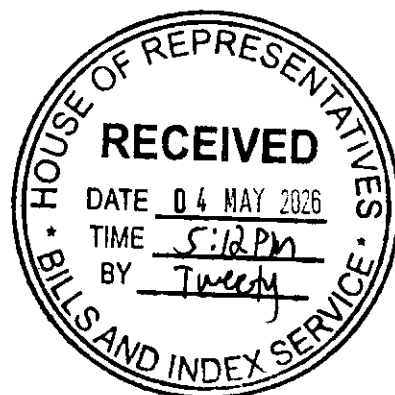




Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

20th CONGRESS
1st Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 9064



Introduced by Representative SITTIE SHAHARA "BAI DIMPLE" I. MASTURA

AN ACT
PROMOTING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PUBLIC MATH AND SCIENCE HIGH SCHOOL IN
UNDERSERVED AREAS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines faces many pressing issues, such as climate change, food security, and public health. Yet, a nation's progress is measured not only by its wealth but by the knowledge and innovation of its people. Science high schools in the Philippines embody this truth by serving as breeding grounds for thinkers and problem solvers who will shape the country's destiny; all the more reason we view science high schools as more than elite academic institutions but rather as strategic investments in the nation's future.

By cultivating young minds with scientific expertise, critical thinking, and a sense of purpose, we are assured that this nation can meet the challenges of tomorrow with innovation, resilience, and leadership.

However, except in many urban centers, many provinces across the country remain without access to quality public math and science education, particularly school children in geographically isolated and economically disadvantaged areas. This scenario prevents young, talented minds from pursuing meaningful vocations in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

This bill seeks to correct this inequity by mandating the establishment of at least one (1) public math and science high school in provinces that still do not have one within their jurisdiction.

An advanced curriculum on science, mathematics, and technology, modeled after the Philippine Science High School System, is to be implemented by the Department of Education (DepEd), Commission on Higher Education (CHED), and the Department of Science and Technology (DOST).

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

SITTIE SHAHARA "BAI DIMPLE" I. MASTURA

Representative

Maguindanao del Norte, Lone District with Cotabato City



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

SECTION 1. Short Title. – This Act shall be known as the "Equitable Access to Math and Science Education Act".

SEC.2. Declaration of Policy. – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to provide equitable access to quality education in the pure and applied sciences, mathematics, and technology for all Filipinos to nurture future generations of scientists, mathematicians, engineers, and other professionals who will serve the nation as catalysts for scientific, technological, and industrial progress.

Pursuant to this declaration, the State shall work together with local government units (LGUs) to eliminate economic and geographical barriers that restrict the access of otherwise willing and qualified students to education subject of this Act.

SEC. 3. *Coverage.* – All provinces of the Republic of the Philippines that do not have at least one (1) public math and science high school currently operating within their respective geographical boundaries at the time this Act takes effect shall be required to fulfill the establishment requirements prescribed by Section 4 of this Act.

For purposes of this Act, the term public math and science high school shall refer to a school principally financed through national or local government funds that implements an advanced curriculum focused on science, mathematics, and technology subjects for grades 7 to 12 students.

SEC. 4. *Establishment of Schools.* – All provinces covered by the preceding section of this Act are hereby mandated to work with the Department of Education (DepEd) to establish at least one (1) public math and science high school within their respective provincial capitals.

Schools established in compliance with this Act may be established through the construction of new facilities, the conversion and/or reorganization of an existing school, or the renovation and reopening of currently non-operational school facilities or other idle government-owned property: *Provided*, that these schools must be fully operational by the next academic year following the effectivity of this Act: *Provided further*, that any utilization of idle government-owned assets shall follow pertinent procedures as prescribed by law: *Provided finally*, that schools which may have been designated by the DepEd as fully compliant under this Act may start operations earlier than the prescribed deadline.

SEC. 5. *School Operations.* – Schools in compliance with this Act shall be operated by the DepEd, with the proper participation of the applicable LGUs and other community stakeholders as prescribed by law. Said schools shall be funded in full under the budget of the DepEd and shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 6. *Admissions.* – Schools established in compliance with this Act shall accept applicants based on the results of a competitive entrance examination. A student may be eligible to apply for admission only if he or she has established continuous residence within the establishing province for at least one (1) year from the date of examination.

SEC. 7. *Curriculum.* – Schools established in compliance with this Act shall implement a six-year integrated junior-senior high school curriculum that focuses on advanced science, mathematics, and technology subjects under the guidance of the DepEd and the Department of Science and Technology (DOST). The revised curriculum of the Philippine Science High School System for grades 7 to 12 shall be used as a basis for the formulation of the said curriculum.

SEC. 8. *Higher Education Bond.* – A graduate of a school established in compliance with this Act shall be required to enroll in a four- or five-year bachelor's degree in science program at an accredited college or university. The graduate must enroll in a course of study in one of the following fields: pure and applied science, mathematics, engineering, technology, or any other field deemed appropriate by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). A graduate who shifts or transfers to a course in any unrelated field before the completion of the degree program shall pay a fine equivalent to the total full cost incurred by the government in subsidizing the secondary education program of said graduate, as calculated by the DepEd. Any fines collected under the terms of this provision shall be allocated to any government program that promotes the advancement of science, mathematics, and technological education in the Philippines.

SEC. 9. *Appropriations.* – The amount of One Hundred Million pesos (Php100,000,000.00) shall be appropriated for the initial implementation of this Act, which shall be incorporated under the annual budget of the DepEd. Thereafter, the amount necessary to carry out the implementation of the program, as determined by the executive committee of the DepEd, shall be incorporated in the General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 10. *Implementing Agencies.* – The DepEd, in coordination with the DOST and CHED, shall be responsible for implementing the provisions of this Act. Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the implementing agencies shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations as may be necessary to ensure the effective and efficient implementation of this Act.

SEC. 11. *Separability Clause.* – Should any provisions of this Act be declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining portions or provisions shall continue to be valid and subsisting.

SEC. 12. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, acts, executive orders, presidential decrees, issuances, rules and regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent with or contrary to the provisions of this Act, are hereby deemed amended, modified, or repealed accordingly.

SEC. 13. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following the publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved.