



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS

First Regular Session

House Bill No. 5416



Introduced by Representative Jernie Jett V. Nisay

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The proposed Last Mile Schools Act seeks to address the persistent educational disparities faced by learners in geographically isolated, disadvantaged, and conflict-affected areas (GIDCA). Despite government efforts to expand access to education, many children, particularly those from Indigenous Cultural Communities (ICCs) and Indigenous Peoples (IPs), remain deprived of basic learning opportunities due to distance, inadequate facilities, and lack of resources.¹ This bill establishes public basic education schools in these underserved areas, ensuring that every Filipino child can exercise their constitutional right to quality education.

In addition to establishing schools, the bill mandates the construction of access roads and provision of essential services, including electricity and information and communications technology, in coordination with relevant national government agencies such as the DPWH, DOE, NEA, and DICT. These interventions aim to remove physical and infrastructural barriers to learning and facilitate uninterrupted access to education, particularly in Last Mile Schools where conventional access is limited or highly challenging.²

The criteria for identifying Last Mile Schools prioritize schools with limited classrooms, multigrade classes, fewer teachers, and high percentages of IP learners, as well as those lacking basic facilities or located in hard-to-reach areas. The program's implementation is designed to be inclusive, respecting the rights and cultural practices of ICCs and IPs, and involves close collaboration with the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), local government units, and other concerned agencies.³ Through this approach, the bill seeks to ensure that interventions are culturally sensitive, sustainable, and aligned with national education development goals.

This proposed bill not only expands equitable access to education but also invests in the long-term development of marginalized communities, thereby promoting

¹ Republic of the Philippines. (1997). The Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of 1997 (RA 8371). <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph>

² Department of Education. (2020). Basic Education Facilities Inventory Report. <https://www.deped.gov.ph>

³ National Commission on Indigenous Peoples. (2018). Policy Guidelines on the Recognition and Protection of Indigenous Peoples. <https://www.ncip.gov.ph>

⁴ World Bank. (2019). Improving access to education in remote and disadvantaged areas: The Philippines. World Bank Group. <https://www.worldbank.org>

1 social inclusion, improving literacy, and empowering learners to achieve their full
2 potential in line with national development objectives.⁴

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

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REP. JERNIE JETT V. NISAY
Pusong Pinoy Partylist



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AN ACT
ESTABLISHING PUBLIC BASIC EDUCATION SCHOOLS IN GEOGRAPHICALLY
ISOLATED AND DISADVANTAGED AND CONFLICT-AFFECTED AREAS,
PROVIDING ACCESS ROADS LEADING TO LAST MILE SCHOOLS, AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

CHAPTER I
GENERAL PROVISIONS

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the *Act shall be known as the “Last Mile Schools Act”*.

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the declared policy of the State to protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels, and take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all.

The State recognizes and promotes the rights of Indigenous Cultural Communities within the framework of national unity and development. To this end, the State shall recognize the right of indigenous families and communities to retain shared responsibility for upbringing, training, education and well-being of their children, consistent with the rights of the child.

1 The State shall improve the quality and access to basic education of children in
2 the far-flung, isolated, disadvantaged and conflict-affected areas, as well as those in
3 Last Mile Schools, by investing on school infrastructures and roads leading to the said
4 public schools.
5

6 **SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms*** – As used in this Act:
7

8 (a) *Basic education* refers to the intended basic learning needs which provide
9 the foundation on which subsequent learning can be based. It includes
10 kindergarten, elementary and secondary education as well as alternative
11 learning systems for out-of-school learners and those with special needs;
12

13 (b) *Basic Education School* refers to learning institutions accredited by the
14 Department of Education (DepEd) to deliver services addressing the
15 intended basic learning needs of students;
16

17 (c) *Indigenous Cultural Communities (ICCs)/Indigenous Peoples (IPs)* refer
18 to the same definition stated in Section 3h, Chapter 2 of Republic Act No.
19 8371, or “The Indigenous Peoples’ Rights Act of 1997”, which describes
20 it as “group of people or homogenous societies identified by self-ascription
21 and ascription by others, who have continuously lived as organized
22 community on communally bounded and defined territory, and who have,
23 under claims of ownership since time immemorial, occupied, possessed
24 and utilized such territories, sharing common bonds of language,
25 customs, traditions and other distinctive cultural traits, or who have,
26 through resistance to political, social and cultural inroads of colonization,
27 non-indigenous religions and cultures, became historically differentiated
28 from the majority of Filipinos. ICCs/IPs shall likewise include peoples who
29 are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the
30 populations which inhabited the country, at the time of conquest or
31 colonization, or at the time of inroads of non-indigenous religions and
32 cultures, or the establishment of present state boundaries, who retain
33 some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions,

1 but who may have been displaced from their traditional domains or who
2 may have resettled outside their ancestral domains”; and
3

4 (d) *Last Mile Schools* refer to public basic education schools with gaps in
5 resources and facilities which are located in geographically isolated and
6 disadvantaged and conflict-affected areas (GIDCA).
7

8 **SEC. 4. Establishment of Last Mile Schools.** – The Last Mile Schools are
9 hereby established, under the administration of the DepEd, to cater to the basic
10 education of learners throughout the country’s GIDCA.
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12 The establishment of Last Mile Schools in locations situated by the ICCs shall
13 be undertaken in consideration of the rights of the IPs, in accordance with Republic Act
14 No. 8371.
15

16 **SEC. 5. Access to Education.** – The DepEd shall collaborate with concerned
17 national government agencies for the delivery of the infrastructures necessary to
18 ensure access to education in the Last Mile Schools, namely:
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- 20 (a) Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), for the construction
21 of access roads leading to the location of Last Mile Schools;
22 (b) Department of Energy (DOE) and National Electrification Administration
23 (NEA), for the installation of electricity; and
24 (c) Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), for
25 the installation of information and communications technology.
26

27 **SEC. 6. Criteria.** – The indicators used in identifying a public school to be
28 included among the Last Mile Schools are the following:
29

- 30 (a) Having less than four (4) classrooms;
31 (b) With makeshift or nonstandard rooms;
32 (c) Absence of or irregular electricity;
33 (d) Have not been allocated funds for repairs or new construction projects in
34 the last four (4) years unless destroyed;

- 1 (e) With travel distance of more than one hour from the center of a city or
2 municipality, or with difficulty of terrain or of such nature as to be
3 considered having difficulty of access to existing educational institutions;
4 (f) Having multigrade classes or rooms;
5 (g) With less than five (5) teachers;
6 (h) Having a student population of less than one hundred (100) learners;
7 (i) With more than seventy-five percent (75%) IP learners; and
8 (j) Having such other circumstances that make it difficult for learners to
9 access school facilities.

10
11 **SEC. 7. Implementation.** – The school building program for the Last Mile
12 Schools shall be established and completed within a period of five (5) years after the
13 effectivity of this Act.

14
15 To facilitate synchronicity, harmony and complementarity of plans, resources
16 and efforts of both the national government and the local government units (LGUs)
17 towards the attainment of the objectives of this Act, the DepEd shall plan and implement
18 the programs, projects, and activities that address the needs of the Last Mile Schools,
19 in coordination and collaboration with the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples
20 (NCIP), DPWH, DICT, DOE, NEA, Department of Social Welfare and Development
21 (DSWD), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), National
22 Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), and concerned LGUs.

23
24 **SEC. 8. Appropriations.** – The amount necessary for the implementation of this
25 Act shall be included in the budgets of the concerned Departments, agencies and
26 Government-Owned and Controlled Corporations in the annual General Appropriations
27 Act.

28
29 **SEC. 9. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** – Within ninety (90) days from
30 the approval of this Act, the Secretary of Education shall, in consultation with the NCIP,
31 DPWH, DICT, DOE, NEA, DSWD, DENR, NDRRMC, and Union of Local Authorities of
32 the Philippines, formulate the rules and regulations implementing the provisions of this
33 Act.

1 **SEC. 10. *Separability Clause.*** – If any provision of this Act is held invalid or
2 unconstitutional, the other provisions not so declared shall remain in force and effect.

3
4 **SEC. 11. *Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, decrees, orders and rules and
5 regulations contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed
6 or amended accordingly.

7
8 **SEC. 12. *Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
9 publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

10
11 Approved,