

SENATE

Senate Bill No. 594

RECEIVED BY: 

INTRODUCED BY SEN. JINGGOY EJERCITO ESTRADA

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This measure is intended to meet the urgent and reasonable need to protect the health, safety and overall well-being of school children and students by adopting a school calendar most suited to Philippine climatic conditions. It would be negated by inability to go to school due to monsoon rains, typhoons respiratory illness of children aggravated by being wet and chilled by rain, or lack of classrooms destroyed by typhoons. This change is consonant with Philippine climatic conditions and the health and safety needs of the children and youth.

The months of June to August are the heaviest rainy months and the occurrence of the grater number of typhoons and monsoon rains. During these months, school children are subjected to the irregularity of school days due to the rains and floods, horrendous difficulties of commuting to and from school, danger to life from open drains resistance and aggravated by intermittent cough, colds and chills. Many of our public schools are unfit for appropriate classroom instruction and the health of the school children when the rains come. Those conducting classes outside of the school itself will be unable to do so.

Studies have shown that adoption of the trimester for tertiary levels is better for accelerated completion of courses and continuity of lessons within the post secondary and college curriculum. Trimesters enable tertiary level students to choose the months best suited to their available time for study and to climate conditions. Trimesters also enable students to complete courses faster, thereby saving on limited resources of the family. For the third semester, students may opt for the distant study plan to avoid the hazards during June to August.

The school calendar proposed for pre-elementary, and secondary levels of education is as follows:

First Semester: September to mid-January plus Saturdays if needed to meet the 110 days required excluding official holidays and to comply with required days plus enrolment or between semester periods to make up for non-seasonal typhoons, calamities and earthquakes.

Second Semester: Mid-January to May plus Saturdays if needed to comply with the 110 days required and to make up for the days lost due to non-seasonal, climatic aberrations, calamities and necessary use of school facilities for refugees.

Third Semester: June to August cover the heaviest rainy months when the children and youth are safer at home. This also meets the agricultural traditions of the country when members of the family all help "bayanihan" style for the family livelihood and community service.

The school calendar proposed for post-secondary and tertiary level is as follows:

First Semester: September to December in order to avoid the months of heaviest rain and greater number of typhoons

Second Semester: January to April with provisions for the holidays and tradition graduation ceremonies.

Third Semester: May to August cover hot summer and heaviest rainy months and student and youth may opt for distant study plan in view of climatic hazards.

Students affected by the disadvantage of heavy rain and monsoon weather may use the third trimester for other useful activities, livelihood projects, agri-industrial pursuits, or tree planting. For those who require additional studies for the third semester, the distant study plan may be used for the heaviest rain and very hot months.

This proposal seeks to begin the revised school calendar with the school year 2007-2008 in conjunction with the lengthening of the school calendar from 200-220 class days. For the pre-elementary, elementary and secondary levels this means the increase of ten (10) more days per semester starting September of each calendar year. For tertiary and post-secondary levels who adopt the trimester system this means adding seven (7) days or about a week more per trimester.

A study and analysis of the rainfall every five years since 1963 shows that the average annual rainfall based on key stations every five years since 1965 up to 1990 is 466.7 millimeters. The heaviest rainfall is for the months of June to August, constituting over the period covered of thirty years (1965 to 1990) at 42.6 percent of the annual rainfall. Thus, the children and youth can avoid being caught in the heaviest rainfall and worst typhoons which are seasonal and periodic during the months of June to August by stating the school calendar in September.

The nation can no longer ignore the reality that our school children and student youth suffer needlessly from having to go to school during the monsoon and typhoon/cyclone months of June to August and it is the time we also consider along with the weather the results of urbanization in school centers such as horrendous traffic difficulty of commuting and the rise of respiratory diseases as the major illness of children and youth below 18 and of school age.

Who will be benefited by this measure?

Each school year about 15.5 million pre-elementary, elementary and secondary school children are affected by the adverse climatic conditions under which they are forced to study, with an additional enrolment of about 300,000 each year.

For the post-secondary and tertiary levels, the school youth affected are about 1.44 million with an additional 78,000 to 122,000 more enrolled each year or about 1.5 million school youth affected of going to school during rainy season and monsoon or typhoon conditions.

For the sake of our children and youth, some 16.94 million more of the from the pre-elementary level to the tertiary level, approval of this measure is urgent, reasonable and necessary for the protection of the future human resources of this nation-Filipino children and youth.



JINGGOY EJERCITO ESTRADA
Senator

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AN ACT
REVISING THE SCHOOL CALENDAR FOR THE HEALTH, SAFETY AND
WELFARE OF SCHOOL CHILDREN AND STUDENT YOUTH, AND FOR THE
OTHER PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. Title. This Act shall be known as the "**School Calendar Act
of 2010**".

SEC. 2. School Calendar. The annual school calendar for pre-
elementary, elementary and secondary levels shall comprise two semesters for
every calendar year. There shall be two hundred twenty (220) school days for
every calendar year or one hundred ten (110) school days per semester. The first
semester shall start the first week of September and shall continue the second
week of January and the second semester shall start the third week of January
and continue until the last week of May.

The school calendar for post-secondary and tertiary levels shall comprise
three (3) trimesters. There shall be two hundred twenty (220) school days for
every calendar year or one hundred ten (110) school days per semester. The first
semester shall start the first week of September and shall continue until the
second week of January and the second semester shall start the third week of
January and continue until the last week of May.

The school calendar for post-secondary and tertiary levels shall comprise
three (3) trimesters. There shall be two hundred twenty (220) school days for
every calendar year or seventy-three (73) days per trimester. The first trimester
shall start the first week of September until the last week of December. The
second trimester shall start the first week of January until the last week of April.
The third trimester shall start the first week of May until the last week of August;
Provide, that, for valid reasons with the written permission of the commission on
Higher Education, public or private post-secondary and tertiary level school may
adopt a particular school calendar on a semestral and modified trimester basis
geared to the needs of its students and the specific climatic conditions of the
area where the school is located: *Provided, further,* that the semestral calendar
shall conform to this Act.

Subject to the provision of this Act, the school calendar for the pre-
elementary, elementary and secondary levels shall be determined by the

Department of Education, taking into consideration days required for enrolment. Official holidays and between semester days off from school for the health of school children. When necessary to complete the required number of school days and to make up for the days' lost due to force majeure, the Department may include Saturdays in the school calendar.

Subject to the provisions of this Act, the actual school calendar and required hours for study according to credits for every trimester of the post-secondary and tertiary level shall be determined by the Commission on Higher Education, taking into consideration the enrolment period, official holidays, and between trimester days off from school for the well-being of school youth. The Commission may require school days on Saturdays to complete required hours for courses or to make up for days lost due to force majeure.

The revised school calendar pursuant to this Act shall be implemented starting school year 2007-2008

SEC. 3. Rules and Regulations. The rules and regulation for the implementation of this Act shall be promulgated by the Department of Education, for the public and private pre-elementary, elementary and secondary levels and by the Commission on Higher Education and the public and private post-secondary and tertiary level of education.

SEC. 4. Resources. Resources required for the appropriate implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual general appropriations of the Department of Education, for the pre-elementary, elementary and secondary levels and of the Commission on Higher Education for the post-secondary and tertiary level. Funds required for the initial year of implementation of the School Calendar from the present system to that proposed under this Act shall be derived from any savings or unused funds of the Department of Education for the pre-elementary, elementary and secondary levels and from the resources under the Act creating the Commission on Higher Education for the post-secondary and tertiary level.

SEC. 5. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect after publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,