

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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **6959**



Introduced by **REP. NATHANIEL “Atty. Nat” M. ODUCAO**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to give the Department of Education (DepEd) the authority to develop and acquire, when necessary, expropriate land to build classrooms for a National School Site Development Plan. The Philippines currently faces a severe shortage of classrooms. Many students are forced to share rooms, attend classes in double or triple shifts, or study in temporary and unsafe spaces. According to DepEd statistics, the national shortage amounts to approximately 165,000 classrooms, with the highest deficits in Calabarzon (31,000), NCR (24,800), and BARMM (13,200). In 2025 alone, of the 1,700 new classrooms planned, only 22 have been completed, 822 are under construction, and 882 has yet to start, highlighting ongoing delays in addressing the shortage. As a result, many learners continue to study in provisional structures or shared rooms, which undermines both the quality of education and the safety and well-being of children.

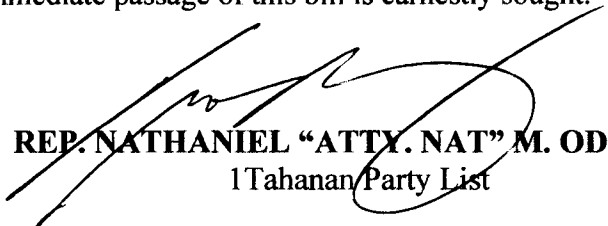
One of the main causes of this shortage is the lack of suitable land for schools. Many public schools operate on small, borrowed, or untitled plots that cannot accommodate additional classrooms, while others cannot expand because nearby land is privately owned or unavailable. Without secure land, even with available funding, classrooms cannot be constructed where they are most needed. The DBM-DepEd Joint Circular No. 2025-2 recognizes the importance of prioritizing school infrastructure projects, including multi-purpose and classroom facilities, in high-need areas.

The shortage of adequate classrooms and educational facilities directly affects student performance. Studies show that overcrowded classrooms, lack of learning materials, and unstable learning environments contribute to lower academic achievement, decreased engagement, and higher dropout rates. When students are forced to study in temporary structures or share limited space, teachers cannot implement effective instructional strategies, and learners struggle to focus and participate fully. Ensuring that schools have sufficient, safe, and well-equipped classrooms is therefore critical not only for access to education but also for improving learning outcomes and nurturing the full potential of every student.

This bill complements existing appropriations and administrative guidance by granting DepEd clear statutory authority to efficiently secure land and, if necessary, exercise expropriation to ensure schools have permanent, safe, and adequate locations for learning, particularly in high-density, rapidly growing, or hazard-prone communities. The bill also requires the creation of a National School Site Development Plan to guide long-term planning, identify areas most in need, and ensure that schools can expand safely as communities grow. By giving DepEd the tools to acquire land and plan strategically, this measure will help reduce classroom shortages, improve learning conditions, and ensure that every child has access to a safe and adequate classroom. This is an essential step toward providing quality education for all Filipino students.

¹ GMA News online (2025) NCR, Calabarzon, BARMM top regions with classroom Shortage – DepEd. Available at <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/topstories/nation/965266/ncr-calabarzon-barmm-top-regions-with-classroom-shortage-deped/story/?> (last accessed December 14, 2025)

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



REP. NATHANIEL "ATTY. NAT" M. ODUCADO
1 Tahanan Party List

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HOUSE BILL NO. **6959**

Introduced by **REP. NATHANIEL “ATTY. NAT” M. ODUCAO**

**AN ACT GRANTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION THE AUTHORITY
TO EXPROPRIATE LAND FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF CLASSROOMS AND
THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SCHOOL SITE PLAN**

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

1 **SECTION 1. *Short Title.*** —This Act shall be known as the “*DepEd Land Expropriation*
2 *for Classroom Construction Act.*”

3 **SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.*** —It is hereby declared the policy of the State to provide
4 accessible, adequate, and safe learning spaces for all learners. To address persistent classroom
5 shortages and the lack of titled and secure school sites, the State hereby strengthens the authority
6 of the Department of Education (DepEd) to acquire and expropriate land necessary for the
7 construction of classrooms and the long-term development of school sites.

8 The State recognizes that the greatest wealth of the Philippines is its people, and that human
9 capital is essential to national development. To fully develop this wealth, every learner must have
10 access to a safe, conducive, and well-equipped learning environment. Providing quality classrooms
11 and educational facilities is therefore not only a matter of access but a critical investment in the
12 intellectual, social, and moral growth of Filipino children, who will become the nation’s future
13 leaders, innovators, and workforce.

14 **SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.*** —For purposes of this Act:

15 a. *Acquisition*—refers to securing land through donation, negotiated sale, transfer, or
16 expropriation.

17
18 b. *Educational Standards*—standards set by DepEd for classroom size, capacity, site
19 suitability, ceiling height, and other educational requirements, including
20 specifications established under DepEd Orders and relevant legislation to ensure
21 safe, comfortable, and conducive learning environments.
22

- 1 c. *Expropriation*—refers to the exercise of eminent domain by DepEd pursuant to
2 existing laws, including Republic Act No. 10752 and the Rules of Court, in order
3 to acquire school sites for public education facilities when negotiation with
4 owners fails or when the site is indispensable to address classroom shortages.
5
6 d. *Infrastructure Standards*—construction, structural, safety, and environmental
7 standards set by the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and
8 DepEd for school buildings and facilities, including provisions for ceiling height,
9 ventilation, and resilience to natural hazards.
10
11 e. *School Site*—refers to land intended for public school facilities, including
12 classrooms, open spaces, and auxiliary infrastructure, which complies with DepEd
13 standards for suitability, safety, and educational adequacy.
14
15 f. *School Site Development Plan*—refers to a multi-year strategic plan identifying
16 present and future land requirements for public education facilities, taking into
17 account DepEd classroom standards, site requirements, and infrastructure
specifications.

18 **SEC. 4. *Authority of the Department of Education to Expropriate Land.***

- 19 a. DepEd is hereby granted the authority to acquire real property needed for the
20 construction, expansion, or improvement of public-school classrooms and related
21 facilities. According to Article VI, Section 17 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution,
22 the exercise of this authority, including the setting of policies, standards, and
23 guidelines for site acquisition, may be delegated by Congress to DepEd, provided
24 that the essential legislative framework and limitations are established by law.
25
26 b. When negotiation fails within a reasonable period, not exceeding sixty (60) days
27 from a written offer, DepEd may initiate expropriation proceedings.
28
29 c. DepEd may expropriate idle, vacant, abandoned, or underutilized lands suitable for
30 educational use when such acquisition is indispensable to address classroom
31 shortages and no reasonable alternative site is available.
32
33 d. Upon filing of the expropriation case and deposit of the amount required under
34 Republic Act No. 10752 or its amendments, DepEd shall be entitled to immediate
35 possession of the property, subject to judicial determination and applicable Rules
36 of Court.
37
38 e. Lands acquired through expropriation shall be titled in the name of the Republic of
39 the Philippines for the use of DepEd.
40
41 f. DepEd shall ensure that acquired sites comply with educational standards, while
42 DPWH shall ensure that all construction and infrastructure comply with
infrastructure standards.

SEC. 5. *Prioritization of Sites for Classroom Construction.* —To address the persistent and critical shortage of classrooms nationwide, the Department of Education (DepEd) shall prioritize the acquisition or expropriation of land for school construction based on the following criteria:

- a. Schools operating on privately owned or borrowed sites — DepEd shall give priority to securing permanent sites for schools currently functioning on leased, borrowed, or untitled land to ensure the safety of students and staff.
- b. Localities with severe classroom shortages —Areas with the most significant gaps between classroom supply and student demand shall be prioritized to maximize the impact of new construction.
- c. High-density or rapidly growing communities — Land acquisition shall consider areas experiencing rapid population growth, urban migration, or increasing student enrollment, where lack of classrooms would exacerbate overcrowding.
- d. Hazard-prone areas — Priority shall be given to relocating schools or constructing new facilities in areas vulnerable to natural hazards, including floods, typhoons, or earthquakes, to safeguard learners and ensure continuity of education.
- e. Government-owned lands suitable for school construction—DepEd shall also prioritize the use of idle, vacant, or underutilized government lands to expedite construction and reduce project delays, while ensuring compliance with educational and infrastructure standards.
- f. Strategic planning alignment—All site acquisition and expropriation shall align with the National School Site Development Plan, ensuring long-term planning, optimal resource use, and sustainable expansion of school facilities.

SEC. 6. *National School Site Development Plan.*

- a. Within one (1) year from the effectivity of this Act, DepEd shall formulate a comprehensive School Site Development Plan covering a period of twenty (20) years.
- b. The Plan shall identify priority locations for classroom construction, land acquisition requirements, site suitability standards, hazard analysis, and annual investment needs.
- c. DepEd shall establish educational standards for school sites, while DPWH shall provide corresponding infrastructure standards for school construction.
- d. The Plan shall be submitted to Congress and updated every two (2) years.

SEC. 7. *Inventory and Titling of Existing School Sites.*

- a. DepEd shall prepare an updated inventory of all existing school sites, including the status of land ownership and land area.

- 1 b. Public lands already occupied by DepEd shall be processed for titling in favor of
2 the republic within one (1) year.
3 c. DENR, LRA, and LGUs shall provide technical assistance and expedited
4 procedures for such titling.

5 **SEC. 8. *Transfer of Government-Owned Lands.*** —National government agencies,
6 GOCCs, and LGUs shall prioritize the transfer of idle, vacant, or underutilized government lands
7 to DepEd for classroom construction, subject to applicable laws.

8 **SEC. 9. *Funding.*** —The amounts necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall
9 be charged against the appropriations of DepEd for school infrastructure. Thereafter, such amounts
10 shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

11 **SEC. 10. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** —DepEd, in coordination with DPWH,
12 DENR, LRA, NEDA, and DILG, shall issue the implementing rules and regulations within ninety
13 (90) days from the effectivity of this Act. The rules shall clearly delineate the responsibilities of
14 DepEd for educational standards and DPWH for infrastructure standards.

15 **SEC. 11. *Separability Clause.*** —If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional,
16 the remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect.

17 **SEC. 12. *Repealing Clause.*** —All laws, decrees, orders, or regulations inconsistent with
18 this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

19 **SEC. 13. *Effectivity Clause.*** —This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication
20 in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

21 *Approved,*