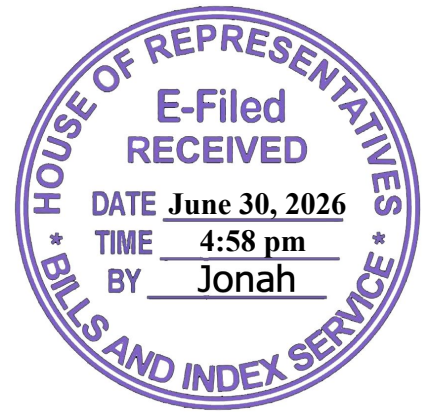


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 9999



Introduced by Representative Jan “Atty. JP” D. Padiernos

EXPLANATORY NOTE

According to the World Bank's Learning Poverty estimates, approximately nine out of ten Filipino children aged ten are unable to read and understand a simple text appropriate for their age, highlighting a serious challenge in foundational learning.¹ At the same time, educational and health experts point out that modern youth face unprecedented mental health pressures. Today, teachers in face-to-face classrooms are constantly dealing with a noticeable spike in student anxiety, stress, and attention issues, which directly ruins a student's focus and ability to learn.

The Philippines continues to confront a dual challenge of learning loss and declining student well-being. National and international assessments have demonstrated significant gaps in foundational literacy and numeracy, while educators increasingly report difficulties in learner engagement, concentration, and emotional regulation. These factors are interrelated and directly affect classroom performance and long-term educational outcomes.

International experience demonstrates that strengthening academic instruction alone is insufficient to address learning recovery. Educational systems in jurisdictions such as Singapore, the United Kingdom, and Australia have increasingly integrated evidence-based social-emotional and classroom wellness strategies into daily instruction to improve learners' focus, resilience, and readiness to learn. Studies likewise show that structured social-emotional learning interventions are associated with improvements in academic achievement, classroom behavior, and student well-being.

Recognizing these developments, this measure establishes a National Classroom Wellness and Learning Recovery Program under the Department of Education. Rather than creating another academic subject or extending instructional hours, the Program institutionalizes practical, evidence-based classroom strategies that may be integrated into existing teaching practices while simultaneously strengthening foundational literacy and numeracy.

By combining learning recovery with learner well-being, the proposed measure seeks to improve educational outcomes, reduce learning gaps, and promote the holistic development of every Filipino learner.

¹ Cagaanan, J.S. (2025). When schooling does not translate to learning: localizing the World Bank's Learning Poverty Framework for SDG 4. *Langkit Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 14(2), 93-110.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JPadiernos', is positioned above the printed name.

Rep. Jan "Atty. JP" D. Padiernos
GP (GALING SA PUSO) Partylist

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TWENTIETH CONGRESS
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HOUSE BILL NO. 9999

Introduced by Representative Jan “Atty. JP” D. Padiernos

**AN ACT STRENGTHENING FOUNDATIONAL LITERACY AND NUMERACY
THROUGH THE INTEGRATION OF DAILY MENTAL WELLNESS AND FOCUS
ACTIVITIES IN BASIC EDUCATION, 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 “*Youth Mental Health and Foundational Learning Integration Act.*”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is hereby declared the policy of 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. Pursuant to Article XIV of the 1987 Philippine Constitution, the State shall ensure that all educational institutions foster the holistic, intellectual, and total well-being of the learner.

Concurrently, the State recognizes its duty under Article II, Section 15 of the Constitution to protect and promote the right to health of the people, which inherently includes the mental health and emotional resilience of Filipino youth.

Towards this end, the State shall institutionalize an integrated approach to basic education that recognizes academic success and mental wellness as mutually reinforcing components of human development. The State shall adopt evidence-based, school-based strategies that simultaneously correct learning deficits, foster emotional resilience, and maximize the learner's cognitive readiness to learn.

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

(a) *Foundational Literacy* refers to the ability of a learner to read, comprehend, interpret, and communicate effectively at a level appropriate to the learner's age and grade.

(b) *Foundational Numeracy* refers to the ability of a learner to understand and apply basic mathematical concepts and operations necessary for everyday life and continued learning.

(c) *Classroom Wellness Activities* refer to brief, age-appropriate, evidence-based educational practices designed to improve learners' attention, emotional regulation, resilience, stress management, and readiness to learn.

(d) *Learning Recovery Interventions* refer to instructional strategies, remedial programs, and support mechanisms intended to address learning gaps and improve foundational competencies.

(e) *Department* refers to the Department of Education (DepEd).

SEC. 4. *National Classroom Wellness and Learning Recovery Framework.* – The Department shall establish and implement a National Classroom Wellness and Learning Recovery Program in all public elementary and secondary schools.

The Program shall promote learner well-being, strengthen foundational literacy and numeracy, improve classroom engagement, and support learning recovery through evidence-based educational strategies integrated into regular classroom instruction.

For this purpose, the Department shall develop standards, guidelines, instructional materials, and implementation frameworks for schools.

The Program may include, but shall not be limited to:

- (a) attention and focus exercises;
- (b) mindfulness and breathing activities;
- (c) brief movement or stretching activities;
- (d) age-appropriate social-emotional learning activities;
- (e) positive reflection and resilience-building practices;
- (f) cooperative learning and peer engagement activities; and
- (g) other evidence-based interventions that promote learner well-being and readiness to learn.

Implementation shall utilize existing instructional time and classroom routines and shall not require the creation of a separate academic subject or additional instructional hours.

SEC. 5. *Strengthening Foundational Literacy and Numeracy.* – The Department, in alignment and coordination with existing national learning recovery initiatives under Republic Act No. 12028, otherwise known as the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program Act, shall strengthen foundational literacy and numeracy by:

- (a) conducting periodic diagnostic assessments to identify learning gaps;
- (b) implementing targeted learning recovery and remediation programs;
- (c) developing evidence-based instructional materials;
- (d) providing differentiated instruction for struggling learners; and
- (e) continuously monitoring learner progress and outcomes.

SEC. 6. *Teacher Professional Development.* – The Department shall provide continuing professional development programs for teachers and school personnel on:

- (a) evidence-based classroom wellness strategies;
- (b) social-emotional learning;

- (c) foundational literacy and numeracy interventions;
- (d) classroom management that promotes learner engagement;
- (e) strategies to integrate these activities into classroom instruction while minimizing additional administrative and reporting burdens on teachers; and
- (f) implementation of the Program established under this Act.

SEC. 7. *Development of Standards and Learning Resources.* – The Department shall develop age-appropriate standards, teaching guides, resource materials, and implementation tools necessary for the effective implementation of this Act.

In developing such standards, the Department may consult educational institutions, child development experts, mental health professionals, and other relevant stakeholders.

SEC. 8. *Monitoring, Evaluation, and Annual Report to Congress.* – The Department shall establish a monitoring and evaluation system to assess the implementation and effectiveness of the Program.

Such evaluation shall include indicators relating to:

- (a) foundational literacy outcomes;
- (b) foundational numeracy outcomes;
- (c) learner engagement and attendance;
- (d) implementation status across schools; and
- (e) such other performance indicators as the Department may determine.

The Department shall submit an annual report to Congress on the implementation and outcomes of the Program, together with recommendations for policy and program improvements.

SEC. 9. *Inter-Agency Coordination.*– The Department may coordinate with the Department of Health, state universities and colleges, local government units, professional organizations, and other public and private stakeholders to promote evidence-based implementation of this Act.

SEC. 10. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the Department. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 11. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Department shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the implementation of this Act.

SEC. 12. *Repealing Clause.* All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules, and regulations inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 13. *Separability Clause.* – If any portion of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other portions which are not affected thereby shall continue in full force and effect.

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

Approved,