

**TWENTIETH CONGRESS OF THE
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
First Regular Session**

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25 JUL 15 P1:43

SENATE

RECEIVED BY:

S.B. No. 628

Introduced by SENATOR 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, AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Literacy Coordinating Council (LCC) was established on November 25, 1991 under Republic Act (R.A.) No. 7165¹ which mandates 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, R.A. No. 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

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"

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.

Notwithstanding 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 R.A. No. 7165. Based on a preliminary analysis of the 2024 Functional Literacy, Education and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS), 93.1% of the population aged 10 to 64 years old is considered basically literate. This implies that 6.9%, or approximately 5.87 million Filipinos within the same age group, are not basically literate—meaning they are unable to read and write a simple message with understanding, or are unable to perform basic mathematical operations. Furthermore, only 70.8% of individuals aged 10 to 64 years old are functionally literate. Conversely, this means that 29.2%, or about 24.8 million Filipinos in the same age group, lack the ability to apply higher-order comprehension skills which requires them to integrate two or more pieces of information and draw inferences from the given content.

Apart from these literacy concerns, issues on the decline in the quality of education in the country, observed by the first Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM) thirty years ago, also continue to this day.³

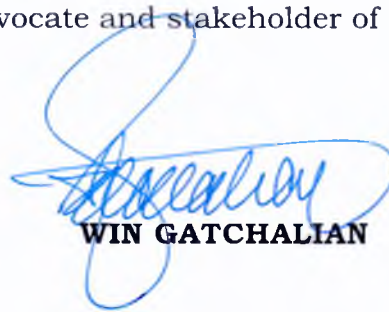
³ Compared to the 2018 cycle of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Filipino learners showed no significant improvement in the 2022 round. Among the 81 participating countries, the Philippines ranked 79th in Science, 75th in Mathematics, and 76th in Reading. Similarly, results from the 2019 Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM) revealed that Grade 5 Filipino learners failed to meet the minimum proficiency standards in Reading, Writing, and Mathematics. Furthermore, results from the 2019 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) indicated that Grade 4 Filipino learners obtained the lowest scores among the 58 participating countries in both Science and Mathematics.

This bill proposes to repeal R.A. No. 7165 by strengthening the LCC's powers and functions, and more importantly streamlines 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) R.A. No. 11510 or the "Alternative Learning System Act" (ALS Act) which provides a practical option to the existing formal instruction, including both 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) R.A. No. 11315 or the "Community-Based Monitoring System Act" (CBMS Act) which builds the capabilities of LGUs and 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 current LCC 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 for the newly renamed National Literacy Council.

Finally, this legislation mandates the Council to formulate a three-year roadmap that shall incorporate strategies to achieve zero illiteracy, with relevant measurable targets and indicators for the introduction of interventions grounded in 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 their local strategies in achieving zero illiteracy in the community.

I earnestly seek the immediate passage of this bill as we recognize the limitations of the law that it aims to repeal, and acknowledge the imperative

for a more radical reform to enable every advocate and stakeholder of literacy to fulfill the vision of literacy for all.



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FUNCTIONS, STREAMLINING ITS MEMBERSHIP STRUCTURE,
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*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 “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
8 2(4) likewise mandates the State to encourage non-formal, informal, and
9 indigenous learning systems, as well as self-learning, independent, and out-
10 of-school study programs particularly those that respond to community
11 needs.

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

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

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

13 The Council shall be attached to the Department of Education (DepEd).
14

15 Sec. 4. *Composition of the Council.* – The Council shall be governed by
16 the following:

17 (a) The Secretaries of Education and the Interior and Local Government,
18 as Co-Chairpersons, who may designate their respective
19 undersecretaries as permanent representatives;

20 (b) The National Statistician and Civil Registrar General of the
21 Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) or a duly designated
22 representative;

23 (c) The Director of the Bureau of Alternative Education (BAE) of the
24 DepEd;

25 (d) The President of the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines;
26 and

27 (e) One (1) representative from the non-government organizations
28 (NGOs).

29 The NGO representative must be a citizen of the Philippines with
30 demonstrated personal or professional commitment and advocacy in the
31 propagation of literacy.

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

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

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

12 The members of the Council shall serve without compensation, but
13 shall be entitled to an appropriate honorarium for attendance at meetings as
14 well as reasonable allowances and reimbursement of expenses related to their
15 participation in the official activities of the Council, in accordance with
16 pertinent laws, rules and regulations.

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

23
24 Sec. 6. *Powers and Functions of the Council.* – The Council shall exercise
25 the following powers and functions:

26 (a) Act as the lead advisory and coordinating body of the government
27 and initiate, promote and recommend the adoption of policies for all
28 literacy endeavors in the country, as well as the formulation of
29 legislative agenda related to literacy;

30 (b) Formulate a three-year roadmap that shall incorporate strategies on
31 how to achieve zero illiteracy, including relevant measurable targets

1 and indicators for the introduction of interventions that are based
2 on empirical results, and which shall be subject to annual review
3 and updating to determine its implementation status and ensure
4 that the objectives of this Act are achieved;

5 (c) Set up and adopt schemes on how to organize and strengthen
6 support structures for the LGUs identified as literacy advocates at
7 the provincial, city, municipal, and barangay levels, including the
8 adoption of strategies to maximize private sector support,
9 cooperation and involvement on literacy programs, projects, and
10 other related activities;

11 (d) Promote and coordinate with NGAs, LGUs, NGOs, and academic
12 institutions on matters concerning local community literacy
13 mapping activities, consistent with the local generation and mapping
14 of data related to education under R.A. No. 11510, otherwise known
15 as the Alternative Learning System Act”, and come up with a
16 database for out-of-school children, youth and adults, including
17 persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and other
18 marginalized and vulnerable members of society, who may not have
19 availed of or completed their basic education and in need of
20 intervention and support;

21 (e) Coordinate with the PSA for the regular conduct of literacy surveys,
22 such as the Functional Literacy Education and Mass Media Survey
23 (FLEMMS), every two years pursuant to Section 9 of this Act;

24 (f) Evaluate the literacy situation in the country, propose ways and
25 means for expanding educational opportunities to citizens of varied
26 socio-economic origins, and adopt modern communications
27 technology and other innovative modes of transmitting knowledge to
28 support literacy endeavors at the national and local levels;

29 (g) Promote and support initiatives for the conduct of research studies
30 and similar undertakings aimed at enhancing and strengthening the
31 crafting of relevant and timely policy recommendations and for the

1 effective implementation of literacy-related programs, projects, and
2 other activities;

3 (h) Organize periodic assemblies such as, among others, literacy
4 conferences and awards, discover and help strengthen good literacy
5 practices, and engage close partnerships with literacy advocates
6 throughout the country; and

7 (i) Perform such other functions as may be necessary in furtherance of
8 the purposes of this Act.

9
10 Sec. 7. *The Secretariat.* – The BAE shall provide secretariat support and
11 render the following administrative support and technical assistance to the
12 Council:

13 (a) Prepare policy recommendations, plans, and other Council priorities
14 and measures necessary for the advancement of basic and
15 functional literacy, and other basic capabilities of out-of-school
16 children, youth and adults, including persons with disabilities,
17 indigenous peoples, and other marginalized and vulnerable
18 members of society, who may not have availed of or completed their
19 basic education and in need of intervention and support;

20 (b) Consult and coordinate with NGAs, LGUs, NGOs, academic
21 institutions, and other stakeholders on matters relating to the
22 functions of the Council and other matters pertaining to the
23 propagation of literacy endeavors;

24 (c) Provide technical assistance to literacy implementers relative to the
25 programs and projects on literacy;

26 (d) Initiate, organize, and promote the holding of research activities,
27 workshops, conferences, national literacy awards and the like,
28 subject to the approval of the Council;

29 (e) Set up, maintain, and update a management information system on
30 literacy programs and projects, policies, best practices, research

1 studies, statistical data and other relevant information relative to the
2 literacy situation in the country;

3 (f) Coordinate with the PSA in the conduct of the FLEMMS and other
4 similar surveys for purposes of providing a quantitative framework
5 that will serve as one of the bases in the formulation of policies and
6 programs on the improvement of literacy and education status in the
7 country;

8 (g) Recommend programs, projects, and other activities to be included
9 for funding in the annual budget proposal of the Council, including
10 support services in the preparation of the Council's annual budget
11 proposal; and

12 (h) Perform other tasks as may be directed by the Council.
13

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

20 For this purpose, the Local School Boards (LSBs) established pursuant
21 to R.A. No. 7160 or the "Local Government Code of 1991", as amended, shall
22 act as the *de facto* LLCs in the provinces, cities and municipalities, with the
23 following functions in addition to Section 9 thereof:

24 (a) Formulate a local roadmap, anchored on the Council's three-year
25 roadmap under Section 6 of this Act, to guide its strategies on how
26 to achieve zero illiteracy in the community, based on empirical data
27 and determined by relevant measurable targets and indicators, and
28 subject to an annual implementation review and assessment;

29 (b) Implement literacy programs and endeavors at the local level,
30 including the identification of priority literacy programs, provision of
31 technical assistance to literacy volunteer workers, program

1 monitoring and evaluation, and coordination with government and
2 non-government partners for program support activities, among
3 others;

4 (c) Ensure the implementation of community literacy mapping activities
5 within the local level through a community-based monitoring
6 system, consistent with R.A. No. 11315 or the "Community-Based
7 Monitoring System Act", to generate updated and disaggregated data
8 on literacy and introduce literacy interventions and allocate
9 resources based on empirical data; and

10 (d) Coordinate with partner NGOs and other agencies of the government
11 in the identification of out-of-school children, youth and adults,
12 including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and other
13 marginalized and vulnerable members of the community who are in
14 need of literacy intervention and support, consistent with the local
15 generation and mapping of data related to education under R.A. No.
16 11510, as well as the Child Find System under R.A. No. 11650.

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

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

23 (a) Conduct the FLEMMS every two years;

24 (b) Strengthen its core unit that is dedicated to the generation, analysis,
25 utilization, and dissemination of all education and literacy statistics
26 and information under R.A. No. 11315;

27 (c) Develop and manage a nationwide database of such statistics and
28 information; and

29 (d) Coordinate with other government agencies whose mandates require
30 the conduct of community mapping programs that are relevant to
31 the education sector such as the Department of the Interior and

1 Local Government and the Department of Social Welfare and
2 Development.

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

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

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

26
27 Sec. 13. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within ninety (90) days
28 from the effectivity of this Act, the Chairperson of the LCC, in consultation
29 with the members of the Council and other stakeholders, shall issue the rules
30 and regulations implementing its provisions.

1 Sec. 14. *Repealing Clause.* – R.A. No. 7165, as amended by R.A. No.
2 10122 otherwise known as “An Act Strengthening the Literacy Coordinating
3 Council by Amending R.A. No. 7165, Otherwise Known as ‘An Act Creating
4 the Literacy Coordinating Council, Defining Its Powers and Functions,
5 Appropriating Funds Therefor and for Other Purposes’”, is hereby repealed.
6 All other laws, executive orders, presidential decrees, administrative orders,
7 rules and regulations, issuances, or parts thereof contrary to or inconsistent
8 with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.
9

10 Sec. 15. *Separability Clause.* – If any part or provision of this Act is
11 declared invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not otherwise
12 affected shall remain in force 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,