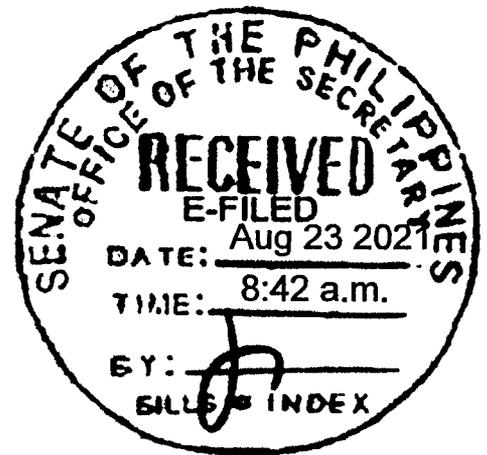


EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
Third Regular Session

SENATE

S.B. No. 2348



Introduced by SEN. WIN GATCHALIAN

AN ACT
RENAMING THE LITERACY COORDINATING COUNCIL TO THE
NATIONAL LITERACY COUNCIL, STRENGTHENING ITS POWERS AND
FUNCTIONS, STREAMLINING ITS MEMBERSHIP STRUCTURE,
PROVIDING ITS LOCAL SUPPORT MECHANISMS, REPEALING FOR THE
PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7165, AS AMENDED, APPROPRIATING
FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Literacy Coordinating Council (LCC) was established on November 25, 1991 under Republic Act (RA) No. 7165¹ which mandated the LCC to act as the primary agency that would spearhead the formulation of policies and programs to eradicate illiteracy in the country. Almost two decades later on May 27, 2010, RA 10122² was enacted to strengthen the LCC by adding to its functions the following: (1) engagement of services, expertise and resources for the cooperation, assistance, and support of appropriate government agencies or NGOs involved in literacy; (2) formulation of policies towards maximizing public and private sector support and involvement on literacy endeavors; and (3) proposing measures on how to organize and strengthen support structures for literacy at the regional, provincial, city, municipal and barangay levels.

¹ Otherwise known as "An Act Creating the Literacy Coordinating Council, Defining its Powers and Functions, Appropriating Funds Therefor, and for Other Purposes"

² Otherwise known as "An Act Strengthening the Literacy Coordinating Council by Amending Republic Act No. 7165, otherwise known as 'An Act Creating the Literacy Coordinating Council, Defining Its Powers and Functions, Appropriating Funds Therefor and for Other Purposes'"

Despite these enactments, however, the latest numbers from the Philippine Statistics Authority show that the universalization of literacy in the country has not been achieved despite three decades since the enactment of RA 7165. Based on the 2019 Functional Literacy, Education and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS), 6 out of every 100 Filipinos 5 years old and over are still not basically literate. This translates to 6 million Filipinos who cannot read or write, with understanding, simple messages. In the same year, about 8 percent of Filipinos aged 10 to 64 years old were functionally illiterate. Meaning 6.7 million Filipinos in this age group do not possess the skills to participate fully and efficiently in daily activities that require a reasonable capability of communicating through a written language. It is noted that apart from literacy concerns, issues on the decline in the quality of education in the country, observed by the Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM) thirty years ago, also continue on to this day.³

This bill proposes to repeal RA 7165 by strengthening the LCC's powers and functions, and more importantly seeks to streamline its membership structure to align the fulfillment of its mandate with the following recent laws that seek to achieve the universalization of literacy as one of their goals: 1) RA 11510 or the "Alternative Learning System Act" (ALS) which provides a practical option to the existing formal instruction, including both the non-formal and informal sources of knowledge and skills, to improve access to education and other learning opportunities and raise the level of literacy to contribute to an individual's sustainable future; and 2) RA 11315 or the "Community-Based Monitoring System Act" (CBMS) which builds the capabilities of LGUs and

³ Based on the latest Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) result released on December 3, 2019, it was revealed that the Philippines scored 353 in Mathematics, 357 in Science, and 340 in Reading, all below the average of participating Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries. The 2019 Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM) results also showed that Filipino learners in Grade 5 did not even meet the minimum proficiency in Reading, Writing, and Mathematics, while the 2019 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) results showed that Grade 4 Filipino learners lagged behind their peers in Science and Math, registering the lowest among all 58 participating countries for both tests.

communities in creating databases at the local level to provide useful information for the design, targeting and impact monitoring of poverty reduction programs and development initiatives, such as the universalization of literacy, at the national level. Thus, with the institutionalization of ALS, this bill proposes to transfer the Council's secretariat to the Bureau of Alternative Education for administrative and technical support. Further, to complement and maximize the CBMS, it proposes to mobilize local government units by establishing the Local School Boards (LSBs) as the *de facto* local literacy councils to provide the local support ecosystem to the newly renamed National Literacy Council.

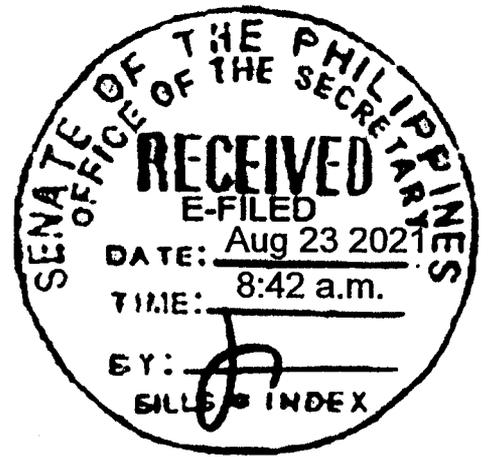
Finally, this legislation mandates the Council to formulate a three-year roadmap that shall incorporate strategies on how to achieve zero illiteracy, with relevant measurable targets and indicators for the introduction of interventions that are based on empirical results. A parallel framework shall be mirrored at the local level where the LSBs shall formulate a local roadmap, anchored on the Council's three-year roadmap, to guide its local strategies in achieving zero illiteracy in the community.

I earnestly seek the immediate passage of this bill which does not only recognize the limitations of the law it seeks to repeal, but acknowledges the imperative of a more radical reform to enable every advocate and stakeholder of literacy to fulfill the vision of literacy for all.


WIN GATCHALIAN

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FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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 “National Literacy
2 Council Act”.

3
4 Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – Pursuant to Article II, Section 17 of the
5 1987 Constitution, it is hereby declared the policy of the State to give priority
6 to education to foster patriotism and nationalism, accelerate social progress,
7 and promote total human liberation and development. Article XIV, Section 2(4)
8 likewise mandates the State to encourage non-formal, informal, and
9 indigenous learning systems, as well as self-learning, independent, and out-of-
10 school study programs particularly those that respond to community needs.

11 To this end, the State shall give priority to the adoption of measures for
12 the universalization of literacy.

13

1 Sec. 3. *Renaming of the Literacy Coordinating Council.* – The name of the
2 Literacy Coordinating Council (LCC), established pursuant to Republic Act No.
3 7165, as amended, is hereby changed to National Literacy Council, hereinafter
4 referred to in this Act as the “Council”.

5 The Council shall serve as the lead inter-agency coordinating and advisory
6 body to the various National Government Agencies (NGAs), the Local
7 Government Units (LGUs), and the private sector on matters pertaining to the
8 formulation of policies and the adoption and implementation of measures for
9 the universalization of literacy.

10 The Council shall be attached to the Department of Education (DepEd).

11
12 Sec. 4. *Composition of the Council.* – The Council shall be governed by the
13 following:

- 14 a) the Secretaries of Education and the Interior and Local Government,
15 as Co-Chairpersons, who may designate their respective
16 undersecretaries as permanent representatives;
- 17 b) the National Statistician and Civil Registrar General of the Philippine
18 Statistics Authority (PSA) or a duly designated representative;
- 19 c) the Director of the Bureau of Alternative Education (BAE) of the
20 DepEd;
- 21 d) the President of the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines
22 (ULAP); and
- 23 e) one (1) representative from the non-government organizations
24 (NGOs).

25 The NGO representative must be a citizen of the Philippines with
26 demonstrated personal or professional commitment and advocacy in the
27 propagation of literacy.

28 Through the adoption of a resolution, the Council shall approve and
29 confirm the election of the NGO representative who shall serve for a term of
30 three (3) years, subject to reappointment on the basis of merit and
31 performance.

1 Sec. 5. *Council Meetings.* – The Council shall conduct its regular
2 meetings quarterly and may hold special meetings to consider urgent matters
3 upon the call of the Chairperson or a majority of its members.

4 The Council shall meet at any agreed location within the Philippines, and
5 the presence of a majority of all its incumbent members shall constitute a
6 quorum.

7 The members of the Council shall serve without compensation, but shall
8 be entitled to an appropriate honorarium for attendance at meetings as well as
9 appropriate allowances and reimbursement of expenses related to their
10 participation in the official activities of the Council, in accordance with
11 pertinent laws, rules and regulations.

12 The duly designated representatives to the Council shall be afforded
13 equal opportunity to vote and participate in any deliberation during meetings
14 of the Council. They shall likewise be afforded, whenever necessary,
15 reimbursement of any actual expenses incurred during the performance of
16 Council-related functions and duties, subject to the provisions of existing laws,
17 rules and regulations.

18
19 Sec. 6. *Powers and Functions of the Council.* – The Council shall exercise
20 the following powers and functions:

- 21 a) act as the lead advisory and coordinating body of the government and
22 initiate, promote and recommend the adoption of policies for all
23 literacy endeavors in the country, as well as the formulation of
24 legislative agenda related to literacy;
- 25 b) formulate a three-year roadmap that shall incorporate strategies on
26 how to achieve zero illiteracy, including relevant measurable targets
27 and indicators for the introduction of interventions that are based on
28 empirical results, and which shall be subject to annual review and
29 updating to determine its implementation status and ensure that the
30 objectives of this Act are achieved;

- 1 c) set up and adopt schemes on how to organize and strengthen support
2 structures for the LGUs identified as literacy advocates at the
3 provincial, city, municipal, and barangay levels, including the
4 adoption of strategies to maximize private sector support, cooperation
5 and involvement on literacy programs, projects, and other related
6 activities;
- 7 d) promote and coordinate with NGAs, LGUs, NGOs, and academic
8 institutions on matters concerning local community literacy mapping
9 activities, consistent with the local generation and mapping of data
10 related to education under Republic Act No. 11510, otherwise known
11 as the Alternative Learning System Act”, and come up with a database
12 for out-of-school children, youth and adults, including persons with
13 disabilities, indigenous peoples, and other marginalized and
14 vulnerable members of society, who may not have availed of or
15 completed their basic education and in need of intervention and
16 support;
- 17 e) coordinate with the PSA for the regular conduct of literacy surveys,
18 such as the Functional Literacy Education and Mass Media Survey
19 (FLEMMS), every two years pursuant to Sec. 9 of this Act;
- 20 f) evaluate the literacy situation in the country, propose ways and
21 means for expanding educational opportunities to citizens of varied
22 socio-economic origins, and adopt modern communications
23 technology and other innovative modes of transmitting knowledge to
24 support literacy endeavors at the national and local levels;
- 25 g) promote and support initiatives for the conduct of research studies
26 and similar undertakings aimed at enhancing and strengthening the
27 crafting of relevant and timely policy recommendations and for the
28 effective implementation of literacy-related programs, projects, and
29 other activities;
- 30 h) organize periodic assemblies such as, among others, literacy
31 conferences and awards, discover and help strengthen good literacy

1 practices, and engage close partnerships with literacy advocates
2 throughout the country; and

- 3 i) perform such other functions as may be necessary in furtherance of
4 the purposes of this Act.

5
6 **Sec. 7. *The Secretariat.*** – The BAE shall provide secretariat support and
7 render the following administrative support and technical assistance to the
8 Council:

- 9 a) prepare policy recommendations, plans, and other Council priorities
10 and measures necessary for the advancement of basic and functional
11 literacy, and other basic capabilities of out-of-school children, youth
12 and adults, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples,
13 and other marginalized and vulnerable members of society, who may
14 not have availed of or completed their basic education and in need of
15 intervention and support;
- 16 b) consult and coordinate with NGAs, LGUs, NGOs, academic
17 institutions, and other stakeholders on matters relating to the
18 functions of the Council and other matters pertaining to the
19 propagation of literacy endeavors;
- 20 c) provide technical assistance to literacy implementers relative to the
21 programs and projects on literacy;
- 22 d) initiate, organize, and promote the holding of research activities,
23 workshops, conferences, national literacy awards and the like,
24 subject to the approval of the Council;
- 25 e) set up, maintain, and update a management information system on
26 literacy programs and projects, policies, best practices, research
27 studies, statistical data and other relevant information relative to the
28 literacy situation in the country;
- 29 f) coordinate with the PSA in the conduct of the FLEMMS and other
30 similar surveys for purposes of providing a quantitative framework
31 that will serve as one of the bases in the formulation of policies and

1 programs on the improvement of literacy and education status in the
2 country;

3 g) recommend programs, projects, and other activities to be included for
4 funding in the annual budget proposal of the Council, including
5 support services in the preparation of the Council's annual budget
6 proposal; and

7 h) perform other tasks as may be directed by the Council.
8

9 *Sec. 8. Establishment of Local Literacy Councils through the Local School*
10 *Boards.* – The Council shall promote the establishment of Local Literacy
11 Councils (LLCs) at the provincial, city and municipal levels, which shall serve
12 as the coordinating and advisory bodies at the local level on matters pertaining
13 to the adoption and implementation of measures for the universalization of
14 literacy.

15 For this purpose, the Local School Boards (LSBs) established pursuant
16 to Republic Act No. 7160 or the “Local Government Code of 1991” shall act as
17 the *de facto* LLCs in the provinces, cities and municipalities, with the following
18 functions in addition to Sec. 9 thereof:

19 a) formulate a local roadmap, anchored on the Council's three-year
20 roadmap under Section 6 of this Act, to guide its strategies on how to
21 achieve zero illiteracy in the community, based on empirical data and
22 determined by relevant measurable targets and indicators, and
23 subject to an annual implementation review and assessment;

24 b) implement literacy programs and endeavors at the local level,
25 including the identification of priority literacy programs, provision of
26 technical assistance to literacy volunteer workers, program
27 monitoring and evaluation, and coordination with government and
28 non-government partners for program support activities, among
29 others;

- 1 c) ensure the implementation of community literacy mapping activities
2 within the local level through a community-based monitoring system,
3 consistent with Republic Act No. 11315 or the “Community-Based
4 Monitoring System Act”, to generate updated and disaggregated data
5 on literacy and be able to introduce literacy interventions and allocate
6 resources based on empirical data; and
7 d) coordinate with partner NGOs and other agencies of the government
8 in the identification of out-of-school children, youth and adults,
9 including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and other
10 marginalized and vulnerable members of the community who are in
11 need of literacy intervention and support, consistent with the local
12 generation and mapping of data related to education under RA No.
13 11510, as well as the Child Find System under existing laws.

14 The Council shall issue the guidelines necessary for the establishment,
15 monitoring and evaluation of the LSBs as *de facto* LLCs.

16
17 Sec. 9. *PSA Literacy Surveys.* – To ensure an evidenced-based
18 formulation of policies and programs on the improvement and universalization
19 of literacy in the country, the PSA is hereby mandated to:

- 20 a) conduct the FLEMMS every two years;
21 b) strengthen its core unit that is dedicated to the generation, analysis,
22 utilization, and dissemination of all education and literacy statistics
23 and information under RA No. 11315;
24 c) develop and manage a nationwide database of such statistics and
25 information; and
26 d) coordinate with other government agencies whose mandates require
27 the conduct of community mapping programs that are relevant to
28 the education sector such as the Department of the Interior and
29 Local Government and the Department of Social Welfare and
30 Development.

1 Sec. 10. *Transfer of Existing LCC Secretariat and its Appropriations to the*
2 *BAE.* – Pursuant to Sec. 7 of this Act, the existing secretariat of the LCC,
3 including the appropriations corresponding to their salaries and other benefits,
4 shall be transferred to and absorbed by the BAE of the DepEd: *Provided*, That
5 such transfer shall neither cause any diminution in the salaries of the
6 personnel concerned nor loss of rank and seniority: *Provided, Further*, That the
7 transfer of positions and corresponding appropriations to the BAE shall be
8 subject to the guidelines to be jointly issued by the DepEd and the Department
9 of Budget and Management.

10
11 Sec. 11. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary to cover the initial
12 implementation of this Act shall be sourced from the appropriation of the LCC
13 under the current General Appropriations Act (GAA). Thereafter, the amount
14 necessary for its continuous implementation shall be included in the budget of
15 the DepEd under the annual GAA.

16
17 Sec. 12. *Submission of Annual Report.* – The Council shall submit to the
18 Senate Committee on Basic Education, Arts and Culture, and the House of
19 Representatives Committee on Basic Education and Culture a detailed annual
20 report of its accomplishments which shall include, among others, its
21 accomplishments, programs and projects, and policy recommendations for the
22 universalization of literacy in the country.

23
24 Sec. 13. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within sixty (60) days
25 from the effectivity of this Act, the Chairperson of the LCC, in consultation with
26 the members of the Council and other stakeholders, shall issue the rules and
27 regulations implementing its provisions.

1 Sec. 14. *Repealing Clause.* – Republic Act No. 7165, as amended by
2 Republic Act No. 10122 otherwise known as “An Act Strengthening the Literacy
3 Coordinating Council by Amending Republic Act No. 7165, Otherwise Known
4 as ‘An Act Creating the Literacy Coordinating Council, Defining Its Powers and
5 Functions, Appropriating Funds Therefor and for Other Purposes”, is hereby
6 repealed. All other laws, decrees, orders, and rules and regulations contrary
7 to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or
8 amended accordingly.

9
10 Sec. 15. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is held invalid
11 or unconstitutional, the other provisions not so declared shall remain in force
12 and effect.

13
14 Sec. 16. *Effectivity.* – Notwithstanding the non-issuance of the IRR, this
15 Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette
16 or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,