

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City
TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session



HOUSE BILLNO. 1282

Introduced by **REP. BERNADETTE "DETTE" G. ESCUDERO**

**AN ACT
PROVIDING EDUCATION PATHWAYS FOR BASIC EDUCATION STUDENTS,
AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The 1987 Constitution mandates the State to "protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all" (Article XIV, Section 1).

In line with this constitutional duty and in light of the longstanding challenges confronting our basic education system, this measure seeks to reform the Senior High School (SHS) program by establishing multiple education pathways that reflects the diverse aspirations, talents, and capacities of Filipino learners. While the K-12 program was envisioned under Republic Act (RA) No. 10533, or the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, to produce graduates ready for higher education or employment, empirical evidence and stakeholder experiences suggest otherwise.

According to a 2020 study by the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS), only one in five senior high school graduates enter the labor force, with many opting instead to pursue further studies due to employers' continued preference for college graduates.

Similarly, a 2022 Pulse Asia survey revealed that 44% of Filipinos expressed dissatisfaction with the K-12 program, citing unmet expectations in employment readiness. Recognizing these gaps, the bill proposes a clear a flexible system where junior high school graduates can choose between two primary education tracks namely: The University Preparatory Pathway, or The Technical-Vocational Education (Tech-Voc) Pathway. These pathways and respective programs under it are intended to equip learners with job-ready competencies that meet evolving labor market demands.

Likewise, this bill incorporates ladderized learning opportunities, allowing Tech-Voc graduates to pursue higher education upon passing the Philippine Educational

Placement Test or equivalent assessments. Additionally, career guidance and counseling services shall be institutionalized to assist students in choosing a suitable pathway that reflects their strengths and aspirations. A salient feature of the bill is the introduction of an Advanced Placement or Honors Examination for Grade 10 completers. Students who pass this examination may opt not to take Grades 11 and 12, and immediately qualify for admission to higher education institutions. This innovation recognizes scholastic excellence and provides an accelerated option for academically advanced learners.

This representative believes that it is incumbent for Congress to urgently respond to the urgent need for systemic recalibration in our basic education system with this legislative intervention. Through this bill, we give Filipino learners real choices and equitable access to either college preparation or meaningful employment through skills training choices that are based not on constraints but on capabilities and aspirations.

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



HON. BERNADETTE "DETTE" G. ESCUDERO
Representative
1st District, Sorsogon

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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 "Education Pathways
2 Act".

3
4 **SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** It is the policy of the State to protect and
5 promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and shall take
6 appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all. The State shall further
7 establish, maintain, and support a complete, adequate, and integrated system of
8 education relevant to the needs of the people and society.

9
10 To this end, the State shall ensure opportunities for Filipinos, regardless of age,
11 background, ethnicity, disability, and association, to attain their maximum potential
12 and enhance their employability by establishing inclusive education pathways that
13 empower and equip the learners with the competencies that are necessary for college
14 or employment.

15
16 **SEC. 3. Education Pathways for Completers of Junior High School.**
17 Upon completing Junior High School, the students shall choose between two education
18 pathways: the University Preparatory Program under the Department of Education
19 (DepEd) or the Technical-Vocational Program under the Technical Education and Skills
20 Development Authority (TESDA).

21
22 **SEC. 4. Career Guidance and Assessments of Students.** Career guidance
23 and counseling services, including aptitude and interest assessments to assist in
24 selecting appropriate paths, as provided in Republic Act No. 11206, or the "Secondary
25 School Career Guidance and Counseling Act", shall be indispensable and crucial in

1 aiding the students to make informed decisions about their preferred educational
2 pathway.

3
4 The DepEd shall administer various relevant assessments, including Early
5 Language, Literacy and Numeracy Assessment and National Achievement Tests, to all
6 elementary and secondary students across all levels. These assessments aim to
7 evaluate their competencies and strengths. The results must be communicated to the
8 students and their parents or guardians to provide them with ample time to consider
9 their educational and career paths. These results shall also serve as a guide to the
10 DepEd and teachers in adjusting and refining their teaching approaches to enhance
11 effectiveness in student learning.

12
13 The DepEd, TESDA, Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Department of
14 Labor and Employment (DOLE), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Department
15 of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), Philippine Chamber of
16 Commerce and Industry, Employers Confederation of the Philippines, National
17 Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), and other concerned agencies shall
18 develop a system or a portal where students can access data and information
19 concerning higher and technical education, current career and industry trends and
20 demands, and other tools that will guide them in their educational and career choices.

21
22 **SEC. 5. University Preparatory Pathway.** The DepEd shall develop and
23 implement a comprehensive curriculum for Grades 11 and 12 that prepares students
24 for admission to colleges and universities.

25
26 This curriculum shall encompass fundamental subjects to improve and
27 guarantee that students acquire functional literacy and practical skills, and elective
28 courses to allow students to explore their interests and meet college and university
29 admission requirements of their chosen degree.

30
31 The DepEd shall include the University Preparatory Pathway in its education
32 roadmap and collaborate with the CHED, colleges, and universities to guarantee
33 alignment between the curriculum and college admission standards. Colleges and
34 universities must ensure that students can easily obtain information about their
35 program of study or curriculum guide to adequately prepare for their college studies.

36
37 **SEC. 6. Technical-Vocational Education Pathway.** TESDA and the
38 industry boards, partners, experts, and practitioners, including micro, small and
39 medium enterprises, shall develop a variety of technical-vocational programs based
40 on an industry-driven and industry-approved standards designed to equip students
41 with practical skills and competencies that are at par with industry requirements.
42 These programs must lead to a diploma or a higher national certificate level. The
43 standards of these programs must further ensure that students acquire functional
44 literacy skills to guarantee their employability upon completion of their chosen
45 program and undergoing the necessary assessment for certification.

1 To effectively implement the programs, TESDA and its accredited Technical
2 Vocational Institutions must have a sufficient number of partner enterprises to ensure
3 that the standards and training for these programs are aligned with current industry
4 needs and requirements.
5

6 This collaboration shall include the conduct of a review and evaluation of the
7 standards every three (3) years to maintain its relevance and responsiveness to the
8 prevailing trends in the industry. For TESDA to undertake the prompt issuance of
9 training regulations or competency
10 standards, whichever is applicable, for new and emerging skill sets, they shall likewise
11 strengthen existing industry boards and establish within two (2) years from the
12 effectivity of this Act industry boards for sectors without one.
13

14 In the development and issuance of training regulations or competency
15 standards, TESDA and the industry boards shall focus on higher-skill level and diploma
16 programs.
17

18 TESDA shall give preference to enterprise-based training programs for National
19 Certification levels III and IV, Philippine Qualifications Framework level 5, and new
20 and emerging skills for technical-vocational learners to enhance their skills and
21 knowledge according to industry needs to encourage industry stakeholders to provide
22 enterprise-based training, apprenticeship opportunities, and skills development.
23

24 The assessments and certifications of students under public technical-
25 vocational institutions and TESDA-funded programs shall be free of charge. TESDA
26 shall implement a system that provides subsidies to students in private education,
27 industry, or enterprise for their assessments and certifications by their economic
28 standing. No student who failed at least three (3) times may avail of the free or
29 subsidized assessment and certification.
30

31 **SEC. 7. Honors Examination.** The DepEd, in consultation with the CHED,
32 shall develop and administer an advanced placement exam, to be taken voluntarily by
33 Grade 10 students in the University Preparatory Pathway, in order to assess their
34 aptitude and readiness to advance to a college degree.
35

36 This advanced placement exam shall give students a grade which shall
37 correspond to their level of proficiency and determine their eligibility to enroll to their
38 chosen degree in a college or university.
39

40 Students who successfully pass the advanced placement exam shall be
41 considered graduates of senior high school without the need to finish Grades 11 and
42 12, and shall be allowed to enroll in their chosen degree the following school year,
43 subject to other requirements that colleges or universities may impose.
44

45 **SEC. 8. Availment of the Ladderized Education Program under**
46 **Republic Act No. 10647.** Upon completion of the full technical-vocational program,
47 the student may enroll in colleges or universities and avail of the ladderized education
48 program for educational advancement. The CHED and TESDA shall strengthen existing

1 policies and implementation of programs for the accreditation and recognition of prior
2 learning of students.

3
4 **SEC. 9. Scholarship Programs.** To ensure that the two educational pathways
5 are accessible to a broad range of students, the DepEd and TESDA shall maintain an
6 educational support program including scholarships for their respective students that
7 properly and sufficiently addresses the accessibility and availability of the pathways to
8 the marginalized communities and learners.

9
10 The DepEd and TESDA shall continue to make available to their respective
11 students the scholarship programs currently implemented in their agencies.
12 Scholarships in the Technical-Vocational Education Pathway shall be made available
13 to learners with disabilities, indigenous learners, and those coming from marginalized
14 communities.

15
16 Prioritization shall also be given to students enrolled in programs with higher
17 skill levels or urgently needed by the industries.

18
19 **SEC. 10. Program Evaluation.** The DepEd and TESDA shall regularly assess
20 and evaluate the effectiveness and quality of their respective education pathways. The
21 findings of these assessments and evaluations shall be utilized to implement essential
22 enhancements and modifications to ensure that the curriculum remains relevant to
23 society.

24
25 **SEC. 11. Support from Other Government Departments and Agencies.**
26 The CHED, DOLE, DTI, DICT, Department of Agriculture, Department of Science and
27 Technology, NEDA, Philippine Qualifications Framework National Coordinating Council,
28 Department of Budget and Management, and other related agencies are hereby
29 mandated to extend the necessary support and resources towards the effective
30 implementation of this Act.

31
32 **SEC. 12. Transition Provisions.** The DepEd and TESDA shall develop and
33 refine their respective curriculum and standards to ensure that such are highly relevant
34 and aligned with the current and future needs of society and industry, including
35 emerging technologies, skills, and workforce demands.

36
37 To ensure the effectiveness of the newly developed curriculum and standards,
38 an initial implementation phase for three (3) years shall be conducted in a selected
39 number of schools from different regions, socioeconomic conditions, and both urban
40 and rural settings to be determined by the agencies. The DepEd and TESDA shall
41 conduct comprehensive assessments during this pilot phase to evaluate the
42 effectiveness of the curriculum and standards in preparing the students for university
43 and college or the workforce, and ensuring that it meets the intended goals. The
44 assessment shall be accessible to the public and may undergo independent or third-
45 party review. The DepEd and TESDA shall refine and enhance their respective
46 curriculum and standards after considering the feedback from various sectors and roll
47 out the final curriculum and standards within one (1) year from the assessment.

1 Upon attaining the qualification standards, the teachers and instructors under
2 the current Technical-Vocational Track of the Senior High School of the DepEd shall
3 be given preference in hiring of instructors and teachers by the TESDA for the
4 implementation of this Act.

5
6 **SEC. 13. Appropriations.** The amount necessary for the implementation of
7 this Act shall be included in the respective budgets of DepEd and TESDA in the annual
8 General Appropriations Act.

9
10 **SEC. 14. Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).** Within ninety (90)
11 days from the approval of this Act, the DepEd, TESDA, and CHED shall, in consultation
12 with other concerned stakeholders, formulate and issue the rules and regulations
13 implementing the provisions of this Act.

14
15 **SEC. 15. Separability Clause.** If any part or provision of this Act is held
16 invalid or unconstitutional, other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in force
17 and effect.

18
19 **SEC. 16. Repealing Clause.** Section 4 of Republic Act No. 10533, or the
20 "Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013", is hereby amended to remove the
21 compulsory requirement for Senior High School in basic education. All other laws,
22 orders, and rules and regulations contrary to, or inconsistent with the provisions of
23 this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

24
25 **SEC. 17. Effectivity.** Notwithstanding the non-issuance of the IRR, this Act
26 shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a
27 newspaper of general circulation.

Adopted,