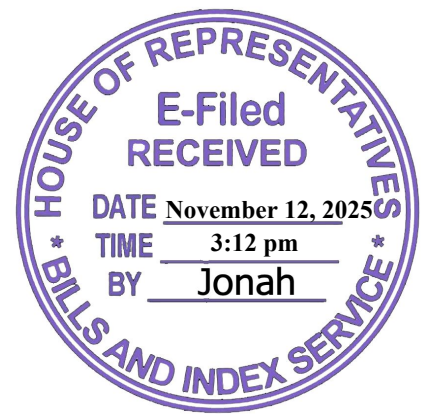


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Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Philippines

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 5923



INTRODUCED BY REP. MARCELINO "MARCY" R. TEODORO

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The right to quality basic education is enshrined in the 1987 Constitution, which mandates the State to protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and to take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all.

Despite significant progress in expanding access to education, thousands of Filipino learners remain excluded due to geographic isolation, poverty, and conflict. The Department of Education (DepEd) identified over 7,000 "Last Mile Schools" (LMS)—small, remote schools in geographically isolated, disadvantaged, and conflict-affected areas (GIDCA) that often lack classrooms, electricity, internet connectivity, and qualified teachers. These schools serve some of the most vulnerable learners, including Indigenous Peoples (IPs), who face the steepest barriers to education.

To address this, the Last Mile Schools Program was launched in 2019, and Congress introduced measures in the 18th and 19th Congresses to institutionalize it. House Bill 10823 passed on Third Reading in the 19th Congress, proposing a five-year roadmap for school construction and access roads. However, implementation challenges—such as slow project delivery, lack of electrification and connectivity, and weak inter-agency coordination—have persisted. The Commission on Audit flagged delays, noting that only a fraction of the targeted LMS was completed by 2023. Meanwhile, new opportunities have emerged. In 2025, DepEd and the National Electrification Administration (NEA) launched a joint initiative to energize 295 LMS using solar and hybrid systems, while the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) expanded its Free Public Internet Access Program to remote schools. These developments underscore the need for a comprehensive, institutionalized framework that integrates school infrastructure, access roads, electrification, and internet connectivity, backed by strong governance and accountability mechanisms.

This proposed measure, the "Last Mile Schools Act of 2025," builds on lessons from previous Congresses and introduces critical innovations:

1. Institutionalization of the LMS Program within DepEd, with a Five-Year Rolling Plan updated annually.
2. Creation of an Inter-Agency Council (DepEd, DPWH, NEA, DICT, NCIP, LGUs, and others) to ensure convergence in school building, road construction, electrification, and connectivity.

1 3. Results-based milestones tied to fund releases, verified by third-party auditors, to prevent
2 delays and ensure accountability.

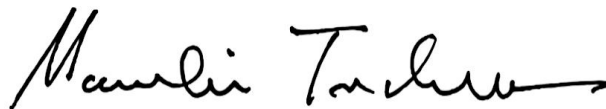
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4 4. Policy hooks for electrification and internet connectivity, mandating NEA and DICT to
5 integrate LMS into their national plans and service-level agreements.

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7 5. Community participation and IP safeguards, including School Community Agreements
8 and Free and Prior Informed Consent where applicable.

9
10 6. Transparency and monitoring, through an open LMS dashboard and annual reporting to
11 Congress.

12
13 By institutionalizing these reforms, this Act seeks to eliminate the physical, digital, and
14 social barriers that prevent thousands of Filipino children from attending school. It ensures that
15 every learner—regardless of geography, ethnicity, or economic status—has access to safe,
16 connected, and fully functional schools.

17
18 In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.

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22 **MARCELINO " MARCY" R. TEODORO**

23 *Representative*

24 1st District, Marikina City
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Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 5923

INTRODUCED BY REP. MARCELINO "MARCY" R. TEODORO

AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING THE LAST MILE SCHOOLS PROGRAM AND
ESTABLISHING PUBLIC BASIC EDUCATION SCHOOLS IN
GEOGRAPHICALLY ISOLATED, DISADVANTAGED, AND CONFLICT-
AFFECTED AREAS

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

SECTION 1. Title. This Act shall be known as the “Last Mile Schools Act of 2025.”

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. The State shall protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality basic education. It shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all, especially learners in geographically isolated, disadvantaged, and conflict-affected areas (GIDCA). Toward this end, the State shall institutionalize a results-driven Last Mile Schools Program that (a) establishes and upgrades schools; (b) builds and maintains safe access roads; (c) secures reliable electricity and internet connectivity; and (d) deploys and supports teachers, with full community participation and transparent monitoring.

SEC. 3. Definition of Terms. As used in this Act:

(a) Last Mile School (LMS) refers to a public basic education school located in GIDCA which typically has any of the following indicators: fewer than four (4) classrooms; makeshift or non-standard rooms; absence of electricity; more than one (1) hour travel from the town center or rugged terrain; multigrade classes; fewer than five (5) teachers; fewer than one hundred (100) learners; and/or with seventy-five percent (75%) or more Indigenous Peoples (IP) learners.

(b) GIDCA refers to geographically isolated, disadvantaged, and conflict-affected areas as determined by the Department of Education (DepEd), in consultation with the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), and relevant agencies.

(c) Access Roads refer to farm-to-market, barangay, municipal, or provincial roads, or footbridges and river crossings that connect learners and teachers to LMS.

(d) Electrification refers to the provision of grid extension or off-grid solutions (e.g., solar PV with battery storage) to power LMS facilities.

(e) Connectivity refers to the provision of broadband internet access to LMS through terrestrial, satellite, or hybrid solutions meeting minimum service standards set by the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) and the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC).

SEC. 4. *Establishment of the Last Mile Schools Program.* The LMS Program is hereby institutionalized within DepEd to plan, establish, upgrade, and sustain LMS, including associated access roads, electrification, and internet connectivity.

SEC. 5. *Governance and Institutional Arrangements.* The Department of Education (DepEd) shall be the lead implementing agency. An LMS Inter-Agency Council (LMS-IAC) is hereby created to be chaired by the DepEd Secretary with the following members: Secretaries of DPWH, DICT, DILG, NCIP, DOTr (as needed), DBM, NEDA; the Administrator of the National Electrification Administration (NEA); and representatives of the League of Provinces/Cities/Municipalities and Liga ng mga Barangay.

The Council shall:

- (a) Approve the LMS Five-Year Rolling Plan and annual targets;
- (b) Issue joint guidelines on site selection, design standards, financing, procurement, data sharing, and maintenance;
- (c) Resolve bottlenecks and coordinate inter-agency actions.

The DepEd shall establish a central PMO and regional PMOs with (i) engineering, (ii) electrification/connectivity, (iii) social safeguards and IP engagement, (iv) M&E, and (v) procurement/contract management units.

Provincial, Municipal, or City LMS Committees shall be established as LGU-led committees, collaborating with DepEd Schools Division Offices, DPWH District Engineering Office, electric cooperatives/private utilities, the DICT field office, and community representatives, to supervise local delivery and Operations and Maintenance.

SEC. 6. *Planning, Targeting, and Land.* Within six (6) months from the effectivity of this Act, DepEd shall adopt a Five-Year Rolling Plan that identifies LMS sites, access roads, electrification and connectivity solutions, teacher needs, and costed packages, with annual updates.

All sites shall have documentary proof of land ownership or rights (e.g., deed of donation, usufruct, or title) compliant with IPRA and other laws. DepEd, in coordination with DENR, NCIP, and LGUs, shall expedite site acquisition and the issuance of tenurial instruments.

Priorities shall include: (1) unserved or underserved barangays; (2) high share of IP and poverty; (3) longest travel time; (4) disaster or climate risk considerations.

SEC. 7. *Infrastructure Standards.* The following standards in establishing infrastructure shall apply:

1 (a) School Facilities — LMS designs shall be climate-resilient, disability-inclusive, gender-
2 responsive, and adaptable for multigrade and flexible learning modalities, with Water,
3 Sanitation, and Hygiene facilities and learning resource rooms.

4
5 (b) Access Roads — DPWH shall plan, design, build, and maintain access roads and
6 bridges in accordance with national standards, with nature-based solutions where viable.

7
8 (c) Electrification — NEA, with electric cooperatives (ECs) or distribution utilities (DUs)
9 and DepEd, shall energize LMS through grid extension or qualified off-grid solutions (e.g.,
10 solar PV + batteries, microgrids) with warranties and O&M arrangements.

11
12 (d) Connectivity — DICT, with NTC and DepEd, shall deliver reliable internet to LMS
13 through fiber, fixed wireless, satellite, or hybrid backhaul, meeting minimum
14 bandwidth/latency standards per classroom and admin office.

15
16 **SEC. 8. *Teacher Deployment and Support.*** DepEd shall deploy and incentivize teachers to
17 LMS through hazard pay allowances, housing support where feasible, professional
18 development, and safety protocols, prioritizing culturally responsive pedagogy for IP learners.

19
20 **SEC. 9. *Community Participation and Social Safeguards.*** The following shall be observed to
21 ensure stakeholder participation and protect communities.

22
23 (a) School Community Agreements. — Prior to civil works, a School Community
24 Agreement (SCA) signed by the School Division Office, LGU, elders or IP leaders, and
25 parents' associations shall set roles in the build and O&M phases.

26
27 (b) Indigenous Peoples Engagement. — Where applicable, free and prior informed consent
28 (FPIC) shall be obtained per IPRA. Materials shall be culturally appropriate and in the
29 mother tongue.

30
31 (c) Grievance Redress. — A multi-channel LMS grievance mechanism (on-site log,
32 hotline, SMS, online portal) shall be maintained by the PMO and LGUs, with response
33 Service Level Agreements.

34
35 **SEC. 10. *Electrification and Connectivity Policy Hooks.***

36
37 (a) NEA Mandate — NEA shall integrate LMS into annual and medium-term
38 electrification plans and may approve capital subsidies to ECs/DUs for LMS energization,
39 including solar/battery systems with O&M service contracts of not less than five (5) years.

40
41 (b) DICT Mandate — DICT shall include LMS in the National Broadband Plan and the
42 Free Public Internet Access Program, may enter into bulk capacity and service-level
43 agreements (SLAs) with private providers, and shall fund last-mile links and campus
44 networks.

45
46 (c) Joint Standards — NEA and DICT, with DepEd and NTC, shall issue joint standards
47 on power quality, network uptime, cybersecurity, content filtering, and device
48 compatibility for LMS.

SEC. 11. Results-Based Milestones and Fund Releases. Appropriations under this Act shall be released in tranches tied to verifiable milestones:

(a) Tranche 1 (20%): Land secured; SCA signed; designs completed and cleared.

(b) Tranche 2 (35%): Civil works 50% complete; access road contract awarded; electrification solution contracted.

(c) Tranche 3 (35%): School and road substantially complete; power commissioned; internet live meeting standards.

(d) Tranche 4 (10%): Occupancy permit issued; teachers deployed; O&M plans and community handover completed.

Third-party verification (TPV) by the COA and accredited independent engineers shall validate milestones prior to subsequent releases.

SEC. 12. Procurement and Delivery Options. DepEd or DPWH may use: (a) design-and-build; (b) framework agreements; (c) lot bundling of sites; (d) community participation in procurement for micro-works; and (e) emergency negotiated procurement post-disaster, subject to existing laws and COA rules. Performance securities, liquidated damages, and blacklisting guidelines shall be strictly applied.

SEC. 13. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Transparency. The DepEd shall maintain an open LMS dashboard, a real-time public dashboard that displays site status, funds, contractors, photos, geo-tags, power or connectivity uptime, and school performance indicators. DepEd shall integrate LMS schools into national learning assessments and targeted remedial programs.

DepEd shall submit to Congress an annual LMS report covering physical and financial progress, learning outcomes (attendance, dropout, reading/math indicators), teacher deployment, road pass ability days, power and internet uptime, and grievance statistics.

SEC. 14. Funding and Appropriations. The amount necessary to carry out this Act shall be charged against the current year's appropriations of DepEd, DPWH, NEA, and DICT. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act (GAA). The DBM shall establish a program code to track LMS expenditures across all agencies.

SEC. 15. Incentives to LGUs and Providers. LGUs that (a) secure land; (b) co-fund road segments; (c) implement O&M; and (d) achieve agreed service standards shall be eligible for performance grants. Providers achieving high uptime or quality may qualify for performance bonuses per DICT and NEA guidelines.

SEC. 16. Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR). Within ninety (90) days from effectivity, the LMS-IAC shall promulgate the IRR, including the Results Framework, milestone verification protocols, and joint standards for electrification and connectivity.

SEC. 17. Oversight. The House Committee on Basic Education and Culture and the Senate Committee on Basic Education shall exercise oversight and may call agencies to report semi-annually.

1 **SEC. 18. *Separability Clause.*** If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the
2 remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect.
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4 **SEC. 19. *Repealing Clause.*** All laws, decrees, orders, and issuances inconsistent herewith are
5 hereby repealed or modified accordingly.
6
7 **SEC. 20. *Effectivity.*** This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the
8 Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.
9
10 **Approved.**
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