



Republic of the Philippines

House of Representatives

Quezon City, Metro Manila

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4



**Introduced by Representatives Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez,
Andrew Julian K. Romualdez and Jude A. Acidre**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Republic Act No. 6728, as amended by Republic Act No. 8545—collectively known as the “Expanded Government Assistance to Students and Teachers in Private Education Act” (E-GASTPE)—was enacted to provide financial support to students and teachers in private educational institutions. However, more than two decades since its passage, the educational landscape has significantly evolved, rendering some of its provisions outdated and insufficient to address current challenges.

Today, private educational institutions face mounting difficulties. Notably, during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, enrollment in private schools plummeted by 48%, highlighting the sector’s vulnerability. Even before the pandemic, many students had already been transferring to public schools due to the exodus of private school teachers—often lured by better compensation and job security in the public sector. This shift has not only strained private schools but has also placed immense pressure on the public school system, which must absorb the growing number of transferees, often without commensurate resources.

Given these circumstances, there is an urgent need to update and expand the scope of E-GASTPE. A new legislative measure is imperative—one that is responsive to the current realities, strengthens private education, and reinforces the complementary roles of public and private institutions in delivering accessible, quality basic education to all Filipino learners.

This bill was filed by Representatives Roman T. Romulo, Ruth Mariano-Hernandez, Ron P. Salo, Yedda Marie K. Romualdez, and Jude A. Acidre, among others, during the Nineteenth Congress and was approved on Third Reading. It seeks to:

- a. *Affirm the right to quality education* – It recognizes the constitutional mandate to make quality education accessible to all and acknowledges the complementary roles of public and private schools in delivering this mandate.
- b. *Institutionalize and improve the voucher program* – By codifying the voucher program, the government aims to provide financial support to students—especially the underprivileged—to enroll in private basic education institutions when public schools are overcrowded or inaccessible.
- c. *Create the Bureau of Private Education* – A specialized bureau under the Department of Education (DepEd) will be established to oversee and regulate all matters related to private basic education, ensuring accountability and effective management of assistance programs.
- d. *Ensure quality and equity* – The bill sets quality assurance mechanisms, performance evaluations, and tracer systems to ensure that both students and schools meet national education standards. It also prioritizes financial aid to vulnerable and underserved sectors.
- e. *Support teachers and institutions* – The bill provides for in-service training, scholarships, and salary subsidies for private school teachers, and capacity-building programs for institutions.
- f. *Align with national development goals* – Through coordination with the DepEd, NEDA, and DBM, the bill aims to ensure that public investments in private education lead to measurable educational outcomes.
- g. *Replace outdated laws* – It repeals specific sections of RA 8545 and RA 6728 (laws on government assistance to students and teachers in private education), updating them to respond to present-day challenges in the education sector.

This bill addresses the long-standing and emerging challenges faced by private basic education—such as enrollment decline, teacher migration, and resource limitations—while reinforcing equity, quality assurance, and institutional

development. It promotes educational choice, empowers families, and alleviates overcrowding in public schools, thereby fostering a balanced, efficient, and inclusive education system.

Through timely and strategic government intervention, this bill aims to sustain and uplift private education as a vital partner in nation-building, ensuring that no Filipino learner is left behind.

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



FERDINAND MARTIN G. ROMUALDEZ



JUDE A. ACIDRE



ANDREW JULIAN K. ROMUALDEZ



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AN ACT

ESTABLISHING THE PRIVATE BASIC EDUCATION VOUCHER PROGRAM, PROVIDING FOR THE CREATION OF THE BUREAU OF PRIVATE EDUCATION, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, REPEALING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTIONS 2, 3, 4(2), 4(3), 5, 6, 7, 12, 14, AND 15 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8545, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "EXPANDED GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE TO STUDENTS AND TEACHERS IN PRIVATE EDUCATION ACT", WHICH AMENDED REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6728, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE TO STUDENTS AND TEACHERS IN PRIVATE EDUCATION ACT"

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 “Private
2 Basic Education Vouchers Assistance Act”.

3
4 **SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.*** – It is the declared policy of the State to
5 protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and
6 shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all. As part of its
7 mandate, it is the State’s policy to establish and maintain a system of
8 scholarship grants, subsidies, and other incentives which shall be available to
9 deserving students, as determined by the guidelines, in both public and private
10 schools, especially to the underprivileged. Likewise, the State recognizes the
11 complementary roles of public and private educational institutions in the
12 educational system and the invaluable contribution that the private schools
13 have made and will make to education.

1
2 The State shall provide the mechanisms to augment the resources and
3 enhance the quality of private basic education, specifically promoting the
4 complementary roles of public and private schools and thus recognize the
5 government's priority of providing basic elementary and secondary education to
6 all Filipino students.
7

8 **SEC. 3. *Coverage.*** – This Act shall cover all private basic education
9 institutions that receive government assistance in the form of vouchers for
10 qualified students, teachers and schools. This covers all the years of basic
11 education.
12

13 The programs of assistance for students under this Act shall be extended
14 only to citizens of the Philippines.
15

16 **SEC. 4. *Criteria for Voucher Assistance.*** – The programs for voucher
17 assistance shall be based on a set of criteria which include among others, the
18 following:
19

20 (a) *Criteria for Students.* – The voucher assistance will be provided to students
21 from middle-income families, as determined by the Philippine Statistics
22 Authority (PSA), who attended public schools identified by the
23 Department of Education as congested or those living in areas with
24 congested public schools or without a nearby public school who wish to
25 enroll in private basic education schools.
26

27 Students who are most vulnerable and underprivileged shall receive
28 a higher voucher amount as determined by the Basic Education Assistance
29 Council (BEAC).
30

31 (b) *Criteria for Schools.* – The participating private basic education schools
32 shall receive assistance based on Quality Assurance under Section 6 of this
33 Act, and the geographic spread and size of student enrollment, as likewise
34 determined by the BEAC, except schools with gaps in resources and
35 facilities which are located in geographically isolated and disadvantaged
36 and conflict-affected areas, or GIDCA schools. Private schools shall
37 undergo the process of recognition and periodic assessment to be able to
38 participate in the programs for voucher assistance.
39

40 **SEC. 5. *Empowering Student Choice.*** – The Department of Education
41 (DepEd) shall create a system that allows students and parents to select their
42 preferred schools from a registry of participating recognized schools, subject to
43 availability of slots.
44

45 The registry of participating recognized private basic educational
46 institutions shall include their schools' information, such as location, number of
47 available slots, number of students per classroom and level, extra-curricular

1 programs, current tuition fees, and top-up required in cases where the voucher
2 amount is less than the tuition fee, among others.

3

4 **SEC. 6. *Quality Assurance.*** – The DepEd shall establish, operate and
5 maintain a system and mechanism for monitoring program outcomes to ensure
6 accountability of participating recognized private basic educational institutions.
7 This covers the following areas:

- 8
- 9 (a) Improved Student Performance – Appropriate performance indicators to
10 determine the extent and outcome of the government assistance and
11 subsidies (GAS) programs including youth literacy rates, national and
12 international assessment scores, among others. For this purpose, the
13 National Achievement Tests and all national assessment examinations
14 generally given by the DepEd shall be administered to all eligible students
15 in all participating private basic education institutions;
- 16
- 17 (b) Improved Student Outcomes – Tracer system to collect and evaluate the
18 career and employment path of its graduates;
- 19
- 20 (c) School Performance – School performance data indicating the mean,
21 median and mode of the scores of the students in the national
22 examinations, and such other measures of quality education delivery; and
- 23
- 24 (d) Priority Subsidy for Underprivileged Students – Distribution of the GAS
25 programs while ensuring that funding is equitably allocated following the
26 order of priority groups.
- 27

28 **SEC. 7. *Other Forms of Assistance.*** – The following shall consist of
29 assistance to private basic education institutions and teachers participating in the
30 voucher program under this Act:

31

32 The forms of assistance granted to teachers in the participating recognized
33 private basic education schools include:

- 34
- 35 (a) In-service training fund for teachers in private basic education schools;
36 (b) Scholarships for qualified private basic education teachers enrolled in
37 quality graduate programs; and
38 (c) Participation in government-funded in-service training for basic education
39 teachers.

40

41 The DepEd may establish a program of assistance for the development of
42 qualified recognized private basic education schools to cover the following areas
43 of school operation:

- 44
- 45 (a) Institutional Development;

- 1 (b) Organizational Development;
2 (c) Human Resource Development;
3 (d) Curriculum and Instructional Development;
4 (e) Research and Planning; and
5 (f) Facilities and School Improvement.

6

7 Consistent with Section 10 of Republic Act No. 10533, or the “Enhanced
8 Basic Education Act of 2013”, the DepEd, in consultation with the Department
9 of Budget and Management (DBM), may develop other forms of financial
10 arrangements and engage the services of private basic education schools based on
11 the complementary roles of public and private institutions in the educational
12 system.

13

14 **SEC. 8. Basic Education Voucher Program.** – Under the basic education
15 voucher program, kindergarten, elementary, and secondary students enrolled in
16 recognized private basic education schools charging school fees shall be provided
17 by the government with vouchers in such amount as may be determined by the
18 DepEd: *Provided*, That the amount shall not be less than the amount currently
19 provided by the DepEd: *Provided*, That the government shall disburse payment
20 of the vouchers to the schools concerned within sixty (60) days from the
21 submission of complete documents to the DepEd.

22

23 The budget for the basic education voucher program shall be equitably
24 allocated and distributed among all regions including the Bangsamoro
25 Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) based on official data
26 sources including, but not limited to, congestion data and open seats, giving
27 priority to underprivileged students.

28

29 Pursuant to Section 2(V), Article V of the Bangsamoro Organic Law, the
30 Bangsamoro Government shall exercise its authority over education for the areas
31 under the BARMM and will directly implement the same program to be charged
32 against their block grant. The DepEd shall provide technical assistance in the
33 implementation of the GAS programs, when necessary.

34

35 Schools participating in the basic education voucher program may increase
36 tuition on the condition that seventy percent (70%) of the amount of the tuition
37 increases shall go to the payment of salaries, wages, allowances, and other
38 statutory benefits of teaching and non-teaching personnel, except administrators
39 who are principal stockholders of the school, and may be used to cover salary
40 increase as provided for in the collective bargaining agreements existing or in
41 force at the time when this Act is approved and made effective. At least twenty
42 percent (20%) of the tuition increases shall go to the improvement or
43 modernization of buildings, equipment, libraries, laboratories, gymnasium and
44 similar facilities and to the payment of other costs of operation. For this purpose,
45 schools shall maintain a separate record of accounts for all assistance received
46 from the government, any tuition increase, and the detailed disposition and use
47 thereof, which record shall be made available for periodic inspection as may be
48 determined by the DepEd.

1
2 **SEC. 9. In-Service Training Fund or Inset Fund.** – For the purpose of
3 improving the quality of teaching in private basic education, there is hereby
4 established in the DepEd an Inset Fund to provide for training programs for the
5 upgrading of knowledge and teaching competencies in critical subject areas and
6 for the modernization of teaching techniques and strategies, including training on
7 the use of computers and of other multi-media educational technologies to assist
8 instruction: *Provided*, That the amount of Inset Fund available to private basic
9 education shall not exceed that available to public basic education as per capita
10 basis: *Provided, further*, That the training programs shall be approved by the
11 DepEd.

12
13 **SEC. 10. Teachers' Salary Subsidy Fund.** – A Teachers' Salary Subsidy
14 Fund is hereby established in the DepEd to grant government subsidy to teachers
15 in recognized private basic education schools participating in the programs of
16 assistance under in this Act: *Provided*, That the government shall provide the
17 teachers with salary subsidy, to be determined by the DepEd: *Provided, further*,
18 That the government shall disburse payment within sixty (60) days after the close
19 of the school year upon submission of complete documents, including but not
20 limited to qualification and actual teaching service, to the DepEd: *Provided,*
21 *furthermore*, That the present allocation out of increases from tuition and other
22 income shall be maintained: *Provided, finally*, That the teacher's salary subsidy
23 received by the teacher shall form part of the exclusions from taxable gross
24 income in accordance with Section 32(B)(7)(e) of the National Internal Revenue
25 Code of 1997, as amended.

26
27 **SEC. 11. Creation of the Bureau of Private Education.** – The Bureau of
28 Private Education (BPE) under the DepEd shall be created to serve as the focal
29 office for the administration, supervision, and regulation of all matters relating to
30 private basic education institutions, including government assistance and
31 subsidies. It shall be headed by a Bureau Director.

32
33 It shall have the following powers and functions:

- 34
35 (a) Monitor and assess the implementation of the private basic education
36 institutions of the policies, plans, and programs established by the DepED
37 as recommended by BPE;
38 (b) Set and enforce minimum standards for programs and institutions of
39 learning, subject to public hearing;
40 (c) Ensure that the activities, efforts, and performance of private basic
41 education institutions shall meet the high standards of excellence and
42 accountability;
43 (d) Administer and implement the policies and programs related to the
44 assistance and subsidies given by the government to students, teachers, and
45 schools in private education;
46 (e) Establish and support partnerships with individual private education
47 institutions to respond effectively to the pressing needs of students and
48 teachers, and to provide learning solutions to underserved communities;

- (f) Monitor and ensure compliance of private basic education institutions to the promulgated rules and regulations of the DepEd in all matters concerning private schools, including tuition fee increases; and
 - (g) Such other powers and functions as may be necessary for the effective and efficient implementation of this Act.

SEC. 12. *Program Administration and Implementation.* – The BEAC shall be responsible for policy guidance and direction, monitoring and evaluation of new and existing programs while the Government Assistance and Subsidies Service (GASS) under the BPE shall be responsible for the day-to-day administration and implementation on the programs of assistance to private basic education.

The BEAC shall be composed of the Secretary of the DepEd, as Chairperson, and the Secretary of the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) and the Secretary of the DBM, as members.

The alternate representative of the Chairperson shall possess the rank of an Undersecretary while the alternate representatives of the members shall possess the rank of not less than an Assistant Secretary in order to secure a quorum.

The BEAC shall meet, from time to time, as the need arises, to assess the effectiveness of the programs under this Act and to propose to Congress other forms of assistance to participating students and schools.

The GASS shall serve as the permanent secretariat for the implementation of the GAS programs under this Act.

The DepEd may engage the services of a third party co-implementor of the GAS programs under this Act.

SEC. 13. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year's appropriation of the DepEd. Thereafter, such amount shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 14. *Penalties.* – In case of violation of this Act by a private school, the DepEd may bar, after due process, such school from participating in or benefiting from the programs of this Act, and from other programs of the DepEd, without prejudice to administrative and criminal charges that may be filed against the school or its responsible officers under existing laws.

1 **SEC. 15. *Transitory Provision.*** – Subject to the availability of funds, the
2 implementation of the provisions stipulated in this Act for the kindergarten and
3 elementary levels shall gradually commence in school year 2026-2027, as may
4 be determined by the DepEd.

5
6 **SEC. 16. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** – Within ninety (90) days
7 from the approval of this Act, the DepEd shall, in consultation with the NEDA,
8 the DBM, and other concerned stakeholders from the national associations of
9 private basic education institutions, promulgate the rules and regulations
10 implementing the provisions of this Act.

11
12 **SEC. 17. *Separability Clause.*** – If any provision of this Act is held invalid
13 or unconstitutional, the other provisions not so declared shall remain in full force
14 and effect.

15
16 **SEC. 18. *Repealing Clause.*** – Sections 2, 3, 4(2), 4(3), 5, 6, 7, 12, 14, and
17 15 of Republic Act No. 8545, or the “Expanded Government Assistance to
18 Students and Teachers in Private Education Act”, which amended Republic Act
19 No. 6728, or the “Government Assistance to Students and Teachers in Private
20 Education Act”, are hereby repealed. All other laws, decrees, orders and rules and
21 regulations contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby
22 repealed or amended accordingly.

23
24 **SEC. 19. *Effectivity.*** – Notwithstanding the non-issuance of the
25 implementing rules and regulations, this Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days
26 after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general
27 circulation.

Approved,