

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **2808**



Introduced by **Rep. FERDINAND ALEXANDER A. MARCOS**
1st District, Ilocos Norte

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The citizens' access to quality education at all levels is guaranteed under the 1987 Philippine Constitution (Section 1, Article XIV). The fundamental charter, furthermore, gives priority to science and technology education, training and services (Sec. 10, Art. XIV).

The limitation therefore imposed by Republic Act No. 8496, as amended by Republic Act No. 9036 (particularly Sections 2 and 5 thereof), on the establishment of Philippine Science High School (PSHS) campus to only one per administrative region of the country, seemingly goes against the grain of the constitutional policy.

This bill seeks to expand the PSHS System by giving every region an equal opportunity to benefit from the establishment of the PSHS System. This bill authorizes the establishment of not more than two (2) PSHS campuses, inclusive of the existing PSHS campuses, in each of the administrative regions of the country outside NCR where PSHS-Main Campus is located. The establishment of PSHS campuses shall be in accordance with the criteria set by the PSHS System Board of Trustees. It is believed that provinces deserve to have a PSHS campus of their own so that their youth would have access to free and quality public science education.

The House of Representatives, in the Nineteenth (19th) Congress, approved this measure on the third reading as House Bill No. 9726 on 7 February 2024, with two hundred fifteen (215) voting in favor, none against, and no abstentions.

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


FERDINAND ALEXANDER A. MARCOS

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AN ACT
STRENGTHENING THE GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF THE
PHILIPPINE SCIENCE HIGH SCHOOL SYSTEM, AND 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 "**Expanded Philippine Science High School System Act.**"

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. The State shall give priority to research and development, invention, innovation and their utilization; and to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education, training and services. It shall support appropriate, self-reliant scientific and technological capabilities, and their application to the country's productive systems and national life. To achieve these, the State hereby establishes a Philippine Science High School (PSHS) System that will assume a leadership role in secondary Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Education.

The State shall support the admission process of the PSHS System by establishing test centers in all regions nationwide, to enhance equitable admissions of and access to deserving students.

The State shall also ensure that every region is given equal opportunity to benefit from the establishment of the PSHS System. Towards this end, not more than two (2) PSHS campuses inclusive of the existing PSHS campuses shall be established in each of the administrative regions of the country outside NCR where PSHS-Main Campus is located. The establishment of PSHS campuses shall be in accordance with the criteria set by the PSHS System Board of Trustees: Provided, That only one (1) PSHS campus shall be established per province: Provided, further, That the PSHS System Board of Trustees may consider the establishment of more than two (2) PSHS campuses per region fifteen (15) years after the implementation of this Act.

SEC. 3. Objectives. - In implementing the foregoing policy, the State shall pursue the following objectives:

- (a) Establish PSHS campuses that offer secondary courses with special emphasis on STEM to students with high aptitude or who are gifted in science and mathematics on a free scholarship basis;
- (b) Establish PSHS campuses that are strategically accessible to the public;
- (c) Ensure uniformity in quality standards and systematic operations of schools under the PSHS System;
- (d) Rationalize the establishment of PSHS campuses as defined in this Act;
- (e) Integrate existing and future campuses into one system of governance and management;
- (f) Ensure that students with high aptitude or gifted in science and mathematics are given equal scholarship opportunities to enroll in the PSHS System;
- (g) Increase the pool of high school graduates who will pursue undergraduate courses to conduct researches, and prepare scholars for careers in Science and Technology (S & T) and become leaders in the field of STEM;
- (h) Establish international collaboration for the holistic development of the STEM students, staff and leaders; and
- (i) Support scholars and teachers' participation in local and international competition, academic symposia, research projects, and other scholarly activities, subject to availability of funds and government accounting and audit regulations.

SEC. 4. Definition of Terms. - As used in this Act:

- (a) **Administrative regions** refer to the administrative regions where the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) holds regional offices;
- (b) **Careers in S & T** refer to pursuit of professions in the fields of basic and applied sciences, such as STEM education and such other disciplines approved by the PSHS System Board of Trustees created in this Act;
- (c) **Deserving students** refer to those who qualify for admission through the PSHS National Competitive Examination, and/or similar other admission processes approved by the PSHS System Board of Trustees such as Lateral Admission Qualifying Examination, and Requirement for Admission, Criteria, and Evaluation;
- (d) **Philippine Science High School or PSHS** refers to a school under the supervision of the PSHS System offering secondary education on scholarship basis to students with high aptitude or are gifted in science and mathematics using a specially designed curriculum focusing on STEM;
- (e) **Philippine Science High School System or PSHS System** refers to the PSHS campuses preparing students with high aptitude in the STEM education to become leaders or innovators;
- (f) **Scholarship** refers to the awards or grants for secondary education given by the PSHS to deserving students;
- (g) **Term of office** refers to the period fixed by this Act within which a public official may hold office; and
- (h) **Tenure of office** refers to the period within which a public official actually held office within a prescribed term.

SEC. 5. PSHS Campuses. The PSHS System shall be composed of the existing PSHS campuses herein mentioned and future campuses which shall be established under this Act. The existing 16 campuses shall be known as follows:

- (1) Philippine Science High School - Main Campus in Diliman, Quezon City;
- (2) Philippine Science High School Davao Region Campus in Davao City, formerly PSHS - Southern Mindanao Campus;
- (3) Philippine Science High School - Western Visayas Campus in Iloilo City, formerly Philippine Science High School - Western Visayas Campus;
- (4) Philippine Science High School - Eastern Visayas Campus in Leyte, formerly Philippine Science High School - Eastern Visayas Campus;
- (5) Philippine Science High School - Cagayan Valley Campus in Nueva Vizcaya, formerly PSHS - Cagayan Valley Campus;
- (6) Philippine Science High School - Northern Mindanao Campus in Lanao del Norte, formerly PSHS - Central Mindanao Campus;
- (7) Philippine Science High School - Bicol Region Campus in Camarines Sur, formerly Philippine Science High School - Bicol Region Campus;
- (8) Philippine Science High School Ilocos Region Campus in Ilocos Sur, formerly Philippine Science High School - Ilocos Region Campus;
- (9) Philippine Science High School Central Visayas Campus in Cebu, formerly, Philippine Science High School - Central Visayas Campus;
- (10) Philippine Science High School - Central Luzon Campus in Clark Freeport Zone, formerly Philippine Science High School - Central Luzon Campus;
- (11) Philippine Science High School - Cordillera Administrative Region Campus in Baguio City, formerly Philippine Science High School Cordillera Administrative Region Campus;
- (12) Philippine Science High School SOCCSKARGEN Region Campus in Koronadal City, formerly Philippine Science High School - SOCCSKARGEN Region Campus;
- (13) Philippine Science High School Caraga Region Campus in Butuan City, formerly Philippine Science High School - Caraga Region Campus;
- (14) Philippine Science High School CALABARZON Region Campus in Batangas City, formerly Philippine Science High School CALABARZON Region Campus;
- (15) Philippine Science High School - MIMAROPA Region Campus in Romblon, formerly Philippine Science High School - MIMAROPA Region Campus; and
- (16) Philippine Science High School - Zamboanga Peninsula Region Campus in Dipolog City, formerly Philippine Science High School Zamboanga Peninsula Region Campus.

In the establishment of future PSHS campuses, the PSHS System Board of Trustees may consider the following locations: First District of Aklan; Daraga, Albay; Ubay, Bohol; Laoag City, Ilocos Norte; Labangan, Zamboanga del Sur; Third District, Cagayan; General Santos City, South Cotabato and Malaybalay City, Bukidnon: Provided, That there shall be established two (2) PSHS campuses per region and one (1) campus per province in accordance with the criteria set forth by the PSHS System Board of Trustees.

SEC. 6. Restriction on the Conversion of High Schools into a Philippine Science High School System. In addition to the criteria set by the PSHS System Board of Trustees in the establishment and operation of the PSHS System, the conversion and inclusion of existing high schools into the PSHS system shall not be allowed.

SEC. 7. Overall Coordinating Authority. - The PSHS System shall be under the administrative supervision of the DOST. The PSHS System Board of Trustees shall be the governing board of all the PSHS campuses. The PSHS System Board of Trustees shall formulate the staffing pattern of the PSHS System in coordination with the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) and the Civil Service Commission (CSC) rules and regulations.

SEC. 8. PSHS Board of Trustees. There shall be created a Board of Trustees composed of the following members:

- (a) Secretary of Science and Technology, as ex officio Chairperson;
- (b) Secretary of Education, as ex officio Vice Chairperson;
- (c) President of the University of the Philippines;
- (d) Executive Director (ED) of PSHS;
- (e) Director of Science Education Institute;
- (f) President of the PSHS National Alumni Association;
- (g) Chairpersons of the Committees on Science and Technology of the Senate and the House of Representatives, as ex officio members;
- (h) One (1) representative each from the private sector, representing higher education, child development professionals or practitioners, industry, agriculture, and new emerging technologies. The private sector representatives shall be appointed by the PSHS System Board of Trustees upon recommendation of a duly constituted search committee. The private sector representatives shall serve a tenure of four (4) years.

SEC. 9. Powers and Functions of the PSHS System Board of Trustees. - The PSHS System Board of Trustees shall exercise the following powers:

- (a) Ensure that the provisions of the laws pertaining to the creation and operation of the PSHS System are implemented;
- (b) Approve policies and guidelines necessary in the establishment and operation of science high schools under the PSHS System in order to maintain the quality and uniform educational standard in all PSHS campuses;
- (c) Approve the curricula submitted by the Executive Director;
- (d) Formulate policies for the expansion of enrollment in the campuses under the PSHS System;
- (e) Approve the criteria for the selection and admission of students;
- (f) Approve the grant or termination of PSHS scholarships including stipend and allowances for students;
- (g) Approve the graduation of successful candidates from the various PSHS campuses;
- (h) Approve the appointments of the Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director, and Campus Director;

- (i) Approve the appointment, promotion, retention, renewal, rewards and incentives for faculty and non-teaching positions, fix their compensation and other conditions of employment, and remove them for cause after proper investigation and hearing;
- (j) Approve the extension of services of faculty members over sixty-five (65) to seventy (70) years of age and allow them to enjoy the rights and benefits under Republic Act (RA) 8439, as amended by RA 11312, otherwise known as "Magna Carta for Scientists, Engineers, Researchers and other Science and Technology Personnel in the Government";
- (k) Draw up a position classification and compensation plan for its faculty and staff, and, any law to the contrary notwithstanding, create positions, fix, and adjust the salaries and benefits of the faculty members and other employees, and determine the minimum hours of service of faculty and such other terms and conditions of employment as it may deem proper;
- (l) Receive grants whether cash, land, buildings and improvements, donations, contributions, bequests, gifts, and formulate policies for the administration thereof in accordance with applicable internal revenue laws;
- (m) Approve the use of income generated by the PSHS System in the pursuit of its functions, and donations received in trust by individual campuses, according to the purpose of the donor and intention of the donation. In cases where income or donation received is not intended for a particular campus, the PSHS System Board of Trustees shall likewise appropriate the same for the benefit of the System or any part thereof;
- (n) Approve policies and rules of discipline for students, faculty, and staff;
- (o) Approve partnership of PSHS System with local and international institutions;
- (p) Approve policies and guidelines to rationalize the establishment and operation of a campus under the System, for its assessment, evaluation and approval including the naming or renaming of existing or future PSHS Campuses;
- (q) Approve the criteria in the search for Executive Director, Deputy Executive Directors and Campus Directors, and the selection of teaching and non-teaching personnel;
- (r) Exercise the discretion to create and reorganize the composition of the Executive Committee or other committees; and
- (s) Approve the organizational and governance structure of the PSHS System recommended by the Executive Director.

SEC. 10. Executive Director. There shall be an Executive Director for the PSHS System, who shall be appointed by the PSHS System Board of Trustees and shall have a rank of an Executive Director V, and a salary grade 30. The Executive Director shall have a tenure of five (5) years renewable for another term, with a maximum of three (3) terms.

The Executive Director shall exercise academic and administrative supervision within the PSHS System and shall be the Chief Executive Officer and primary implementor of policies and guidelines set by the PSHS System Board of Trustees.

SEC. 11. Duties and Functions of the Executive Director. The Executive Director shall perform the following:

- (a) Coordinate core curriculum planning activities and research-based development to be implemented by various campuses;
- (b) Conduct a continuing evaluation of the implementation of the approved curriculum;
- (c) Oversee research projects of PSHS campuses which shall include monitoring, coordinating and evaluating research programs of campuses;
- (d) Manage the IP registration, prototype development and commercialization or adoption of research outputs of scholars and students;
- (e) Provide legal and technical support to members of the PSHS System. Towards this end, the Office of the Executive Director shall be provided with legal and technical staff who shall provide legal, technical and administrative services to PSHS campuses;
- (f) Establish strategic linkages, and coordinate student and faculty exchange programs with foreign and local institutions to upgrade the level of expertise of both faculty and students;
- (g) Facilitate networking among the campuses of the PSHS System with other institutions in terms of sharing of resources, expertise, and equipment;
- (h) Oversee the development of a system-wide outreach program to upgrade the teaching of STEM and provide support within the capabilities and resources of various science high school campuses;
- (i) Recommend to the PSHS System Board of Trustees the approval of the organizational and governance structure of the PSHS System;
- (j) Coordinate the implementation of PSHS System Board of Trustees approved admission process, criteria and standards; and
- (k) Provide secretariat services to the PSHS System Board of Trustees.

The Executive Director shall be provided with the necessary staff for the efficient and effective implementation of the above functions.

In view of the expansion of the PSHS System, the office of the Executive Director shall be provided with additional plantilla positions to be determined by the Executive Director and approved by the PSHS System Board of Trustees.

SEC. 12. Deputy Executive Directors. – There shall be three (3) Deputy Executive Director positions with the rank of Deputy Executive Director IV and entitled to salary grade 28. They shall be appointed by the PSHS System Board of Trustees on the basis of a search process and shall serve for a tenure of five (5) years, renewable for another term but with a maximum of three (3) terms.

SEC. 13. Campus Director. – There shall be a Campus Director for each PSHS campus in the region to be appointed by the PSHS System Board of Trustees, with the rank of Director III and with a salary grade 27. The Campus Director shall serve a tenure of five (5) years, renewable for another term with a maximum of three (3) terms on the basis of a search process. The Campus Director shall be the administrative and academic head of a campus and will be responsible for its smooth operations. The Campus Director may constitute a consultative body which may act as a citizen's arm to interpret the educational needs of the service area of the campus.

SEC. 14. Executive Committee. – There shall be an Executive Committee (Execom) which is collegial in nature in the PSHS System composed of the Executive Director, as ex officio chairperson, the Deputy Executive Director, as ex officio member, and the Campus Directors as members.

SEC. 15. Faculty Members Qualification. – Faculty members of the PSHS System shall be exempt from any civil service examination or regulation as a requisite for appointment. They shall be selected in accordance with such criteria as may be established by the Board of Trustees which shall include, if necessary and practicable, screening and competitive examination.

SEC. 16. Curriculum. – There shall be a PSHS System STEM curriculum from Grades 7 to 10, and Grades 11 to 12, which shall be recognized as Junior High School, and Senior High School levels, respectively.

SEC. 17. Duty and Tax Exemptions. – All grants, bequests, endowments, gifts, donations and contributions made to and used actually, directly and exclusively for educational purposes by the PSHS System, shall be exempt from donor's tax and the same shall be considered as allowable deductions from gross income for purposes of computing the taxable income of the donor, in accordance with the provisions of the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997, as amended.

The importation of scientific and research equipment for educational purposes made by the PSHS System, upon certification by the DOST, shall be exempt from customs duties in accordance with the provisions of RA 10863, otherwise known as the "Customs Modernization and Tariff Act (CMTA)."

SEC. 18. Trust Fund. – Income generated from school fees collected by the PSHS campuses shall be reported and deposited to an authorized government depository bank as a trust fund of the PSHS System to be used for priority programs and activities.

SEC. 19. Appropriations. – The amount necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 20. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the PSHS System Board of Trustees shall formulate the necessary rules and regulations to implement this Act.

SEC. 21. Transitory Provision. – Upon approval of this law, the following incumbent key officials of the PSHS System shall acquire a new term of office, as follows: (a) Executive Director and Deputy Executive Director, subject to meritorious performance and approval of the PSHS System Board of Trustees, are eligible to assume a maximum of three (3) terms; and (b) Campus Directors, subject to meritorious performance and approval of the PSHS System Board of Trustees, are eligible to assume a maximum of three (3) terms.

Further, the PSHS System Board of Trustees thru the Executive Committee shall submit a reclassification, staffing modification and/or position classification or qualification plan to upgrade the salary grades of its personnel, particularly of its

faculty with specialized science teacher status, subject to the existing policies of the Department of Budget and Management and the Civil Service Commission rules and regulations.

SEC. 22. Separability Clause. – If any provision or part of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions hereof which are not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SEC. 23. Repealing Clause. – RA 3661, otherwise known as the “Philippine Science High School”, RA Act 8496, otherwise known as the “Philippine Science High School (PSHS) System Act of 1997”, and RA 9036 amending RA 8496 are hereby repealed. All laws, proclamations, orders, rules and regulations or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby amended, repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 24. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,