



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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 5272

Introduced by **Representative KATRINA REIKO CHUA - TAI**
1st District, Zamboanga City

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Classrooms shape our country's future. Students deserve quality education in safe, supportive spaces that protect their health and dignity. Yet thousands of public schools in the Philippines still lack basic Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) facilities. This gap exposes children to unsafe conditions that directly affect learning, growth, and well-being.

Poor sanitation has clear, serious effects. In a Metro Manila survey of students aged 10 to 15, over 28% had diarrhoea and 68% were dehydrated. The study also found 15% of students were stunted, 9% undernourished, and 21% overnourished, highlighting health disparities. Nationally, 28.4% of school-aged children have soil-transmitted helminths (intestinal worms), exceeding global averages. Nearly 29% of Filipino children are stunted. Only 39% of Filipino students have access to single-sex, usable sanitation facilities in schools. In 2019, 86% of diarrhea-related deaths in the country were linked to poor WASH access.

These problems cause millions of lost school days, lower learning outcomes, and long-term health issues. Poor sanitation and hygiene harm both physical health and access to education. Students who are often ill, dehydrated, or who avoid unsanitary bathrooms miss class or struggle to focus. This leads to frequent absences, lower performance, and lost opportunities, mainly for vulnerable students.

This proposed bill ensures every child has access to a safe, quality education by requiring the government to allocate dedicated funds for constructing, upgrading, and maintaining WASH facilities in all public schools. It also establishes regular monitoring and evaluation to guarantee these facilities remain safe, functional, and child-friendly.

Prioritizing hygiene in schools reduces illness-related absences, increases participation, and boosts student energy. Healthy, comfortable children pay more attention and engage better. Improved WASH conditions globally lead to a decrease in school absences. Better hygiene also improves nutrition and physical development by reducing infections and enhancing nutrient absorption, which is essential for reducing stunting among Filipino children.

Clean, private, and gender-sensitive restrooms protect the dignity of all students, especially girls and children with special needs. They also help prevent dropouts. Proper school sanitation instills lifelong habits of cleanliness, responsibility, and environmental care, fostering a culture of health and civic duty within communities.

Building WASH infrastructure brings major long-term economic benefits. Healthier students lower healthcare costs, reduce learning disruptions, and join a more productive workforce. The Philippine Institute for Development Studies estimates inadequate WASH services cost the nation hundreds of billions of pesos each year.

Let's teach our students to live clean and healthy lives. By giving them knowledge, dignity, and safety, we build a better Philippines, one pair of clean hands at a time.

IN VIEW OF THE FOREGOING, immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



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AN ACT

MANDATING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (DepEd) AND THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS (DPWH) TO ALLOCATE FUNDS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF WATER, SANITATION, AND HYGIENE (WASH) AREAS IN ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS NATIONWIDE, 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 “WASH Public School Act.”

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote public health, ensure access to clean water and sanitation, and instill values of cleanliness, environmental responsibility, and good citizenship among the youth. In recognition of every child's right to health and a conducive learning environment, the State shall provide adequate facilities in all public schools to support hygiene education and practice.

SECTION 3. Construction of WASH Areas in Public Schools. - The Department of Education (DepEd), in coordination with the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and the Department of Health (DOH), is hereby mandated to oversee and ensure the construction, rehabilitation, or upgrading of Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) facilities in all public elementary and secondary schools across the country. This inter-agency collaboration shall ensure that WASH infrastructure is implemented effectively, in accordance with national standards and health guidelines, and within a timeframe that prioritizes the most underserved areas.

Each WASH area shall include, but not be limited to, the following essential components:

- Handwashing stations with access to clean and safe running water and soap to promote regular hygiene practices among students and staff;
- Gender-sensitive, accessible, and child-friendly toilets that provide privacy and dignity for all learners, including girls and students with disabilities;

- 1 • Proper drainage systems and waste disposal mechanisms to maintain sanitary
2 conditions and reduce environmental health risks within school premises;
3 • Water supply systems capable of supporting the daily hygienic and sanitation needs of
4 the entire school population.

5 These provisions shall be implemented with consideration for local contexts and
6 environmental sustainability, and must adhere to child protection, safety, and inclusivity
7 standards at all times.

8 **SECTION 4. Appropriations.** – An initial fund shall be appropriated from the current
9 budget of the Department of Education and the Department of Public Works and Highways.
10 Thereafter, the amount necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included
11 in the annual General Appropriations Act (GAA).

12 Priority shall be given to geographically isolated, disadvantaged, and conflict-affected
13 areas (GIDCA), and to schools with no existing or substandard sanitation facilities.

14 **SECTION 5. Implementation and Monitoring.** – DepEd shall develop the necessary
15 implementing rules and guidelines within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act. It
16 shall also include hygiene education as part of the school curriculum to instill habits of
17 cleanliness and environmental responsibility among students.

18 An annual report on the status of WASH facilities shall be submitted to Congress to
19 ensure transparency and accountability.

20 **SECTION 6. Separability Clause.** – If any of the sections or provisions of this Act is
21 held invalid, all other provisions not affected thereby shall remain valid.

22 **SECTION 7. Repealing Clause.** – All laws, decrees, issuances, rules and regulations
23 inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

24 **SECTION 8. Effectivity Clause.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
25 complete publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

26 *Approved,*