

TWENTIETH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
HOUSE BILL No. 2910

INTRODUCED BY HON. RICARDO S. CRUZ, JR.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The First Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM I) in the 1990s played a pivotal role in diagnosing the systemic challenges in the Philippine education system. One of its landmark recommendations – trifocalization – led to the creation of three specialized agencies: the Department of Education (DepEd) for basic education, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) for higher education, and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) for technical and vocational education training (TVET).

The Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM II), in its Year 2 Report, emphasized that this structural reform has been successful in improving subsectoral attention.¹ Qualitative analysis revealed that government expenditure per student significantly increased post-trifocalization. However, despite this progress, the reform has not translated into significant improvements in completion rates and learning outcomes.²

A key barrier identified by EDCOM II is the lack of cohesive planning across these three educational subsectors. Previous efforts to create an advisory body for DepEd, CHED, and TESDA failed to establish a sustained and institutionalized mechanism for long-term strategic alignment between the executive and legislative branches. Without unified policies, Philippine education will continue to struggle with fragmented leadership and disconnected reforms.

To address this gap, this measure proposes the establishment of the Third Commission on Education (EDCOM III), which will adopt a parliamentary-style approach by bringing together the heads of DepEd, CHED, and TESDA into a single coordinating body. Working closely with legislators and stakeholders, EDCOM III will serve as an institutional bridge to harmonize policies, align priorities, and ensure a coherent education roadmap. It will build upon the efforts of previous Commissions, providing a strategic foundation for policy, planning, and programming in both the executive and legislative branches.

The urgency of this reform cannot be overstated. The future of Philippine education in the coming decades hinges on the policies and structures established today. If the

¹ Second Congressional Commission on Education. (2025). Fixing the foundations: *A matter of national survival* (Year Two Report). EDCOM II.

² *Ibid.*

country is to produce a globally competitive workforce and ensure that education serves as a catalyst for national development, decisive and coordinated action is imperative.

At stake is the future of millions of Filipino learners. The education system must equip them with essential skills and open doors to greater opportunities. A unified and forward-looking vision must guide these reforms – one that fosters high-quality schools, an optimal learning environment, and a promising future for every Filipino. To move beyond past challenges, education must no longer be a barrier but a pathway to success.

The creation of EDCOM III presents an opportunity to institutionalize this vision. The Scripture tells us in Galatians 6:7, “*kung ano ang itinanim, siyang aanihin.*” Indeed, by laying the groundwork for a truly cohesive and future-ready education system, we aim to foster sustained accountability and provide a better future for the next generation—ultimately transforming the nation by building the right foundations.

In line with the policy adopted by its original proponent Senator Alan Peter “Compañero” S. Cayetano, this bill therefore serves as a counterpart measure. It is for the reason stated above that the passage of this measure is earnestly sought.


RICARDO S. CRUZ, JR.

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AN ACT
CREATING A THIRD COMMISSION ON EDUCATION (EDCOM III),
STRENGTHENING AND CONTINUING THE MANDATE OF EDCOM II TO
ADDRESS THE NATIONAL EDUCATION CRISIS, APPROPRIATING
FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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 "Third Commission on Education (EDCOM III) Act."

Section 2. Declaration of Policy. - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to make education a critical component of human capital development, socio-economic equality, inclusive growth, and sustainable development. It shall formulate national education policies and plans in accordance with its constitutional mandate to establish a complete, adequate, and integrated system of education relevant to the needs of the people and society.

Towards this end, the State shall take appropriate steps to protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels, recognize the complementary roles of public and private education, and take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all.

Section 3. Creation of EDCOM III. - EDCOM III is hereby created to enhance and strengthen the mandate of EDCOM II. EDCOM III shall ensure the active and direct participation of the three education agencies, namely, the Department of Education (DepEd), the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), with the relevant Committees of the Senate and House of Representatives.

Section 4. Objectives of EDCOM III. - EDCOM III shall have the following objectives:

1. Ensure that the quality of Philippine education, both public and private, is at par with international standards by aligning its curricula, teaching methodologies, and assessment systems with global best practices;
2. Determine and address challenges and gaps in school infrastructure, learning resources, and availability of well-trained teachers and educators

- to achieve the best learning environment for learners and students at all levels; and
3. Update the national education agenda and roadmap, as may be necessary to integrate the recent educational developments on artificial intelligence, digital technologies, and other emerging global advancements to future-proof the education system and the country's workforce.

Section 5. *Composition of EDCOM III.* - Guided by the national strategic vision on education, EDCOM III shall work towards its common goals and priorities and shall be composed of the following:

- a. As Co-Chairpersons:
 - i. Chairperson of the Senate Committee on Basic Education;
 - ii. Chairperson of the Senate Committee on Higher, Technical and Vocational Education;
 - iii. Chairperson of the House Committee on Basic Education and Culture; and
 - iv. Chairperson of the House Committee on Higher and Technical Education.
- b. As Commissioners:
 - i. Chairperson of the Commission on Higher Education;
 - ii. Secretary of the Department of Education;
 - iii. Director-General of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority;
 - iv. Secretary of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST);
 - v. Chairperson of the Senate Committee on Sustainable Development Goals, Innovation and Futures Thinking;
 - vi. Chairperson of the House Committee on Sustainable Development Goals.

The members of the Commission shall receive no compensation, but travelling, communications, and other necessary expenses shall be allowed, subject to existing laws, and rules and regulations.

Section 6. *Powers and Functions of EDCOM III.* - EDCOM III shall have the following powers and functions:

- a. Continue to review, monitor, and formulate an action agenda, policies, and programs to address education challenges, with primary focus on the following: stunting, learning poverty, high attrition rates, availability of well-trained teachers, digital infrastructure, emerging global industries and technologies, and skills mismatch in the country;
- b. Coordinate with government agencies, local government units (LGUs), and other relevant sectors to promote policy and program coherence;
- c. Serve as a regular forum for inter-sub-sectoral consultations and proposals for intervention to address cross-cutting policies and programs of the three sub-sectors of education, with a focus on proposing reforms in the basic education curriculum, scholarship grants, and voucher systems;
- d. Submit annual reports to Congress on the progress of implementation of this Act; and
- e. Perform other functions as may be necessary to implement the provisions of this Act.

Section 7. *Standing Committees.* - The members of the EDCOM III shall establish from among its members standing committees, to be chaired by such members or experts from multisectoral groups, and engage resource persons from the public and private sectors as may be needed.

The standing committees shall include the National Commission for Culture and the Arts and the Philippine Sports Commission in their respective consultations to ensure that arts and sports education are integrated into the education system.

Section 8. *Advisory Support Council of EDCOM III.* - The Advisory Support Council (ASC) of EDCOM III is hereby created to provide the Commission with expert assistance and advice.

The members of the EDCOM III shall always be present at all of the Commission's meetings. The Senate President and the Speaker of the House of Representatives shall choose recognized experts from the following sectors to form part of the ASC: two (2) members from the academe, two (2) members from the business sector, two (2) members from parents' associations duly recognized by EDCOM III, two (2) members who are heads of LGUs, and two (2) members from civil society organizations and development partners engaged in education.

EDCOM III shall undertake the necessary measures to ensure the broadest possible, most inclusive and diversified composition of the ASC.

The members of the ASC who are government officials shall serve in the Council without any additional emoluments, allowances, or pay, by virtue of and in connection with the positions they have been elected to or appointed to, as the case may be.

Section 9. *Technical Secretariat and Executive Director.* - A Technical Secretariat, to be headed by an Executive Director (ED), shall be organized to provide technical and administrative support to the EDCOM III in the exercise of its powers and performance of its functions under Section 6 of this Act. The Technical Secretariat shall co-exist with the Commission.

The ED to be appointed by the Commission must be a recognized expert with experience both in the fields of education and management. The ED shall work full-time and shall have the rank, privileges, and emoluments of an Executive Director IV (Salary Grade 29).

Subject to the review and approval of the DBM, and in accordance with existing civil service laws, rules, and regulations, the members of EDCOM III shall determine the necessary human resource requirements in order to fulfill its mandate under this Act.

Section 10. *Meetings of EDCOM III.* - The EDCOM III shall meet at least once every quarter, but may be convened by its Chairpersons to such special meetings as may be necessary. The members of the EDCOM III shall be duly notified of any meeting in advance. The first meeting of the Council shall take place within one (1) month from the effectivity of this Act, at a time and place to be designated by the Chairpersons.

Section 11. *The National Education Agenda.* - The national education agenda formulated by EDCOM II shall be implemented, monitored and updated by EDCOM III,

as may be necessary. An annual report on its implementation shall be submitted to the Philippine Congress.

The national education agenda developed by EDCOM II, shall be subject to further evaluation by the other important stakeholders in education, such as the parents' associations and school communities.

Section 12. Appropriations. - The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the available appropriations of the Senate and the House of Representatives. Thereafter, the amount necessary for its continuous implementation, including any deficiency in the current year, shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act subject to existing budgeting, accounting, and auditing rules and regulations.

Section 13. Separability Clause. - If any provision or part of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining parts not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

Section 14. Repealing Clause. - All 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 or amended accordingly.

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

Approved,