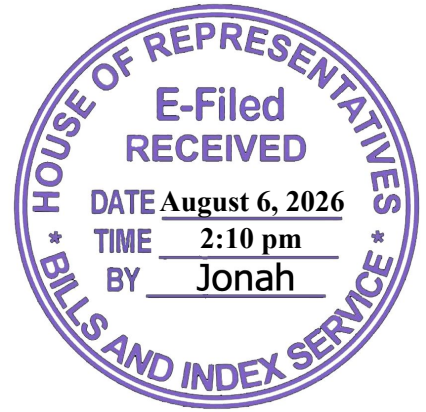


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Constitution Hills, Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 10660



Introduced by 2nd District of Iloilo Representative
HON. KATHRYN JOYCE F. GORRICETA, M.D.

AN ACT
STRENGTHENING DIGITAL EDUCATION ACCESS AND INSTITUTIONALIZING
TEACHER DIGITAL SKILLS TRAINING IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The rapid integration of digital technologies into education has transformed the way learning is delivered, accessed, and supported. In the Philippines, however, significant gaps remain in digital access among learners in public elementary and secondary schools. Many students continue to face difficulties due to unreliable internet connectivity, limited access to digital learning devices, and the absence of accessible school-based or community-based facilities for digital learning. At the same time, public school teachers require sustained training and institutional support to effectively use digital platforms, blended learning methods, and emerging educational technologies.

Digital education is no longer merely supplementary to classroom instruction. It has become an essential component of a modern, inclusive, and resilient basic education system. Beyond access to devices and connectivity, learners and teachers must also be equipped with the skills to locate, evaluate, cite, and responsibly use credible, authoritative, and scholarly digital resources. In an online environment where information is abundant but not always reliable, digital research literacy is necessary to promote academic integrity, evidence-based learning, and responsible use of technology.

This proposed measure seeks to institutionalize government support for digital education in public elementary and secondary schools by expanding access to reliable internet connectivity, appropriate digital learning devices, and digital learning hubs, with priority given to learners from low-income households and geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas. It likewise strengthens teacher capacity through continuous and accredited digital skills training, including training on digital pedagogy, online and blended instruction, cybersecurity, data privacy, and the responsible use of emerging technologies.

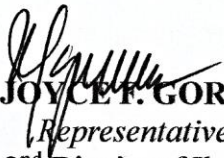
The bill further promotes access to academic digital resources, including credible academic websites, digital libraries, open-access journals, peer-reviewed publications, government research portals, and other reliable sources of research materials appropriate to the basic education curriculum. It also integrates digital research literacy into learning activities and

teacher training programs, ensuring that both learners and teachers are guided in proper citation, attribution, paraphrasing, academic integrity, and the ethical use of digital research materials.

Furthermore, the bill mandates the establishment of national digital education standards for basic education to ensure quality, consistency, accessibility, data security, child online safety, and responsible technology use. It authorizes partnerships with telecommunications companies, technology providers, public libraries, state universities and colleges, research institutions, academic publishers, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders to maximize resources and accelerate implementation. Regular reporting to Congress and audit by the Commission on Audit are likewise provided to ensure transparency, accountability, and measurable outcomes.

By strengthening digital education access, institutionalizing teacher digital skills training, and promoting digital research literacy, this measure seeks to build a more equitable, future-ready, and resilient public basic education system that prepares Filipino learners and teachers for the demands of an increasingly digital and knowledge-based society.

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


KATHRYN JOYCE F. GORRICETA, M.D.

Representative
2nd District of Iloilo

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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 “*Digital Education Access and Teacher Capacity-Building Act.*”

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. — It is hereby declared the policy of the State to ensure accessible, inclusive, resilient, and quality basic education through the effective and responsible use of digital technologies. The State shall promote equitable access to digital learning resources among learners in public elementary and secondary schools, particularly those from low-income households and geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas.

The State shall likewise strengthen the capacity of public school teachers to deliver effective digital, blended, and technology-enabled instruction through continuous, needs-based, and accredited training programs.

It is further declared the policy of the State to promote digital research literacy among learners and teachers by ensuring access to credible, authoritative, and scholarly academic digital resources, and by strengthening their capacity to identify, evaluate, cite, and ethically use reliable digital research materials for formal and evidence-based learning.

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

- (a) *Academic Digital Resources* refer to credible, authoritative, and scholarly online databases, academic websites, digital libraries, educational applications, electronic journals, peer-reviewed publications, open-access repositories, government research portals, and other reliable digital sources of educational, scientific, technical, historical, legal, cultural, and research information;
- (b) *Basic Education* refers to kindergarten, elementary, junior high school, and senior high school education under the supervision and regulation of the Department of Education;

- (c) *Digital Education* refers to instruction, learning support, or educational services delivered through online, blended, or technology-enabled methods and platforms;
- (d) *Digital Learning Device* refers to an appropriate electronic device, such as a tablet, laptop, or other similar equipment, used by learners or teachers for digital learning and instruction;
- (e) *Digital Learning Hub* refers to a facility located in a public school or other government-owned or community-based facility that provides shared access to internet connectivity, digital learning devices, digital educational resources, and Academic Digital Resources;
- (f) *Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas* (GIDA) refer to areas officially classified as such by the government;
- (g) *Public Schools* refer to public elementary and secondary schools, including senior high schools, under the supervision of the Department of Education.

SEC. 4. *Digital Access for Learners.* — The Department of Education, in coordination with the Department of Information and Communications Technology, local government units, and other concerned agencies, shall develop and implement a phased program to improve digital education access in public elementary and secondary schools.

For this purpose, the program shall include:

- (a) Provision of reliable internet connectivity in public schools, with priority given to schools in GIDA, low-income communities, and areas with limited or no connectivity;
- (b) Provision of free or subsidized internet access or connectivity support for qualified learners, subject to guidelines to be issued by the Department of Education;
- (c) Provision of appropriate digital learning devices to qualified learners, prioritizing those from low-income households, learners without access to digital devices, and learners in GIDA;
- (d) Establishment or strengthening of Digital Learning Hubs in public schools, public libraries, barangay facilities, or other suitable government-owned facilities;
- (e) Development and distribution of accessible digital learning resources aligned with the basic education curriculum; and
- (f) Provision of access, where practicable, to Academic Digital Resources, including credible, authoritative, and scholarly digital libraries, academic websites, educational applications, open-access journals, peer-reviewed publications, government research portals, and other reliable sources of research materials appropriate to the basic education curriculum.

SEC. 5. *Teacher Digital Skills Training.* — The Department of Education shall design, implement, and regularly update a mandatory and continuous digital skills training program for public elementary and secondary school teachers.

The training program shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Digital pedagogy and technology-enabled teaching strategies;
2. Online and blended classroom management;
3. Development, evaluation, and use of digital and blended learning materials;
4. Use of learning management systems and other approved digital education platforms;
5. Cybersecurity, data privacy, child protection, and responsible use of educational technologies;
6. Appropriate use of emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence-assisted teaching tools, subject to ethical, pedagogical, and data protection standards; and
7. Training on accessing, evaluating, citing, and ethically using Academic Digital Resources, including credible, authoritative, and scholarly academic websites, digital

libraries, open-access journals, peer-reviewed publications, government research portals, and other reliable online research materials.

Completion of the training program shall be recognized as part of the professional development requirements of teachers, subject to existing laws, rules, and regulations on teacher education and continuing professional development.

SEC. 6. *Digital Research Literacy and Access to Academic Digital Resources.* — The Department of Education shall integrate digital research literacy into appropriate subjects, learning areas, teacher training programs, and school-based learning activities in public elementary and secondary schools.

For this purpose, the Department of Education shall ensure that learners and teachers are trained, in a manner appropriate to their grade level, subject area, and teaching assignment, on:

- (a) Accessing and using credible, authoritative, and scholarly academic websites, digital libraries, educational applications, open-access journals, peer-reviewed publications, government research portals, and other reliable online research resources;
- (b) Distinguishing credible, evidence-based, and research-supported sources from unreliable, misleading, or unverified online content;
- (c) Proper citation, attribution, paraphrasing, referencing, and ethical use of digital research materials;
- (d) Responsible use of artificial intelligence-assisted tools and other emerging technologies in research, subject to academic integrity, data privacy, cybersecurity, and child protection standards; and
- (e) Applying digital research skills in classroom activities, project-based learning, science investigatory projects, policy research, and other curriculum-based academic outputs.

The Department of Education may enter into partnerships with public libraries, state universities and colleges, reputable academic publishers, research institutions, technology providers, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders to expand access to credible, authoritative, and scholarly Academic Digital Resources, including free and open-access materials.

SEC. 7. *National Digital Education Standards for Basic Education.* — The Department of Education, in coordination with the Department of Information and Communications Technology, the National Privacy Commission, and other relevant agencies and stakeholders, shall establish and regularly update national digital education standards for public elementary and secondary schools.

Such standards shall include:

- (a) Minimum requirements for school internet connectivity and digital learning facilities;
- (b) Approved or recommended learning management systems, platforms, and digital learning tools;
- (c) Data privacy, cybersecurity, child online safety, and responsible technology use requirements;
- (d) Quality assurance standards for digital, blended, and technology-enabled instruction;
- (e) Accessibility standards for learners with disabilities and learners in disadvantaged communities;

- (f) Monitoring and evaluation indicators for digital education access, teacher readiness, and learner outcomes;
- (g) Standards for the identification, evaluation, and use of credible, authoritative, and scholarly Academic Digital Resources, including guidelines on age-appropriate access to electronic journals, peer-reviewed academic publications, digital libraries, government research portals, and other reliable digital research materials; and
- (h) Guidelines on digital research literacy, citation practices, academic integrity, responsible research conduct, and the ethical use of artificial intelligence-assisted research tools.

SEC. 8. *Digital Learning Hubs.* — The Department of Education, in coordination with local government units and other concerned agencies, shall establish or strengthen Digital Learning Hubs to provide learners and teachers with shared access to internet-enabled learning resources, digital learning devices, and Academic Digital Resources.

Priority shall be given to public schools located in GIDA, low-income communities, and areas with limited household access to internet connectivity and digital devices.

Digital Learning Hubs may be established in public schools, public libraries, barangay facilities, or other appropriate government-owned facilities, subject to guidelines issued by the Department of Education.

Such hubs shall, where practicable, provide access to credible, authoritative, and scholarly digital research materials, including open-access journals, digital libraries, government research portals, and other reliable academic resources appropriate to the needs of learners and teachers.

SEC. 9. *Public-Private Partnerships.* — The Department of Education, in coordination with the Department of Information and Communications Technology and local government units, is hereby authorized to enter into partnerships with telecommunications companies, technology providers, educational institutions, civil society organizations, public libraries, state universities and colleges, research institutions, reputable academic publishers, digital library providers, and other stakeholders to support the implementation of this Act.

Such partnerships may include support for school connectivity, digital devices, learning platforms, teacher training, technical assistance, maintenance, development of digital learning resources, access to Academic Digital Resources, digital research literacy training, and responsible research use programs, in accordance with existing laws, rules, and regulations.

SEC. 10. *Appropriations.* — The amounts necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the Department of Education and other concerned agencies. Thereafter, such amounts as may be necessary for its continued implementation shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 11. *Monitoring, Reporting, and Congressional Oversight.* — The Department of Education shall submit an annual report to Congress on the implementation of this Act. The report shall include, among others:

- (a) Number and location of public schools provided with internet connectivity;
- (b) Number of learners provided with digital learning devices or connectivity support;

- (c) Number and location of established or strengthened Digital Learning Hubs;
- (d) Number of teachers who completed digital skills training programs;
- (e) Status of compliance with national digital education standards;
- (f) Status of access to Academic Digital Resources and implementation of digital research literacy training for learners and teachers;
- (g) Measures undertaken to promote citation practices, academic integrity, and responsible use of digital research materials; and
- (h) Assessment of implementation challenges, funding requirements, and learning outcomes.

All funds utilized under this Act shall be subject to audit by the Commission on Audit.

SEC. 12. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* — Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Education, in coordination with the Department of Information and Communications Technology, the National Privacy Commission, the Department of Budget and Management, local government units, and other relevant agencies, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 13. *Separability Clause.* — If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 14. *Repealing Clause.* — All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules, and regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

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

Approved,