

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



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HOUSE BILL No. 3648

**Introduced by REPRESENTATIVES LANI MERCADO-REVILLA,
BRYAN B. REVILLA AND RAMON JOLO B. REVILLA III**

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

EXPLANATORY NOTE

As of 2023, the completion rate for secondary education stands at only 30.5%. Of those who graduate, about 45% proceed to tertiary education, yet just 24% of adults aged 25 and above hold a college degree. For many, this is not due to a lack of ambition, but to the absence of a guided path. Without structured guidance, students are left to guess which educational choices lead to their career goals.

At present, the linkages between basic education, higher education, technical-vocational training, and employment remain weak. Students must navigate these transitions on their own, with varying levels of support. Those with resources and access to guidance are better positioned to succeed, using the time as an opportunity to explore interests before committing to a career. However, low-income and first-generation students are at a higher risk of disengaging from education or abandoning career aspirations altogether.

The *Education Pathways Act* seeks to change that. It aims to close the gaps by establishing clear, accessible, and inclusive framework for learners after junior high school. Under this bill, the students will be guided into one of two structured pathways – *University Preparatory Pathway* and *Technical-Vocational Pathway*. To ensure informed choices, the bill mandates strengthened career guidance services and competency assessments starting in basic education. The measure further institutionalizes collaboration among agencies to align education and training programs with labor market needs.

Ultimately, this bill is not just focused on educational reform – it is an economic necessity. A workforce equipped with the right skills, adaptability, and knowledge is vital to the country's competitiveness and long-term prosperity. By

giving every student a clear roadmap from school to career, we invest in human capital, break systemic barriers, and open doors to opportunity for all.

If we are to secure a better future for the country, we must equip today's learners with the tools, guidance, and pathways they need to reach their fullest potential. The *Education Pathways Act* is a step toward that future, ensuring that no student is left to figure it out alone.

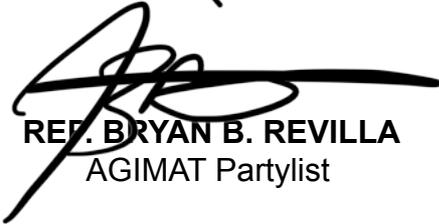
In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.

References:

- WestEd Center for Economic Mobility. (2024). *Five Recommendations for Creating K–16 Pathways for All Students*. WestEd. <https://www.wested.org/blog/five-recommendations-k-16-pathways/>
- Leveraging Career Pathways to Maximize Student Opportunities*. All4Ed. (n.d.). <https://all4ed.org/future-ready-schools/emerging-practices-guides/leveraging-career-pathways-to-maximize-student-opportunities/>
- Philippines: Tertiary school enrollment*. The Global Economy.com. (2025). https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Philippines/Tertiary_school_enrollment/
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**AN ACT
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Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. Short Title. - This Act shall be known as the "Education Pathways Act".

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. - It is the policy of 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. The State shall further establish, maintain, and support a complete, adequate, and integrated system of education relevant to the needs of the people and society.

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

SEC. 3. Education Pathways for Completers of Junior High School. – Upon completing junior high school, the students shall choose between two education pathways: the University Preparatory Program under the Department of Education (DepEd) or the Technical-Vocational Program under the Technical Education Skills Development Authority (TESDA).

SEC. 4. Career Guidance and Assessments of Students. - Career guidance and counseling services, including aptitude and interest assessments to assist in selecting appropriate paths, as provided in Republic Act No. 11206, or the "Secondary School Career Guidance and Counseling Act", shall be indispensable and crucial in aiding the students to make informed decisions about their preferred educational

pathway.

The Department of Education (DepEd) shall administer various relevant assessments, including literacy and numeracy assessments, and National Achievement Tests, to all elementary and secondary students across all levels. These assessments aim to evaluate their competencies and strengths. The results must be communicated to the students and their parents or parent-substitutes to provide them with ample time to consider their educational and career paths. These results shall also serve as a guide to the DepEd and teachers in adjusting and refining their teaching approaches to enhance effectiveness in student learning.

The DepEd, TESDA, Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Employers Confederation of the Philippines, Department of Economy, Planning and Development (DEPDev), and other concerned agencies shall develop a system or a portal where students can access data and information concerning higher and technical education, current career and industry trends and demands, and other tools that will guide the students in their educational and career choices.

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

This curriculum shall encompass fundamental subjects to improve and guarantee that students acquire functional literacy and practical skills, and elective courses to allow students to explore their interests and meet college and university admission requirements of their chosen undergraduate program leading to a bachelor's degree.

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

SEC. 6. *Technical-Vocational Pathway.* - TESDA and the industry boards, partners, experts, and practitioners, including small and medium enterprises, shall develop and offer a variety of technical-vocational programs based on an industry-driven and industry-approved standards designed to equip students with practical skills and competencies that are at par with industry requirements. These programs must lead to a diploma or a higher national certificate level. The standards of these programs must further ensure that students develop functional literacy skills to guarantee their employability after completing their chosen program and passing the necessary assessment for certification.

To effectively implement the programs, TESDA and its accredited technical-

vocational institutions must have a sufficient number of partner enterprises to ensure that the standards and training for these programs are aligned with current industry needs and requirements. This collaboration will involve reviewing and evaluating the standards every three (3) years to ensure they remain relevant and responsive to current industry trends, allowing TESDA to promptly develop training regulations for emerging skill sets. TESDA shall likewise strengthen existing industry boards and establish industry boards for sectors that currently lack them, two years from the effectivity of this Act.

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

TESDA shall give preference to enterprise-based training programs for National Certification levels III and IV, Philippine Qualifications Framework level 5, and new and emerging skills to enhance the skills and knowledge of technical-vocational learners in accordance with the industry demands, and to encourage industry stakeholders in providing enterprise-based training, apprenticeship opportunities, and skills development.

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

SEC. 7. Honors Examination. - The DepEd, in consultation with the CHED, shall develop and administer an advanced placement exam, to be taken voluntarily by Grade 10 students in the University Preparatory Pathway, in order to assess their aptitude and readiness to advance to an undergraduate program.

This advanced placement exam shall give students a grade which shall correspond to their level of proficiency and determine their eligibility to enroll in their chosen undergraduate program in a college or university.

Students who successfully pass the advanced placement exam shall be deemed to have completed the full high school program without the need to undergo Grades 11 and 12, and shall be allowed to enroll in their chosen undergraduate program the following school year, subject to other requirements that colleges or universities may impose.

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

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

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

The DepEd and TESDA shall continue to make available to their respective students the scholarship programs currently implemented in their agencies.

Scholarships in all pathways shall be made available to learners with disabilities, indigenous learners, and those from marginalized communities.

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

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

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

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

An initial implementation phase for three (3) years shall be conducted in a selected number of schools from different regions, socioeconomic conditions, and both urban and rural settings to be determined by the agencies. To ensure the effectiveness of the newly developed curriculum and standards, the DepEd and TESDA shall conduct comprehensive assessments during this pilot phase. The assessments shall be accessible to the public and may undergo independent or third-party review. The DepEd and TESDA shall refine and enhance the curriculum and standards after considering the feedback from various sectors, and roll out the final curriculum and standards immediately thereafter.

Upon attaining the qualification standards, the teachers and instructors under

the current Technical-Vocational Track of the Senior High School of the DepEd shall be given preference in hiring of instructors and teachers by the TESDA for the implementation of this Act.

SEC. 13. Appropriations. - The amount necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be included in the respective budget of DepEd and TESDA in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 14. Joint Congressional Oversight Committee. - There is hereby created a Joint Congressional Oversight Committee (JCOC) to monitor and oversee the implementation of the provisions of this Act. The JCOC shall be composed of five (5) members each from the Senate and from the House of Representatives, respectively, including a member of the minority from each chamber, to be chaired jointly by the chairpersons of the Committees on Basic Education of both the Senate and the House of Representatives. The four (4) other members from each chamber shall be designated, respectively, by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

SEC. 15. Implementing Rules and Regulations. - Within ninety (90) days from the approval of this Act, the DepEd, TESDA, and CHED, in consultation with other concerned stakeholders, shall formulate and issue the rules and regulations implementing the provisions of this Act.

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

SEC. 17. Repealing Clause. - Sec. 4 of Republic Act No. 10533, or the "Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013", is hereby amended to remove the compulsory requirement for Senior High School in basic education.

All laws, orders, and rules and regulations contrary to, or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

SEC. 18. Effectivity. - Notwithstanding the non-issuance of the IRR, this Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,