



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

H. No. 4745

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AN ACT

**INSTITUTIONALIZING THE PUBLIC BASIC EDUCATION SCHOOLS
IN GEOGRAPHICALLY ISOLATED AND DISADVANTAGED AND
CONFLICT-AFFECTED AREAS, PROVIDING ACCESS ROADS LEADING
TO LAST MILE SCHOOLS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

*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 "Last Mile Schools
2 Act."

3
4 **SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** – It is the declared policy of the State to protect
5 and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels, and to take
6 appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all.

1 The State recognizes and promotes the rights of Indigenous Cultural
2 Communities within the framework of national unity and development. To this end,
3 the State shall recognize the right of indigenous families and communities to retain
4 shared responsibility for upbringing, training, education and well-being of their
5 children, consistent with the rights of the child.

6
7 The State shall improve the quality and access to basic education for children in
8 the far-flung, isolated, disadvantaged, and conflict-affected areas, as well as those in
9 Last Mile Schools, by investing in school infrastructures and access roads and
10 programs responsible to their unique contexts.

11
12 **SEC. 3. Definition of Terms.** – As used in this Act:

- 13
14 (a) *Basic education* refers to the intended basic learning needs which provide
15 the foundation on which subsequent learning can be based. It includes
16 kindergarten, elementary and secondary education as well as alternative
17 learning systems for out-of-school learners and those with special needs;
18
19 (b) *Basic Education School* refers to learning institutions accredited by the
20 Department of Education (DepEd) to deliver services addressing the intended
21 basic learning needs of students;
22
23 (c) *Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged and Conflict-Affected Areas*
24 *(GIDCA)* refer to schools or communities situated in remote or marginalized
25 locations, with limited access to essential services and infrastructure, or
26 impacted by conflict of insecurity;
27
28 (d) *Indigenous Cultural Communities (ICCs)/Indigenous Peoples (IPs)* refer to
29 the same definition stated in Section 3h, Chapter 2 of Republic Act No. 8371,
30 or "The Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of 1997," which describes it as "group
31 of people or homogenous societies identified by self-ascription and ascription
32 by others, who have continuously lived as organized community on
33 communally bounded and defined territory, and who have, under claims of
34 ownership since time immemorial, occupied, possessed and utilized such
35 territories, sharing common bonds of language, customs, traditions and
36 other distinctive cultural traits, or who have, through resistance to political,
37 social and cultural inroads of colonization, non-indigenous religions and
38 cultures, became historically differentiated from the majority of Filipinos.
39 ICCs/IPs shall likewise include peoples who are regarded as indigenous on
40 account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country,
41 at the time of conquest or colonization, or at the time of inroads of
42 non-indigenous religions and cultures, or the establishment of present state

boundaries, who retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions, but who may have been displaced from their traditional domains or who may have resettled outside their ancestral domains"; and

- (e) *Last Mile Schools* refer to public basic education schools with gaps in resources and facilities which are located in the GIDCA.

SEC. 4. *Establishment of Last Mile Schools.* – The Last Mile Schools are hereby established, under the administration of the DepEd, to cater to the basic education of learners throughout the country's GIDCA.

The establishment of Last Mile Schools in locations situated by the ICCs shall be undertaken in consideration of the rights of the IPs, in accordance with Republic Act No. 8371.

SEC. 5. *Access to Education.* – The DepEd shall collaborate with concerned national government agencies for the delivery of the infrastructures necessary to ensure access to education in the Last Mile Schools, namely:

- (a) Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), for the construction of access roads leading to the location of Last Mile Schools;
- (b) Department of Energy (DOE) and National Electrification Administration (NEA), for the installation of electricity; and
- (c) Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), for the installation of information and communications technology.

SEC. 6. *Criteria.* – The indicators used in identifying a public school to be considered a Last Mile School may include the following:

- (a) Having less than four (4) classrooms;
- (b) With makeshift or nonstandard rooms;
- (c) Absence of or irregular electricity;
- (d) Have not been allocated funds for repairs or new construction projects in the last four (4) years unless destroyed;
- (e) With travel distance of more than one hour from the center of a city or municipality, or with difficulty of terrain or of such nature as to be considered having difficulty of access to existing educational institutions;
- (f) Having multigrade classes or rooms;
- (g) With less than five (5) teachers;
- (h) Having a student population of less than one hundred (100) learners;
- (i) With more than seventy-five percent (75%) IP learners; and

- 1 (j) Having such other circumstances that make it difficult for learners to access
2 school facilities.

3
4 The Secretary of Education is hereby vested with the authority to define and
5 adjust the Last Mile Schools criteria.
6

7 **SEC. 7. Tailored Programs for Last Mile Schools.** – The DepEd shall formulate
8 and implement programs responsive to the unique context of Last Mile Schools,
9 teachers, and learners, including but not limited to:

- 10
11 (a) Learning delivery and intervention mechanisms;
12 (b) School staffing standards, given the unique needs of learners in last mile
13 schools;
14 (c) Formula for school maintenance and other operating expenses, in
15 consultation with the Department of Budget and Management (DBM);
16 (d) Learning tools and equipment;
17 (e) Learner support services;
18 (f) Relevant pre-service teacher education curriculum and assessment (with the
19 Teacher Education Council (TEC), the Commission on Higher Education, and
20 the Professional Regulation Commission);
21 (g) Relevant in-service training, through the National Educators' Academy of the
22 Philippines; and
23 (h) Teacher, school head, and school evaluations, in coordination with the Civil
24 Service Commission (CSC).
25

26 **SEC. 8. Implementation.** – The school building program for the Last Mile Schools
27 shall be established and completed within a period of five (5) years after the effectivity
28 of this Act.
29

30 To facilitate synchronicity, harmony and complementarity of plans, resources and
31 efforts of both the national government and the local government units (LGUs)
32 towards the attainment of the objectives of this Act, the DepEd shall plan and
33 implement the programs, projects, and activities that address the needs of the Last
34 Mile Schools, in coordination and collaboration with the National Commission on
35 Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), DPWH, DICT, DOE, NEA, Department of Social Welfare
36 and Development (DSWD), Department of Environment and Natural Resources
37 (DENR), National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), and
38 concerned LGUs.
39

40 **SEC. 9. Reporting on Learner Outcomes.** – The DepEd shall assess and report
41 on learner outcomes separately for students enrolled in Last Mile Schools, to ensure
42 that progress and gaps are systematically monitored and addressed.

1 **SEC. 10. *Policy Review.*** – The DepEd shall review and revise existing relevant
2 policies, standards, and guidelines to directly address the specific conditions and
3 contexts of Last Mile Schools.
4

5 **SEC. 11. *Appropriations.*** – The amount necessary for the implementation of this
6 Act shall be included in the budgets of the concerned departments, agencies and
7 government-owned and controlled corporations in the annual General Appropriations
8 Act.
9

10 **SEC. 12. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** – Within ninety (90) days from
11 the approval of this Act, the Secretary of Education shall, in consultation with the
12 NCIP, DPWH, DICT, DOE, NEA, DSWD, DENR, NDRRMC, DBM, CSC, TEC, and Union
13 of Local Authorities of the Philippines, formulate the rules and regulations
14 implementing the provisions of this Act.
15

16 **SEC. 13. *Separability Clause.*** – If any provision of this Act is held invalid or
17 unconstitutional, the other provisions not so declared shall remain in force and effect.
18

19 **SEC. 14. *Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, decrees, orders and rules and regulations
20 contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or
21 amended accordingly.
22

23 **SEC. 15. *Effectivity.*** – Notwithstanding the non-issuance of the implementing
24 rules and regulations, this Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in
25 the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,