



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4286



Introduced by Representative **ANTONINO B. ROMAN III**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

One of the most pressing challenges in Philippine public education today is the shortage of qualified and empowered school leaders. Thousands of principal positions remain vacant, leaving teachers-in-charge or designated officers to shoulder leadership responsibilities without proper authority, training, or compensation. This leadership vacuum contributes to inefficiency in school management, low morale among teachers, and missed opportunities to improve student learning outcomes.

Past legislative measures have attempted to address these gaps. House Bill No. 11432 (19th Congress) sought to mandate the immediate filling of principal vacancies, recognizing that leadership gaps hinder school operations. Senate Bill No. 3000 and House Bill No. 10270 proposed a career progression system for teachers and school leaders, aiming to provide professional pathways to principalship. These measures underscored the importance of strong school leadership but largely focused on two aspects: (a) filling vacant items, and (b) promoting career mobility.

This proposed measure builds upon and strengthens those earlier efforts by taking a comprehensive, systemic approach to school leadership development and support.

First, it institutionalizes a School Leadership Pipeline, enabling qualified educators — particularly Master Teachers and those with proven leadership potential — to undergo targeted training, mentoring, and fast-track preparation for the principalship examination, in coordination with the Civil Service Commission (CSC). This ensures that vacancies are filled by competent and well-prepared leaders.

Second, it provides sustainable support mechanisms for principals and school heads, including the creation of Assistant Principal items in large schools (subject to Department of Budget and Management [DBM] standards and funding availability), continuing professional development, mental health and wellness programs, and administrative assistance. Unlike previous bills, this measure recognizes that leadership is not merely about occupying a position but about ensuring that the individual in that role is adequately supported to succeed.

Third, it mandates a clear accountability and oversight framework. The Department of Education (DepEd) shall submit an Annual School Leadership Report to Congress and

the DBM, detailing principal vacancies, appointments, training programs, funding utilization, and challenges encountered. A joint Congressional oversight hearing is required to ensure that progress is monitored, problems are addressed, and compliance is considered in evaluating DepEd's annual budget.

Fourth, the bill strengthens the funding framework by establishing a dedicated School Leadership Development Fund under DepEd's budget, ensuring resources for training, professional development, and support services. Importantly, this measure also amends Section 272 of Republic Act No. 7160, otherwise known as the Local Government Code of 1991, to expand the allowable uses of the Special Education Fund (SEF). At present, SEF spending is limited to operations, infrastructure, books, and sports development. By expressly allowing SEF allocations for school leadership training, professional development, and related support activities, this bill empowers Local Government Units (LGUs) and their Local School Boards to invest in the quality of school leadership — a critical but previously neglected dimension of education reform.

By ensuring that both national appropriations and local education resources may lawfully be used for leadership development, this measure addresses not only the vacancy backlog but also the quality and sustainability of school leadership. With stronger principals come stronger schools, better-supported teachers, and improved learning outcomes for Filipino children.

Immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Antonino B. Roman III', with a stylized flourish at the end.

ANTONINO B. ROMAN III



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AN ACT
STRENGTHENING SCHOOL LEADERSHIP IN BASIC EDUCATION BY
ESTABLISHING A SCHOOL LEADERSHIP PIPELINE, SUPPORT
MECHANISMS, AND ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK, AMENDING
SECTION 272 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7160, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE
LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE OF 1991, 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 “School Leadership Development and Support Act of 2025.”

SECTION. 2. Declaration of Policy. - It is the policy of the State to ensure that every public school is led by a competent, qualified, and fully supported school head. The State recognizes that strong school leadership directly influences teacher performance, student learning outcomes, and the overall quality of basic education. To this end, the State shall institutionalize a comprehensive leadership pipeline, provide support systems to school heads, and establish accountability mechanisms for the effective and efficient management of public schools.

SECTION. 3. School Leadership Development Program. – The Department of Education (DepEd) shall establish and implement a School Leadership Development Program that shall include the following:

- a. Leadership Pipeline – Creation of a systematic pathway for qualified educators, particularly Master Teachers and those with demonstrated leadership potential, to undergo training, mentoring, and fast-track eligibility preparation for principalship;
- b. Mandatory Training and Certification – Standardized leadership and management training programs for aspiring and newly appointed principals, assistant principals, and other school heads;
- c. Assistant Principal Positions – The DepEd, in coordination with the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) and the Civil Service Commission (CSC), shall establish guidelines for the creation of Assistant Principal items in large schools, subject to approved staffing standards, position classification, and availability of

funds under the General Appropriations Act (GAA);

- d. Support Mechanisms – Provision of continuing professional development, mental health programs, and administrative assistance for school heads to ensure effective and sustainable leadership;
- e. Annual School Leadership Report – The DepEd shall submit to Congress and the DBM an Annual School Leadership Report not later than March 31 of every year.

The report shall include:

1. The total number of principal items nationwide, broken down by region and division;
2. The number of filled and unfilled principal items, including reasons for vacancies;
3. The number of newly created and filled Assistant Principal positions;
4. Training and professional development programs conducted, and the number of participants;
5. Utilization of funds appropriated under this Act; and
6. Challenges encountered and recommendations for improvement.

SECTION. 4. Elimination of Vacancy Backlog. - The DepEd shall, within three (3) years from the effectivity of this Act, [MODIFIED: clarified language] take all feasible steps to substantially eliminate the existing backlog of unfilled principal items in all public schools, subject to the creation of new plantilla positions by DBM, compliance with CSC qualification standards, and availability of appropriations under the GAA.

SECTION. 5. Appropriations. – The amount necessary to implement this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the Department of Education under the General Appropriations Act (GAA). Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for its continued implementation shall be included in the annual GAA.

For this purpose, a School Leadership Development Fund is hereby established within the DepEd budget to finance training, professional development, mental health and wellness programs, and administrative support for school heads.

The creation of new plantilla positions such as Assistant Principals shall be subject to the approval of DBM in accordance with existing budgeting, staffing, and compensation laws.

SECTION 6. Local Government Support and SEF Amendment. - Local Government Units (LGUs), through their Local School Boards, may allocate a portion of their Special Education Fund (SEF) to support school leadership training, professional development, and related support activities.

For this purpose, Section 272 of RA 7160, otherwise known as the Local Government Code of 1991, is hereby amended to read as follows:

SECTION 272. Application of Proceeds of the Additional One Percent SEF

Tax. – The proceeds from the additional one percent (1%) tax on real property accruing to the Special Education Fund (SEF) shall be automatically released to the local school boards: Provided, That, in case of provinces, the proceeds shall be divided equally between the provincial and municipal school boards: Provided, however, That the proceeds shall be allocated for the operation and maintenance of public schools, construction and repair of school buildings, facilities and equipment, educational research, purchase of books and periodicals, and sports development. It may likewise be allocated to support school leadership training, professional development, and related support activities as determined and approved by the local school board.

The DepEd, in consultation with the DBM, the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), and the Commission on Audit (COA), shall issue guidelines on the proper utilization, accounting, and auditing of SEF allocations for this purpose.

SECTION 7. Implementing Rules and Regulations. - Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DepEd, in consultation with the CSC, DBM, DILG, COA, and relevant stakeholders, shall promulgate the rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act. Such IRR shall include the standards, timelines, and reporting mechanisms to ensure compliance with the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 8. Congressional Oversight. - The House of Representatives Committee on Basic Education and Culture and the Senate Committee on Basic Education shall conduct a joint oversight hearing on the Annual School Leadership Report within sixty (60) days from its submission.

During such hearings, the DepEd shall present progress toward eliminating the backlog of principal vacancies, utilization of appropriated funds, and outcomes of training and support programs. Congress may recommend measures, including budgetary adjustments, to ensure compliance with the objectives of this Act. Failure of the DepEd to substantially comply with the provisions of this Act shall be considered in the evaluation of its annual budget proposal.

SECTION 9. Separability Clause. – If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the validity of the remaining provisions shall not be affected.

SECTION 10. Repealing Clause. – All laws, decrees, orders, and regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 11. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,