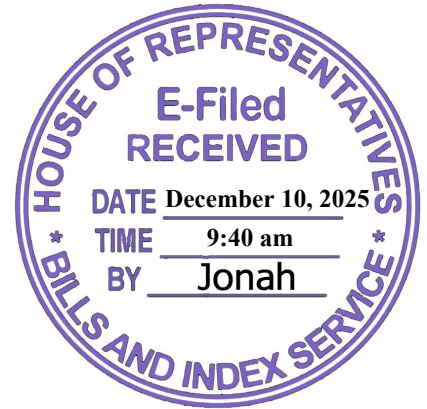




Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 6745



Introduced by Representatives Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez, Yedda Marie K. Romualdez, Andrew Julian K. Romualdez and Jude A. Acidre

AN ACT

RENAMING THE LITERACY COORDINATING COUNCIL TO NATIONAL LITERACY COUNCIL, STRENGTHENING ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS, EXPANDING ITS MEMBERSHIP STRUCTURE AND SUPPORT MECHANISMS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, REPEALING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7165, AS AMENDED

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Literacy is a fundamental element of national development, empowering citizens to participate fully in social, economic, and political life. In the Philippines, significant gains have been made through formal and nonformal education programs; however, many Filipinos, particularly in remote and marginalized communities, continue to face barriers to achieving functional and digital literacy. With the rapid advancement of technology, shifting labor market needs, and the growing importance of lifelong learning, there is a need for a stronger institutional framework to coordinate and sustain literacy initiatives and ensure that no one is left behind in the country's pursuit of inclusive and equitable progress. The existing Literacy Coordinating Council (LCC), established under Republic Act No. 7165, has long served as the government's literacy policy and coordination arm, but the expanding scope and complexity of literacy development call for an enhanced and empowered body.

This bill seeks to rename the Literacy Coordinating Council as the National Literacy Council (NLC) and to strengthen its powers, functions, and organizational structure. It expands the Council's membership to include broader representation from national government agencies, local government units, and civil society to foster a whole-of-nation approach to literacy governance. The proposed measure mandates the NLC to formulate a National Literacy and Lifelong Learning Framework, oversee the implementation and monitoring of literacy programs, and institutionalize regional and local literacy coordinating bodies to ensure effective delivery of programs on the ground. It also provides for adequate funding support, promotes policy research and innovation, and enhances capacity-building for literacy stakeholders.

Through these reforms, the bill envisions a more inclusive, coordinated, and future-ready national literacy system that upholds every Filipino's right to learn and develop their full potential.

This bill was previously filed and approved on third reading during the 19th Congress.

In view of the foregoing, approval of this bill is earnestly requested.



FERDINAND MARTIN G. ROMUALDEZ



YEDDA MARIE K. ROMUALDEZ



ANDREW JULIAN K. ROMUALDEZ



JUDE A. ACIDRE



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 6745

Introduced by Representatives Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez, Yedda Marie K. Romualdez, Andrew Julian K. Romualdez and Jude A. Acidre

AN ACT
RENAMING THE LITERACY COORDINATING COUNCIL TO
NATIONAL LITERACY COUNCIL, STRENGTHENING ITS POWERS
AND FUNCTIONS, EXPANDING ITS MEMBERSHIP STRUCTURE
AND SUPPORT MECHANISMS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR, REPEALING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO.
7165, AS AMENDED

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 “National Literacy Council Act.”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – Pursuant to Article II, Section 17 of the Constitution, it is the declared policy of the State to give priority to education to foster patriotism and nationalism, accelerate social progress, and promote total human liberation and development. Article XIV, Section 2(4) of the Constitution likewise mandates the State to encourage non- formal, informal, and indigenous

learning systems, as well as self-learning, independent, and out-of-school study programs particularly those that respond to community needs. To this end, the State shall give priority to the adoption of measures for the universalization of literacy.

SEC. 3. *Renaming of the Literacy Coordinating Council.* – The nomenclature of the Literacy Coordinating Council, established pursuant to Republic Act No. 7165, as amended, entitled “An Act Creating the Literacy Coordinating Council, Defining Its Powers and Functions, Appropriating Funds Therefor, and for Other Purposes”, is hereby changed to National Literacy Council, herein referred to in this Act as the “Council”.

The Council shall serve as the lead inter-agency coordinating and advisory body to the various agencies of the national government, the local government units (LGUs), and the private sector, on matters pertaining to the formulation of policies and the adoption and implementation of measures for the universalization of literacy. The Council shall be attached solely for budgetary coordination and related purposes to the Department of Education (DepEd).

SEC. 4. *Composition.* – The Council shall be composed of the following members:

- a) Secretary of the DepEd, as Chairperson, who may designate an undersecretary as permanent representative;
- b) Secretary of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), as co-Chairperson, who may designate an undersecretary as permanent representative;

- c) Secretary of the National Economic and Development Authority, or a duly designated permanent representative;
- d) Director General of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, or a duly designated permanent representative;
- e) Chairperson of the Commission on Higher Education, or a duly designated permanent representative;
- f) Director General of the Philippine Information Agency, or a duly designated permanent representative;
- g) President of the Philippine Normal University, or a duly designated permanent representative;
- h) National Statistician and Civil Registrar General of the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), or a duly designated permanent representative;
- i) Director of the Bureau of Alternative Education (BAE) of the DepEd;
- j) A representative from the non-government organizations (NGOs), who is a citizen of the Philippines with a demonstrated personal or professional commitment and advocacy in the propagation of literacy; and
- k) A representative from the associations of private educational institutions, who is a citizen of the Philippines with a demonstrated personal or professional commitment and advocacy in the propagation of literacy.

The Council shall approve and confirm the appointment of the representative from the NGOs and the representative from the associations of private educational institutions through the adoption of a resolution. Such representatives shall serve for a term of three (3) years, and may be reappointed only once for another three (3) years on the basis of merit and performance.

SEC. 5. *Meetings.* – The Council shall conduct its regular meetings quarterly at any agreed location within the Philippines and may hold special meetings to

consider urgent matters upon the call of the chairperson or a majority of its members. A majority of all its incumbent members shall constitute a quorum, the presence of which is necessary to transact business.

A meeting may be conducted virtually only in circumstances when meeting in person is impossible or impractical and all the Council members are able to communicate adequately during the meeting.

Members of the Council shall serve without compensation, but shall be entitled to appropriate honoraria for attendance in meetings, as well as appropriate allowances and reimbursement of expenses related to their participation in the official activities of the Council, in accordance with pertinent laws, rules and regulations.

The duly designated representatives to the Council shall be afforded equal opportunity to participate in the meetings of the Council, and shall be allowed to vote on any matter in the agenda of the Council. Likewise, they shall be afforded, whenever necessary, reimbursement of any actual expense incurred during Council-related functions and duties, subject to the provisions of existing laws, rules and regulations.

SEC. 6. *Powers and Functions.* – The Council shall be vested with the following powers and functions:

- a) Act as the lead advisory and coordinating body of the government and initiate, promote and recommend the adoption of policy and program directions for all literacy endeavors in the country;

- b) Evaluate the literacy situation in the country, propose ways and means for expanding educational opportunities to citizens of varied socio-economic origins, and adopt modern communications and educational technology and other innovative modes of transmitting knowledge to support literacy endeavors at the national and local levels;
- c) Support and assist the BAE on matters concerning community mapping activities for the maintenance of a centralized database for out-of-school children and adults, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and other marginalized and vulnerable members of society, who may not have availed of or completed their basic education and who may need intervention and support;
- d) Strengthen support structures identified as literacy advocates of LGUs in the city, municipal, and barangay levels, by adopting strategies that maximize private sector support for, cooperation, and involvement in literacy development programs, projects, and related activities;
- e) Promote and support initiatives for the conduct of research studies and similar undertakings aimed at enhancing and strengthening the crafting of relevant and timely policy recommendations, and for the effective implementation of literacy- related programs, projects, and other activities;
- f) Organize periodic assemblies, such as literacy conferences and giving of awards to increase awareness on and help strengthen good literacy practices, and engage close partnerships with literacy advocates throughout the country;
- g) Establish the organizational structure of the Council secretariat and determine the secretariat's staffing pattern, qualifications, duties and responsibilities, and other administrative policies including, among others, those pertaining to hiring and promotion, subject to the guidelines set forth

by the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) and the Civil Service Commission;

- h) Prepare an annual budget proposal and ensure that the allotted annual appropriation shall be spent in accordance with the purposes as specified in the General Appropriations Act;
- i) Formulate necessary guidelines for business continuity, disaster recovery and backup capabilities and facilities to ensure continued operation and delivery of services in times of public health emergency, occurrence of calamity, and any other threat that requires public safety and protection; and
- j) Perform such other functions as may be necessary in furtherance of the purposes of this Act.

SEC. 7. *The Secretariat.* – The secretariat shall be headed by an Executive Director, who shall assist the Council in the performance of its functions.

The salaries of the Executive Director and other officers and employees of the Council secretariat shall be in accordance with the Revised Compensation and Position Classification System and other existing laws.

The existing organizational structure and staffing pattern of the secretariat shall be revised so as to integrate appropriately the provisions of this Act subject to the review and approval by the DBM: *Provided*, That no officer or employee of the existing secretariat shall be removed from the service except for a valid cause, in accordance with Republic Act No. 6656, entitled “An Act to Protect the Security of Tenure of Civil Service Officers and Employees in the Implementation of Government Reorganization.”

SEC. 8. *Duties and Responsibilities of the Secretariat.* – In the performance of its duties and responsibilities, the Council secretariat shall:

- a) Provide administrative and technical support and assistance to the Council, including the preparation of policy recommendations, plans and programs, and other Council priorities and measures necessary for the advancement of basic and functional literacy, and other basic capabilities of out-of-school children and adults, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and other marginalized and vulnerable members of society, who may not have availed of or completed their basic education and who may need intervention and support;
- b) Consult and coordinate with national government agencies, LGUs, NGOs, academic institutions, and other stakeholders on matters relating to the functions of the Council and on other matters pertaining to the propagation of literacy endeavors;
- c) Provide technical assistance to the implementers of the programs and projects on literacy;
- d) Initiate, organize, and promote the conduct of research activities, workshops, conferences, national literacy awards and the like, subject to the approval of the Council;
- e) Set up, maintain, and update a management information system on literacy programs and projects, policies, best practices, research studies, statistical data and other relevant information relative to the literacy situation in the country;
- f) Coordinate with the PSA in the conduct of the Functional Literacy, Education and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS) for purposes of providing a quantitative framework that shall serve as one of the bases in the formulation of policies and programs on the improvement of literacy and education status in the country;

- g) Recommend programs, projects, and other activities to be included for funding in the annual budget proposal of the Council, including support services in the preparation of the Council's annual budget proposal; and
- h) Perform other tasks as may be directed by the Council.

SEC. 9. *Collaboration and Linkages with the BAE.* – The Council shall closely coordinate with the BAE concerning the management of Alternative Learning System (ALS) programs, projects and other activities, especially those that are geared towards the universalization of literacy, particularly among out-of-school children and adults, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and other marginalized and vulnerable members of society. It shall also collaborate with the BAE on matters pertaining to literacy concerns for policy formulation, knowledge management, advocacy, social mobilization, and partnerships, among others.

SEC. 10. *Establishment of Local Literacy Councils.* – The Council shall promote the establishment of Local Literacy Councils (LLC) as support structures at the city, municipal, and barangay levels, which shall serve as the coordinating and advisory body at the local level on matters pertaining to the adoption and implementation of community-based measures for the propagation of literacy.

The LLCs shall work with the LGUs in the implementation of literacy programs and endeavors at the local level, including the identification of priority literacy programs, provision of technical assistance to literacy volunteer workers, program monitoring and evaluation, and coordination with government and non-government partners for program support activities.

An LGU may, *motu proprio* or upon the recommendation of the Council, establish its LLC within its jurisdiction in accordance with the guidelines set forth by the Council.

SEC. 11. *National Literacy Awards.* – The Council shall organize the National Literacy Awards for the purpose of recognizing, commending, and awarding deserving LGUs and NGOs for implementing outstanding literacy programs in their respective jurisdictions within the country.

The National Literacy Awards shall be held once every two (2) years and shall encourage the participation of all literacy advocates and stakeholders nationwide. The event shall serve as the venue to exhibit, discover, share, and help strengthen good literacy practices and thus, engage partnerships with various literacy advocates and stakeholders.

The Council shall formulate the guidelines on the conduct of the National Literacy Awards, including the criteria for the creation of a board of judges per category and the selection of winners.

The board of judges for each category shall be chosen from a panel of experts in the field of literacy and education.

SEC. 12. *Subsidy for Qualified Outstanding Literacy Programs; Outstanding Individual Awards.* – The Council shall award appropriate financial subsidies to the top awardees of the Search for Outstanding Literacy Programs for both LGU and NGO categories to fund their chosen literacy programs in their respective localities: Provided, That the NGO awardees are non-stock, non-profit, and established for educational purposes. The Council shall formulate and issue

guidelines on the release of this financial subsidy including the amount of the award, period and frequency of release of such amounts to the awardees, and conditions or qualifications for entitlement thereto. The amounts of the financial subsidy to qualified awardees may be subject to periodic adjustments, as deemed necessary by the Council.

The Council shall also designate awardees for the Outstanding Individual Literacy Workers and Outstanding ALS Mobile Teachers whose qualifications for entitlement to a financial award and the amount thereof shall be included in the guidelines.

SEC. 13. *Assistance from Special Education Fund.* – Notwithstanding the provisions of Republic Act No. 7160, otherwise known as the “Local Government Code of 1991”, as amended, the LGUs may be authorized to use a portion of the Special Education Fund to augment the funds appropriated by the LGUs for the purpose of implementing literacy-related programs and activities at the local level.

SEC. 14. *Annual Report.* – The Council shall submit to the Senate Committee on Basic Education, Arts and Culture and the House of Representatives’ Committee on Basic Education and Culture a detailed annual report which shall include its accomplishments, programs and projects, and policy recommendations and, if necessary, propose legislation for the universalization and continuing improvement of literacy rate and numeracy skills of learners.

SEC. 15. *Appropriations.* – The initial amount for the implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year’s appropriations of the DepEd.

Thereafter, the funding of which shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 16. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within one hundred twenty (120) days after the effectivity of this Act, the Chairperson of the Council shall, in consultation with the Council members and other concerned stakeholders, promulgate the rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

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

SEC. 18. *Repealing Clause.* – Republic Act No. 7165, entitled, “An Act Creating the Literacy Coordinating Council, Defining Its Powers and Functions, Appropriating Funds Therefor, and for Other Purposes,” as amended by Republic Act No. 10122, entitled, “An Act Strengthening the Literacy Coordinating Council by Amending Republic Act No. 7165, Otherwise Known as ‘An Act Creating the Literacy Coordinating Council, Defining Its Powers and Functions, Appropriating Funds Therefor and for Other Purposes’,” is hereby repealed.

All other laws, decrees, orders, and rules and regulations contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

SEC. 19. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,