

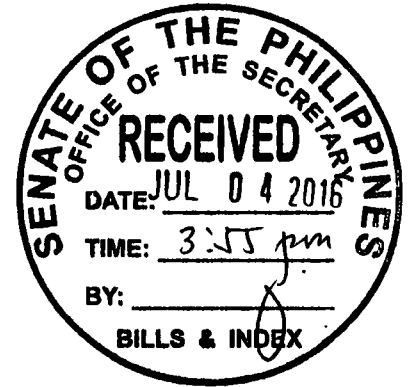
SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE]

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES]

First Regular Session]

SENATE

S.B. No. 373



Introduced by SEN. WIN GATCHALIAN

AN ACT

PROMOTING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PUBLIC MATH AND SCIENCE HIGH SCHOOLS IN PREVIOUSLY UNDERSERVED AREAS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

A progressive and economically potent society must be built by a formidable army of scientific minds. Without a solid workforce of scientists, mathematicians, engineers, and other skilled professionals, the Philippines will continue on with an economy perennially on the brink, yet never achieving, full industrialization and the prosperity that comes with it. In order to fulfill our destiny as the next true Asian tiger economy, we must ensure that we have invested in the human capital necessary to achieve this.

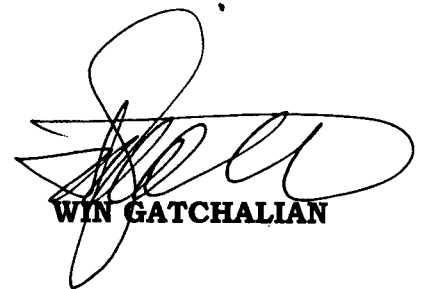
Sadly, despite the increasing government commitment to improving the state of Philippine education, recent editions of the Global Competitiveness Survey have consistently ranked the Philippines in the bottom 20% of participating countries in terms of the quality of science education. National performance in math has worsened, with students posting an average score of only 46.3% on the National Achievement Test from 2011-2012. The increased budget for education has yet to pay dividends when it comes to science education.

A universal tenet of quality education, consistently reported by reputable

education experts and enshrined in the 1987 Constitution, is ensuring equitable access to education. This entails ensuring access to all forms of education, including specialized math and science curricula. However, this type of valuable, oft-sought-after education is only available to the lucky few that are admitted to the Philippine Science High School system, one of the Regional Science High Schools, or those who are fortunate enough to live near one of the other science high schools scattered across the country.

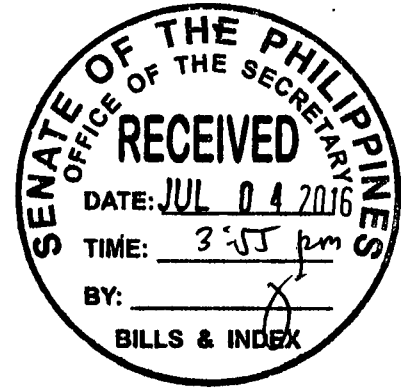
Therefore, this legislation seeks to close the educational access gap between different sectors of Philippine society. The establishment of a new structure of accessible math and science high schools across the Philippines will allow capable and willing students who have been hindered by geographic and economic barriers to pursue a science-based education in numbers that are as of yet unheard of in the Philippines. In time, this investment in human capital will pay dividends as these ambitious young students become the next science-related professionals of our country. Considering the enormous dividends that the cultivation of these brilliant minds will pay to society in the future, this is a worthy investment for us to make.

Support for the passage and approval of this legislation is earnestly sought.



WIN GATCHALIAN

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

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

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

9 Pursuant to this declaration, the State shall work hand-in-hand with
10 local government units (LGUs) to eliminate economic and geographical barriers that
11 restrict the access of otherwise willing and qualified students to said education.

12 SEC. 3. **Coverage**. - All provinces of the Republic of the Philippines
13 which do not have at least one (1) public math and science high school
14 currently operating within their respective geographical boundaries at the time

1 this Act takes effect shall be required to fulfill the establishment requirements
2 prescribed by Section 4 of this Act.

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

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

11 Schools established in compliance with this Act may be established through
12 the construction of new school facilities, the conversion and/or reorganization of an
13 existing school, or the renovation and re-opening of currently non-operational school
14 facilities or other idle government-owned property: *Provided, That* these schools must
15 be fully operational by Academic Year 2018-2019: *Provided, further, That* any
16 utilization of idle government-owned assets shall follow pertinent procedures as
17 prescribed by law: *Provided, finally, That* schools which have been designated by the
18 DepEd as fully compliant under this Act may start operations earlier than the
19 prescribed deadline.

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

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

30 **SEC. 7. *Curriculum.*** - Schools established in compliance with this Act shall
31 implement a six-year integrated junior-senior high school curriculum that focuses
32 on advanced science, mathematics, and technology subjects under the guidance of
33 the DepEd and the Department of Science and Technology (DOST). The revised

1 curriculum of the Philippine Science High School system for Grades 7-12 shall be
2 used as a basis for the formulation of said curriculum.

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

16 **SEC 9. Appropriations.** - The amount of Five Hundred Million Pesos
17 (P500,000,000.00) is hereby initially appropriated to implement the provisions
18 of this Act. Thereafter, such amount necessary to effectively carry out the
19 provisions of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations
20 Act.

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

27 **SEC. 11. Separability Clause.** - Should any part of this Act be declared
28 unconstitutional, the rest of the provisions of this Act shall continue to be in
29 effect and subsisting.

30 **SEC. 12. Repealing Clause.** - The provisions of other laws, decrees,
31 executive orders, rules and regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby
32 repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

33 **SEC. 13. Effectivity.** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its

- 1 publication in the *Official Gazette* and/or in at least two (2) national
- 2 newspapers in general circulation.

Approved,