



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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

3903
HOUSE BILL NO. _____



Introduced by **Representative EDUARDO R. RAMA JR.**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Education is a constitutional right, and part of the states overarching duties. Article XIV, Section 1 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution mandates 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.”

In pursuit of the aforementioned mandate, the “Expanded Government Assistance to Students and Teachers in Private Education (E-GASTPE) program was established under Republic Act No. 6728, which was further amended by Republic Act No. 8545. The E-GASTPE Program provided financial support to students and teachers in private education institutions. This program contributed significantly to easing the burden of tuition fees, expanding access to private education, and complementing the public education system through the Education Service Contracting (ESC) and Tuition Fee Supplements.

However, with the growing population, rising costs of education, and persistent disparities in access to quality education, the current scope of assistance remains insufficient. Many families continue to struggle with the financial requirements of education, while teachers in private institutions, who play an equally vital role in nation-building, often face inadequate support and benefits compared to their public-school counterparts.

In view thereof, this representation respectfully proposes the passage of the **Private Basic Education Vouchers Assistance Act**, which seeks to address these challenges by:

1. **Expanding Coverage** – widening eligibility of government assistance to cover more learners in elementary and secondary levels, especially those belonging low-income families;
2. **Creation of the Bureau of Private Education** – this legislative measure seeks to create the Bureau of Private Education under the Department of Education, the sole purpose of which is to serve as the focal office for the administration, supervision, and regulation of all



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matters relating to private basic education institutions, including government assistance and subsidies. It shall be headed by a Bureau Director;

3. **Increasing Support for Teachers** – providing enhanced assistance and benefits for teachers in private educational institutions to ensure fair compensation, professional development, and retention of the quality of educators;
4. **Updating Subsidy Levels** – mandating the adjustment of financial assistance amounts to match present-day tuition costs and the rising costs of living.

Private education institutions are indispensable partners in nation-building. By strengthening the E-GASTPE framework and expanding its reach, the undersigned aims to ensure that no Filipino learner is left behind due to financial limitations, and that private school teachers receive the recognition and support they deserve.

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


REP. EDUARDO R. RAMA JR.
2nd District, City of Cebu



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AN ACT

ESTABLISHING THE PRIVATE BASIC EDUCATION VOUCHER PROGRAM, PROVIDING FOR THE CREATION OF THE BUREAU OF PRIVATE EDUCATION, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, REPEALING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTIONS 2, 3, 4(2), 4(3), 5, 6, 7, 12, 14, AND 15 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8545, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "EXPANDED GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE TO STUDENTS AND TEACHERS IN PRIVATE EDUCATION ACT", WHICH AMENDED REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6728, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE TO STUDENTS AND TEACHERS IN PRIVATE EDUCATION ACT"

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

1 **SECTION 1. Short Title.** — This Act shall be known as the “Private Basic Education
2 Vouchers Assistance Act”.

3 **SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** — It is the declared policy of the State to protect and promote
4 the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and shall take appropriate steps to make such
5 education accessible to all. As part of its mandate, it is the State’s policy to establish and maintain a
6 system of scholarship grants, subsidies, and other incentives which shall be available to deserving
7 students, as determined by the guidelines, in both public and private schools, especially to the
8 underprivileged. Likewise, the State recognizes the complementary roles of public and private
9 educational institutions in the educational system and the invaluable contribution that the private
10 schools have made and will make to education.

11 The State shall provide the mechanisms to augment the resources and enhance the quality
12 of private basic education, specifically promoting the complementary roles of public and private
13 schools and thus recognize the government’s priority of providing basic elementary and secondary
14 education to all Filipino students.

1 **SEC. 3. Coverage.** — This Act shall cover all private basic education institutions that receive
2 government assistance in the form of vouchers for qualified students, teachers and schools. This
3 covers all the years of basic education.

4 The programs of assistance for students under this Act shall be extended only to citizens of
5 the Philippines.

6 **SEC. 4. Criteria for Voucher Assistance.** — The programs for voucher assistance shall be
7 based on a set of criteria which include among others, the following:

- 8 (a) *Criteria for Students.* — The voucher assistance will be provided to students from middle-
9 income families, as determined by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), who attended
10 public schools identified by the Department of Education as congested or those living in
11 areas with congested public schools or without a nearby public school who wish to enroll in
12 private basic education schools.

13
14 Students who are most vulnerable and underprivileged shall receive a higher voucher amount
15 as determined by the Basic Education Assistance Council (BEAC).

- 16 (b) *Criteria for Schools.* — The participating private basic education schools shall receive assistance
17 based on Quality Assurance under Section 6 of this Act, as likewise determined by the BEAC,
18 except schools with gaps in resources and facilities which are located in geographically
19 isolated and disadvantaged and conflict-affected areas, or GIDCA schools. Private schools
20 shall undergo the process of recognition and periodic assessment to be able to participate in
21 the programs for voucher assistance.

22 **SEC. 5. Empowering Student Choice.** — The Department of Education (DepEd) shall
23 create a system which allows students and parents to select their preferred schools from a registry of
24 recognized participating schools, subject to availability of slots.

25 The registry of recognized participating private basic educational institutions shall include
26 the educational institution's profile containing relevant information, such as location, number of
27 available slots, number of students per classroom and level, extra-curricular programs, current tuition
28 fees, and top-up required in cases where the voucher amount is less than the tuition fee, among
29 others.

30 **SEC. 6. Quality Assurance.** — The DepEd shall establish, operate and maintain a
31 monitoring system for program outcomes to ensure the accountability of recognized participating
32 private basic educational institutions. The following areas shall be covered:

- 33 (a) *Improved Student Performance* — Appropriate performance indicators to determine the
34 extent and outcome of the government assistance and subsidies (GAS) programs
35 including youth literacy rates, national and international assessment scores, among
36 others. For this purpose, the National Achievement Tests and all national assessment
37 examinations generally given by the DepEd shall be administered to all eligible students
38 in all participating private basic education institutions;
39

- 1 (b) *Improved Student Outcomes* — Tracer system to collect and evaluate the career and
2 employment path of its graduates;
3
4 (c) *School Performance* — School performance data indicating the mean, median and mode of
5 the scores of the students in the national examinations, and such other measures of
6 quality education delivery; and
7
8 (d) *Priority Subsidy for Underprivileged Students* — Distribution of the GAS programs while
9 ensuring that funding is equitably allocated following the order of priority groups.
10

11 **SEC. 7. Other Forms of Assistance.** — The following shall consist of assistance to private
12 basic education institutions and teachers participating in the voucher program under this Act:

13 The forms of assistance granted to teachers in the participating recognized private basic
14 education schools include:

- 15 (a) *In-service training fund* for teachers in private basic education schools;
16 (b) *Scholarships for qualified private basic education teachers* enrolled in quality graduate programs;
17 and
18 (c) Participation in *government-funded in-service training* for basic education teachers.
19

20 The DepEd may establish a program of assistance for the development of qualified
21 recognized private basic education schools to cover the following areas of school operation:

- 22 (a) Institutional Development;
23 (b) Organizational Development;
24 (c) Human Resource Development;
25 (d) Curriculum and Instructional Development;
26 (e) Research and Planning; and 5 (f) Facilities and School Improvement.

27 Consistent with Section 10 of Republic Act No. 10533, or the “Enhanced Basic Education
28 Act of 2013”, the DepEd, in consultation with the Department of Budget and Management (DBM),
29 may develop other forms of financial arrangements and engage the services of private basic education
30 schools based on the complementary roles of public and private institutions in the educational
31 system.

32 **SEC. 8. Basic Education Voucher Program.** — Under the basic education voucher program,
33 kindergarten, elementary, and secondary students enrolled in recognized private basic education
34 schools charging school fees shall be provided by the government with vouchers in such amount as
35 may be determined by the DepEd: *Provided, That* the amount shall not be less than the amount
36 currently provided by the DepEd: *Provided, That* the government shall disburse payment of the
37 vouchers to the schools concerned within sixty (60) days from the submission of complete
38 documents to the DepEd.

1 The budget for the basic education voucher program shall be equitably allocated and
2 distributed among all regions, including the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
3 (BARMM) based on official data sources including, but not limited to, congestion data and open
4 seats, giving priority to underprivileged students.

5 Pursuant to Section 2 (V), Article V of the Bangsamoro Organic Law, the Bangsamoro
6 Government shall exercise its authority over education for the areas under the BARMM and will
7 directly implement the same program to be charged against their block grant. The DepEd shall
8 provide technical assistance in the implementation of the GAS programs, when necessary.

9 Schools participating in the **basic education voucher program** may increase tuition on the
10 condition, that *seventy percent (70%)* of the amount of the tuition increases shall go to *the payment of*
11 *salaries, wages, allowances, and other statutory benefits of teaching and non-teaching personnel*, except
12 administrators, who are principal stockholders of the school, and may be used to cover salary increase
13 as provided for in the collective bargaining agreements existing or in force at the time when this Act
14 is approved and made effective. At least twenty percent (20%) of the tuition increases, shall go to
15 the improvement or modernization of buildings, equipment, libraries, laboratories, gymnasias and
16 similar facilities and to the payment of other costs of operation. For this purpose, schools shall
17 maintain a separate record of accounts for all assistance received from the government, any tuition
18 increase, and the detailed disposition and use thereof, which record shall be made available for
19 periodic inspection as may be determined by the DepEd.

20 **SEC. 9. In-Service Training Fund or InSet Fund.** — For the purpose of improving the
21 quality of teaching in private basic education, there is hereby established an Inset Fund under the
22 Department of Education; to provide for training programs for the leveling up of knowledge and
23 teaching competencies in critical subject areas and for the modernization of teaching techniques and
24 strategies, including training on the use of computers, artificial intelligence and of other multi-media
25 educational technologies to assist instruction: *Provided*, That the amount of Inset Fund available to
26 private basic education shall not exceed that available to public basic education on a per capita basis:
27 *Provided, further*, That the training programs shall be approved by the DepEd.

28 **SEC. 10. Teachers' Salary Subsidy Fund.** — A Teachers' Salary Subsidy Fund is hereby
29 established under the DepEd to grant government subsidy to teachers in recognized private basic
30 education schools participating in the programs of assistance under in this Act: *Provided*, That the
31 government shall provide the teachers with salary subsidy, to be determined by the DepEd: *Provided*,
32 *further*, That the government shall disburse payment within sixty (60) days after the close of the school
33 year upon submission of complete documents, including but not limited to qualification and actual
34 teaching service, to the DepEd: *Provided, furthermore*, That the present allocation out of increases from
35 tuition and other income shall be maintained: *Provided, finally*, That the teacher's salary subsidy
36 received by the teacher shall form part of the exclusions from taxable gross income in accordance
37 with Section 32(B)(7)(e) of the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997, as amended.

38 **SEC. 11. Creation of the Bureau of Private Education.** — The Bureau of Private Education
39 (BPE) under the DepEd shall be created to serve as the focal office for the administration,
40 supervision, and regulation of all matters relating to private basic education institutions, including
41 government assistance and subsidies. It shall be headed by a Bureau Director.

1 It shall have the following powers and functions:

- 2 (a) Monitor and assess the implementation of the private basic education institutions of
3 the policies, plans, and programs established by the DepEd as recommended by BPE;
4
5 (b) Set and enforce minimum standards for programs and institutions of learning, subject
6 to public hearing;
7
8 (c) Ensure that the activities, efforts, and performance of private basic education
9 institutions shall meet the high standards of excellence and accountability;
10
11 (d) Administer and implement the policies and programs related to the assistance and
12 subsidies given by the government to students, teachers, and schools in private
13 education;
14
15 (e) Establish and support partnerships with individual private education institutions to
16 respond effectively to the pressing needs of students and teachers, and to provide
17 learning solutions to underserved communities;
18
19 (f) Monitor and ensure compliance of private basic education institutions to the
20 promulgated rules and regulations of the DepEd in all matters concerning private
21 schools, including tuition fee increases; and
22
23 (g) Such other powers and functions as may be necessary for the effective and
24 efficient implementation of this Act.
25

26 **SEC. 12. *Program Administration and Implementation.*** — The BEAC shall be responsible
27 for policy guidance and direction, monitoring and evaluation of new and existing programs while the
28 Government Assistance and Subsidies Service (GASS) under the BPE shall be responsible for the
29 day-to-day administration and implementation on the programs of assistance to private basic
30 education institutions.

31 The BEAC shall be composed of the Secretary of the DepEd, a Chairperson, and the
32 Secretary of the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) and the Secretary of the
33 DBM, as members.

34 The alternate representative of the Chairperson shall possess the rank of an Undersecretary
35 while the alternate representatives of the members shall possess the rank of not less than an Assistant
36 Secretary in order to secure a quorum.

37 The BEAC shall meet, from time to time, as the need arises, to assess the effectivity of the
38 programs under this Act and to propose to Congress other forms of assistance to participating
39 students and schools.

40 The GASS shall serve as the permanent secretariat for the implementation of the GAS
41 programs under this Act.

1 The DepEd may engage the services of a third party co-implementor of the GAS programs
2 under this Act.

3 **SEC. 13. Appropriations.** The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this
4 Act shall be charged against the current year's appropriation of the DepEd. Thereafter, such amount
5 shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

6 **SEC. 14. Penalties.** — In case of violation of this Act by a private school, the DepEd may
7 bar, after due process, such school from participating in or benefiting from the programs of this Act,
8 and from other programs of the DepEd, without prejudice to administrative and criminal charges
9 that may be filed against the school or its responsible officers under existing laws.

10 **SEC. 15. Transitory Provision.** — Subject to the availability of funds, the implementation
11 of the provisions stipulated in this Act for the kindergarten and elementary levels shall gradually
12 commence in school year 2026-2027, as may be determined by the DepEd.

13 **SEC. 16. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** — Within ninety (90) days from the
14 approval of this Act, the DepEd shall, in consultation with the NEDA, the DBM, and other
15 concerned stakeholders from the national associations of private basic education institutions,
16 promulgate the rules and regulations implementing the provisions of this Act.

17 **SEC. 17. Separability Clause.** — If any provision of this Act is held invalid or
18 unconstitutional, the other provisions not so declared shall remain in full force and effect.

19 **SEC. 18. Repealing Clause.** — Sections 2, 3, 4(2), 4(3), 5, 6, 7, 12, 14, and 15 of Republic
20 Act No. 8545, or the "Expanded Government Assistance to Students and Teachers in Private
21 Education Act", which amended Republic Act No. 6728, or the "Government Assistance to Students
22 and Teachers in Private Education Act", are hereby repealed. All other laws, decrees, orders and
23 rules and regulations contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed
24 or amended accordingly.

25 **SEC. 19. Effectivity.** — Notwithstanding the non-issuance of the implementing rules and
26 regulations, this Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or
27 in a newspaper of general circulation.

28 *Approved*