



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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 8211



Introduced by Representatives **ROMAN T. ROMULO & ANTONINO B. ROMAN III**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippine Constitution mandates the State to establish and maintain a system of quality education and to inculcate patriotism, nationalism, and civic values among Filipino youth. Undergirding these constitutional mandates is the recognition that a globally competitive, English-proficient citizenry is indispensable to national development, social equity, and economic sovereignty in the twenty-first century.

In fact, the Philippines built its international reputation on the English proficiency of its workforce. This competitive advantage has historically powered various employment sectors, such as the information technology-business process management (IT-BPM) sector, which generates \$32.5 billion in annual revenues and sustains millions of Filipino families.¹

However, the Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM2) has documented a learning crisis of alarming proportions. Grade 3 proficiency stands at a mere 30.52%, plummeting to 1.36% by Grade 10, and reaching an unconscionable 0.4% by Grade 12—meaning only four in every thousand graduating senior high school students demonstrate workplace-ready competencies² specially those related to communicative competence.

EDCOM2's Year Two Report, titled "Fixing the Foundations: A Matter of National Survival," forewarns that without immediate and systemic intervention, the Philippines faces permanent relegation in global education and labor markets.³

¹ IT & Business Process Association of the Philippines [IBPAP] & Private Sector Advisory Council [PSAC]. (2023). Roadmap to 1 million new jobs by 2028. IBPAP.

² Second Congressional Commission on Education [EDCOM2]. (2026a). Student proficiency rates plunge from 30% in Grade 3 to 0.47% in Grade 12. <https://edcom2.gov.ph/student-proficiency-rates-plunge-from-30-in-grade-3-to-0-47-in-grade-12/>

³ Second Congressional Commission on Education [EDCOM2]. (2026b). EDCOM II releases "Turning Point" report. <https://edcom2.gov.ph/edcom-ii-releases-turning-point-report-unveils-10-year-national-roadmap-to-reverse-education-crisis/>

At 90.9% learning poverty—nine in ten ten-year-olds unable to read with comprehension—the Philippines already ranks worst among ASEAN nations and scored lowest in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2018 reading results globally. The Philippines has simultaneously dropped to 22nd in global English proficiency rankings, imperiling priorities towards the creation of workforce-ready citizens.⁴

A comprehensive scoping study of English as a Subject in Basic Education (ESBE) jointly conducted by the British Council and the National Teachers College identifies systemic root causes: fragmented language policies, non-optimized assessments, 26% of teachers scoring below the B1 level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)—inadequate for producing higher-proficiency students—and curriculum overemphasis on grammar rather than real-world communicative tasks.⁵

Industry data confirm the urgent link between English proficiency and employability. Research demonstrates that English proficiency directly mediates the relationship between educational programs and workplace communication skills, with a growing number of employers requiring CEFR B2 level for workforce entry.⁶

Meanwhile, a number of economies expanding robustly have moved decisively. For instance, Malaysia's TalentCorp, Vietnam's Ministry of Education partnerships, and India's National Skill Development Corporation all coordinate language proficiency standards with workforce development directions—while the Philippines pursues unharmonized and insufficiently funded efforts.

The 415 Special Economic Zones operated by PEZA, SBMA, CDC, and other investment promotion agencies depend fundamentally on English proficiency as their competitive advantage for attracting foreign direct investment. As proficiency deteriorates, SEZ locators face increased training costs and diminished competitiveness, threatening billions of pesos in annual export revenues and the government's ability to attract new zone investors.

This bill establishes the comprehensive legislative architecture needed to arrest this decline and systematically rebuild the English language competencies of Filipino learners at all levels of the educational system. It creates a National English Proficiency Framework aligned with international standards, an English Language Development Authority for coordinated implementation, and mandates evidence-based pedagogy, teacher proficiency standards, and a national assessment system.

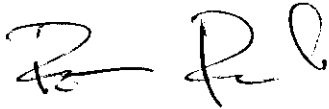
⁴ Second Congressional Commission on Education [EDCOM2]. (2023). EDCOM 2 releases year one report. <https://edcom2.gov.ph/edcom-2-releases-year-one-report/>

⁵ British Council & National Teachers College [NTC]. (2024). Scoping study of English as a subject in basic education (ESBE) in the Philippines. British Council Philippines. <https://www.britishcouncil.ph/programmes/english>

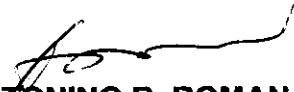
⁶ Cagas, M. A. E. S., Paragat, N. R., Baluyos, G. R., Vallejo, J. H., & Clarin, A. S. (2025). The mediating role of English proficiency in the relationship between job enabling English proficiency (JEEP) program participation and workplace communication. *International Journal of Science and Research Archive*, 17(1), 791-808. <https://doi.org/10.30574/ijrsra.2025.17.1.2855>

This measure recognizes that English proficiency is a strategic national asset—a bridge to opportunity, equity, and global engagement that enables Filipinos, regardless of socioeconomic background, to compete and thrive in a knowledge-driven global economy.

Immediate and favorable passage of this bill is earnestly sought.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R. Romulo', written in a cursive style.

ROMAN T. ROMULO

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Antonino B. Roman III', written in a cursive style.

ANTONINO B. ROMAN III



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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 8211

Introduced by Representatives **ROMAN T. ROMULO & ANTONINO B. ROMAN III**

**AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE NATIONAL ENGLISH PROFICIENCY FRAMEWORK,
CREATING THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY, MANDATING
ENGLISH PROFICIENCY STANDARDS ACROSS ALL LEVELS OF EDUCATION
AND THE WORKFORCE, APPROPRIATING
FUNDS THEREFOR, 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 "National English Proficiency Act" or "NEPA."

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. -- It is the policy of the State to protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education, and to take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all. Pursuant to this mandate, the State recognizes English language proficiency as a strategic national asset essential for individual empowerment, workforce competitiveness, and national economic development in the context of ASEAN integration and global engagement.

The State acknowledges the urgent and systemic decline in the English proficiency of Filipino learners across all educational levels. The Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM2) documents that only 0.4% of Grade 12 students demonstrate workplace-ready competencies, that 48.76% of Grade 3 students cannot read at grade level, and that at 90.9% learning poverty the Philippines ranks worst among ASEAN nations in foundational literacy and lowest in PISA 2018 reading globally. The Philippines has simultaneously dropped to 22nd in global English proficiency rankings, imperiling the IT-BPM industry's goal of one million new jobs by 2028.

To avert permanent relegation in global education and labor markets, the State shall establish a comprehensive national architecture to systematically develop, sustain, and upgrade the English language proficiencies of Filipino learners and workers,

aligned with international standards and responsive to the evolving demands of the national, regional, and global economy.

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

(a) "CEFR" refers to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, an internationally recognized standard describing language ability on a scale from A1 (beginner) to C2 (mastery);

(b) "English Language Development Authority" or "ELDA" refers to the government body created under this Act to coordinate and implement the National English Proficiency Framework;

(c) "National English Proficiency Framework" or "NEPF" refers to the comprehensive, CEFR-aligned system of standards, assessments, and interventions established under this Act;

(d) "English as a Second Language" refers to the study and instruction of English by non-native speakers aimed at developing proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing for academic, professional, and social communication;

(e) "English-medium Education" is the use of the English language to teach academic subjects or courses aimed at simultaneously developing subject-specific knowledge and English proficiency;

(f) "Proficiency Standards" refer to CEFR-aligned benchmarks for English language competency applicable to learners, educators, and workers;

(g) "Special Economic Zones" or "SEZs" refers to designated areas administered by investment promotion agencies including PEZA, SBMA, CDC, and other similar authorities; and

SEC. 4. National English Proficiency Framework (NEPF). -- There is hereby established a National English Proficiency Framework that shall serve as the comprehensive policy architecture for developing English language competencies among Filipino learners and workers. The NEPF shall:

(a) Adopt CEFR-aligned proficiency standards integrated with the National Education and Workforce Development Plan (NatPlan), targeting Grade 3 reading proficiency from 47.74% to 95% by 2035 and Grade 12 National Achievement Test proficiency from 0.4% to at least 90%;

(b) Establish measurable proficiency benchmarks for every level of basic education, higher education, technical-vocational education, and the workforce;

(c) Mandate minimum English proficiency requirement for workforce entry in all regulated professions and for employment;

(d) Recommend evidence-based pedagogical approaches that contribute towards the development of communicative competence in English of all Filipino learners and teachers across the lifespan;

SEC. 5. English Language Development Authority (ELDA). — There is hereby created an English Language Development Authority (ELDA) under the Office of the President, composed of the following:

(a) A Chairperson appointed by the President;

(b) Commissioners comprising the Secretary of the Department of Education (DepEd); the Chairperson of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED); the Director-General of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA); the Chairperson of the Professional Regulations Commission (PRC); the Secretary of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE); the Director-General of the Philippine Economic Zones Authority (PEZA); and a representative from (a) a network of professional industry associations and (b) Coordinating Council for Private Education; and

(c) A Technical Secretariat staffed by career service officers with expertise in language education, curriculum development, and assessment.

The ELDA shall be the primary inter-agency coordinating body for the implementation of the NEPF, consistent with the NatPlan.

SEC. 6. Mandated English Proficiency Standards. – In recognition of the need for teachers and educators to serve as role models of English proficiency, the following standards are hereby mandated:

(a) All basic education students exiting from Senior High School shall be required to achieve a CEFR B2 proficiency from a National English Proficiency Test to be developed and administered by the ELDA in cooperation with the DepEd;

(b) All technical-vocational learners completing a National Certification (NC) shall be required to achieve a CEFR B2 proficiency from a National English Proficiency Test to be developed and administered by the ELDA in cooperation with the TESDA;

(c) All higher education learners shall be required to achieve a CEFR C1 proficiency from a National English Proficiency Test to be developed and administered by the ELDA in cooperation with the CHED prior to graduation;

(d) Prior to hiring, all teachers and educators engaged in the delivery of basic, technical-vocational, and higher education programs shall be required to present proof of attainment of at least CEFR C1 proficiency from an internationally recognized assessment provider;

(e) DepEd, CHED, and TESDA shall provide accessible alternative certification pathways, such as, but not limited to, the Certificate in English Language Teaching to

Adults (CELTA), and continuing ESL-focused professional development programs for those entering and engaging in English-medium education (EME);

(f) DOLE shall coordinate with industry associations to create and implement the registry of entry-level English language proficiency requirements for employment in coordination with the ELDA; and

(g) PRC shall require the presentation of proof of attainment of at least CEFR C1 proficiency from an internationally recognized assessment provider for all applicants for professional licensure.

SEC. 7. National Standards and Assessment System. -- The ELDA, in coordination with DepEd, CHED, TESDA, PRC, and DOLE shall establish a National Standards and Assessment System that shall:

(a) Conduct systematic CEFR-aligned assessments at the end of every key educational stage—Grade 3, Grade 6, Grade 10, Grade 12, and tertiary level to generate nationally comparable data on English proficiency;

(b) Use assessment results to inform curriculum design, pedagogical methods, and teacher professional development;

(c) Publish annual disaggregated proficiency reports by region, school type, and socioeconomic status to enable targeted interventions for underserved populations; and

(d) Align assessment frameworks for English with internationally recognized benchmarks in aid of better participation in large-scale international assessments and global measures of workforce competitiveness.

SEC. 8. Coordinated Talent Development Infrastructure. -- The ELDA shall oversee a coordinated talent pipeline for English-proficient workers by:

(a) Establishing school-to-employment pathways with English proficiency as a primary prerequisite workforce competency;

(b) Formalizing public-private partnerships in support of the NEPF in light of specific priorities of the NatPlan;

(c) Coordinating with appropriate public and private agencies such as PEZA, BOI, SBMA, and CDC, among others to establish English proficiency benchmarks for Special Economic Zone workforce development; and

(d) Integrating such benchmarks English proficiency development into the curriculum in basic education, technical-vocational education, and higher education ensuring alignment between English competencies and industry communication requirements.

SEC. 9. Resource Mobilization and Appropriations. -- The following funding mechanisms are hereby established:

(a) The ELDA shall prepare a ten-year English Language Investment Plan aligned with critical priorities of the NatPlan;

(b) The amount necessary for initial implementation shall be charged to current year appropriations of relevant agencies. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act;

(c) Public-private partnerships with industry sectors, educational foundations, international development partners, and other stakeholders shall be actively pursued to supplement government appropriations; and

(d) Fifty percent (50%) of all funds appropriated under this Act shall prioritize interventions in identified low-performing regions and schools serving the most socioeconomically disadvantaged learners.

SEC. 10. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting. -- The ELDA shall:

(a) Conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the implementation of this Act every three (3) years and submit a report to Congress and the President;

(b) Establish a publicly accessible online dashboard tracking national and regional English proficiency indicators, updated annually; and

(c) Engage an independent evaluator of the implementation progress of the National English Proficiency Framework.

SEC. 11. Implementing Rules and Regulations. -- Within ninety days (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the ELDA, in coordination with DepEd, CHED, TESDA, DOLE, and PEZA, shall formulate and issue the rules and regulations necessary to implement the provisions of this Act. Other government entities, civil society organizations, language education experts, and industry representatives may be invited to participate in the process.

SEC. 12. Separability Clause. -- If any part or provision of this Act shall be declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not so affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 13. Repealing Clause. -- All laws, decrees, executive orders, memorandum orders, administrative orders, or parts thereof which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 14. Effectivity. -- This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,