ensure hiring of qualified graduates under this Program as public school teachers with the incentives outlined under Section 10 of this Act, and coordinating the same with the Civil Service Commission and the Department of Budget and Management. DepEd will provide forward estimates of teacher needs for every specialization and level to help in mapping out the scholar recruitment plan under Section 11. It will coordinate with its regional offices to ensure regional support and coordination with other offices in the implementation of this program; *Provided that*, additional staff will be provided to DepEd regional offices in support of the Program, as necessary. The DepEd, through the TEC, shall ensure that the policies for the program are supported by relevant stakeholders; and shall ensure the continuous monitoring and evaluation, including the impact of hiring of teaching professionals facilitated

through Section 8 of Republic Act No. 10533 or the “Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013” and Republic Act No. 10612 or the Fast-Track S&T Scholarship Act of 2013.

SECTION 14. *Commission on Higher Education.* – CHED shall lead in setting the standards for and validation of the qualifications of partner TEIs and continue to monitor the eligibility of the partner TEIs, to ensure the Program’s effective and efficient implementation. CHED shall submit the necessary information to DepEd to help with the implementation of this Program. It shall continue to improve and uplift the quality standards for TEIs and higher education to expand the number of eligible TEIs for the TEACH Program.

CHED shall take the lead in coordinating with the Unified Student Financial Assistance System for Tertiary Education (UniFAST) Board under Republic Act No. 10931, to ensure complementarity and harmonization with this Act. CHED shall ensure that the scholarships for in-service teacher education under Section 10(f) are made available to the Program grantees.

SECTION 15. *Teacher Education Council.* – The TEC will provide multi-stakeholder support for the TEACH Program in determining the policy, monitoring and evaluation assistance for the Program. It will lead the creation of a monitoring and evaluation plan for the Program, including an impact evaluation study to be initiated in the fifth year of the Program and every two years thereafter, including an outcome tracking system for the scholar-graduates. From the impact evaluation study, it will make recommendations regarding teacher education policies, planning and teacher education development projects.

SECTION 16. *Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs).* – Partner TEIs will help in the administration of the Program in their respective schools, subject to the terms and conditions of their commitments under Section 12 of this Act. Every TEI is tasked with the rigorous selection and monitoring of the mentors for the Recipients of the Program. It shall ensure pre-service teacher education that is innovative and responsive, taking into account student-learning-centered professional teaching of knowledge and skills for educators who will have a strong sense of professionalism, moral character and with strong respect for diversity, and ethnic cultures, concern for society, and international vision.

CHAPTER V MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

SECTION 17. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be charged against the available appropriations of the Department of Education, under the current General Appropriations Act. The Secretary of Education shall immediately include in the DepEd’s budget the

amount necessary for the effective implementation of this Act. An initial appropriation for Eight Hundred Forty-Six Million Pesos (PHP 846,000,000.00) for the first year of implementation. Thereafter, the amount necessary for its continuous implementation shall be included in the Annual General Appropriations.

Section 18. ***Other Sources of Funding.*** Other sources of funds such as grants, donations, collections and other forms of assistance from public or private entities, whether domestic or foreign, may be tapped and facilitated by the DepEd in relation to the implementation of the TEACH Program.

SECTION 19. ***Review and Monitoring.*** – The DepEd, through the TEC, shall report to the President and Congress after the first five (5) years, and every two (2) years thereafter, on the implementation of the provisions of this Act and shall submit recommendations for its improvement. All the TEC government agencies are also tasked to monitor the implementation of the TEACH Program as well as the actual hiring in public schools of the TEACH Program graduates, and to undertake such studies and include these in their respective annual reports.

SECTION 20. ***Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).*** – Within one hundred twenty (120) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Education through the Teacher Education Council, and in consultation with the National Economic Development Authority, Commission on Higher Education, Department of Science and Technology, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, Civil Service Commission and Department of Budget and Management, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

The IRR issued pursuant to this section shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or a newspaper of general circulation. Copies of the IRR as published shall be transmitted to the Chairs of the Committees on Basic Education and Higher Education in the Senate and the House of Representatives, no later than six (6) months after the effectivity of this Act.

SECTION 21. ***Separability Clause.*** - If any provision or part of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining provisions or parts not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 22. ***Repealing Clause.*** - All other laws, executive orders, presidential decrees, administrative orders, rules and regulations, issuances, or parts thereof inconsistent with or contrary to the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SECTION 23. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in any newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,