

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC )  
OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
Second Regular Session )

Office of the Secretary

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SENATE

S. No. 3220

RE. *[Signature]*

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Introduced by Senator Manuel "Lito" M. Lapid

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### EXPLANATORY NOTE

The right to education is a basic human right which provides for free and compulsory primary education for all. It also includes a responsibility to develop equitable access to higher education. This is how the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights defines the universal entitlement to education, but unfortunately for most of our people, education is a privilege enjoyed by the upper echelon of our society.

This bill seeks to establish rural farm schools in every province as an alternative mode of secondary education which shall provide our rural youth access to schooling at a minimal cost and arm them with skills that can be utilized in their environment as well as encourage them to engage in agricultural or fishing or similar or related courses leading to agricultural or fishing viability and sustainability.

A rural farm school is a parallel learning system and an alternative delivery mode of secondary education that will provide for facilitative and experiential learning on the core subjects of the secondary education curriculum with focus on agriculture or fishery and is designed to address the needs of children in rural, agricultural or fishing communities.

This proposed Act will promote the establishment of a complete, adequate, and integrated system of education that will respond to the needs of our society and encourage non-formal, informal, and indigenous learning system.

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

  
MANUEL "LITO" M. LAPID  
Senator *[Signature]*

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AN ACT  
ESTABLISHING RURAL FARM SCHOOLS AS ALTERNATIVE DELIVERY MODE OF  
SECONDARY EDUCATION AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

*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 "Rural Farm Schools Act".

**SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** - It is hereby declared to be the policy of the State to protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education of all levels and take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all. Further to this, the State shall establish, maintain and support a complete, adequate and integrated system of education relevant to the needs of the people and society and encourage non-formal, informal and indigenous learning systems, as well as self-learning, independent and out-of-school study programs particularly those that respond to community needs.

The State shall likewise promote sustainable agricultural productivity and rural development by empowering the human capital in the countryside through access to avenues of learning suited to the needs and realities of the rural agricultural communities.

In furtherance of the principles of social justice and social equity, the State shall provide the necessary support to the beneficiaries of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) including, but not limited to, the provision of access to a broad range of educational opportunities to their children.

**SEC. 3. Definition of Terms.** - For purposes of this Act, the following terms shall be defined as follows:

- (a) *Alternative delivery mode* refers to the nontraditional education program recognized by the Department of Education (DepED) which applies a flexible learning philosophy and a curricular delivery program that includes non-formal and informal sources of knowledge and skills. An alternative delivery mode may include the use of facilitator-aided and interactive self-instructional print and audio-based learning materials, video tapes, face-to-face structured learning groups, semi-structured and unstructured discussions, one-on-one tutorials, study groups and self-learning groups, demonstration sessions, home visits, mentoring and remediation.
- (b) *Rural farm school* refers to a parallel learning system and an alternative delivery mode of secondary education. It provides for facilitative and experiential learning on the core subjects of the secondary education curriculum with focus on agri-fisheries, designed to address the needs of children in rural, agricultural or fishing communities.
- (c) *Public rural farm school* refers to a rural farm school operated by the government or any of its political subdivisions.
- (d) *Private rural farm school* refers to a rural farm school operated by a private entity, a non-government organization or a farm association. This is a school which is not funded by the government or any of its political subdivisions.
- (e) *Tutors* refer to facilitators or instructors who comprise the teaching staff of the rural farm school. They are specialists in their own fields of endeavor and who facilitate the educative process.
- (f) *CARP beneficiaries* refer to farmers or their kin who had received Certificates of Land Ownership Award (CLOA) or Emancipation Patents under Republic Act No. 6657, as amended, otherwise known as the "Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law of 1988".

(g) *Agrarian reform community* refers to a barangay or cluster of barangays where a critical mass of agrarian reform beneficiaries is situated.

(h) *Farm entrepreneurship* refers to the intermingling of finance, business and agriculture in setting into operation or motion a business venture involved in the production of agricultural commodities or enterprises.

**SEC. 4. *Establishment of Rural Farm Schools.*** - rural farm schools are hereby established to provide an alternative delivery mode of secondary education. The public rural farm schools shall be free from tuition and other school fees, except those fees which may be allowed by the DepED. Private rural farm schools shall set a minimal tuition and other fees subject to the approval of the DepED: Provided, That the relatives of CARP beneficiaries up to the third degree of consanguinity in the descending line shall be exempt from payment of the fees.

The DepED shall institutionalize high standards of quality assurance in rural farm schools. These standards shall involve prescribing guidelines and policies on the operation and management of rural farm schools as well as basic curricular content to ensure the credibility and academic integrity of rural farm schools.

Within one (1) year upon the formulation of the implementing rules and regulations of this Act, the DepED shall encourage the establishment of at least one (1) public rural farm school in every province in the country.

**SEC. 5. *Implementing Agency.*** - The DepED, through the Bureau of Secondary Education, shall regulate the organization and operation of the rural farm schools and the implementation of its curriculum as prescribed herein.

**SEC. 6. *Curriculum and Teaching Methodology.*** - The curriculum of the rural farm school shall follow the core secondary education curriculum of the DepED with add-on courses focused on Agri-Fishery Arts.

The last two (2) academic years in the rural farm school educational system shall focus on integrative learning across all subject disciplines in the curriculum with emphasis on farm entrepreneurship theory and practice and its promotion as a tool in

cultivating local entrepreneurs, revitalizing rural economies and repopulating rural communities.

The rural farm schools shall apply a flexible learning philosophy which may include an alternative delivery mode as recognized by the DepED.

**SEC. 7. *Eligible Students.*** - Graduates of elementary school education, regardless of age, shall be eligible to enroll in the rural farm schools for their secondary education.

Relatives of the beneficiaries of the CARP up to the third degree of consanguinity in the descending line shall be given priority in admission when the rural farm school cannot accommodate all of those applying for enrollment.

**SEC. 8. *The School Head.*** - Every rural farm school shall have a school head to oversee its operations and management. The school head shall be tasked to facilitate the tutors' participation in professional development activities including technical skills training and extension services by the DepED, the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR). The school head shall also ensure that the curricular program is properly implemented and sufficient and adequate educational resources are available and accessible to the students.

**SEC. 9. *The Tutors.*** - The tutors of the rural farm school shall be specialists in their fields of endeavor. They shall act as teachers, guidance counselors, rural developers, livelihood project proponents, marketing specialists and/or project consultants. They shall establish a working partnership with the parents by conducting parent-tutor dialogues and parent workshops.

**SEC. 10. *Salary of Rural Farm School Personnel.*** - Public rural farm school personnel shall receive a monthly basic salary based on the compensation prescribed under the Salary Standardization Law, as amended, in addition to other benefits prescribed by law.

In the case of private rural farm school personnel, they shall receive the salary and other benefits prescribed under the Labor Code of the Philippines.

**SEC. 11. *Skills Training and Extension Support.*** - The DepED, the DAR, the DA, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) and the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) shall provide continuous technical skills training and provision of extension materials including, but not limited to, books, student workbooks, teaching session guides and other materials or equipment on the subjects offered, and other extension services to the tutors of rural farm schools.

**SEC. 12. *Accreditation of Rural Farm Schools.*** - The DepED shall set the requirements for accreditation of rural farm schools and accredit those that shall meet the prescribed requirements. Rural farm schools may not operate unless accredited by the DepED.

The DepED may withdraw or downgrade the accreditation of a rural farm school if it fails to maintain the standards set for its accreditation.

All accredited private rural farm schools, their mentors or facilitators and students shall be eligible for subsidies under Republic Act NO. 6728, as amended by Republic Act No. 8545, or the "Expanded Government Assistance to Students and Teachers in Private Education Act".

**SEC. 13. *School Monitoring and Evaluation.*** - The DepED shall conduct regular monitoring and evaluation to determine continuing compliance with the requirements on accreditation status of the rural farm schools and to determine whether or not the rural farm schools adhere to the standards of quality assurance prescribed by the DepED.

**SEC. 14. *Tax Exemption.*** - Any donation, contribution, bequest or grant which may be made to a rural farm school duly accredited under Section 12 of this Act shall be exempt from the donor's tax and the same shall be considered as allowable deduction from the gross income in the computation of the income tax of the donor in accordance with the provisions of the National Internal Revenue Code (NIRC) of 1997, as amended: Provided, That the rural farm school has likewise been accredited by the Philippine Council for NGO Certification (PCNC).

**SEC. 15. *Appropriations.*** - The Secretary of Education shall immediately include in the Department's program the operationalization of the public rural farm schools, the funding of which shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

**SEC. 16. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** - Within ninety (90) days after the effectivity of this Act, the DepED, in consultation with the DA, the DAR, the TESDA and the ATI, shall formulate the rules and regulations needed for the effective implementation of this Act.

**SEC. 17. *Separability Clause.*** - If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

**SEC. 18. *Repealing Clause.*** - All laws or parts thereof, decrees, orders, rules and regulations inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

**SEC. 19. *Effectivity Clause.*** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette.

Approved.