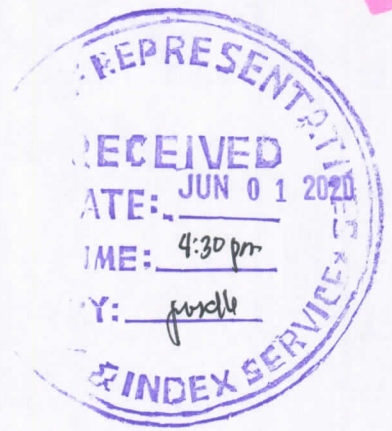


Republic of the Philippines  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
Quezon City, Metro Manila

**EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS**  
*First Regular Session*

HOUSE BILL NO. 6904



**Introduced by Representative Roman T. Romulo**

### **EXPLANATORY NOTE**

In the midst of a global pandemic, uncertainty seems to be the only thing certain. The very mettle of our people is being tested in all fronts. Both the public and private sectors are doing what they can to mitigate the damage that the COVID-19 virus has been causing and is impending to cause in our country.

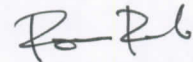
In this light, we look into this salient policy of the state: *It is the policy of the State to protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all.* This policy enshrined in our Constitution is unqualified, such that even in times of local or national emergencies, where it is feasible, education must continue. It is clear now that no vaccine will be available in the immediate future. We are here to state that no compromise will be made on the health and safety of our learners. However, we cannot at the same time sleep on the rights of our people to access quality education. We must work towards finding a solution to deliver to our people what they rightfully deserve.

This measure institutionalizes *blended* and *flexible* learning in all public and private schools during national and local emergencies. Blended and Flexible learning is the designation used to refer to a range of learning possibilities in an education program in which the delivery varies by combining learning platforms such as online distance learning, modular distance learning, television or radio based instruction, and/or traditional classroom based learning. The combination will depend on the circumstances of the calamity or disaster and the capacity of the learners in the areas affected.

This bill was crafted to enable the education sector to be able to effectively respond to the current paradigm of the COVID-19 Pandemic. However, it is equally important to note that the responsiveness that this bill will provide will not only be applicable to the current national emergency, but to our adaptability to future emergencies of this magnitude.

Again, it cannot be gainsaid that the welfare of our learners is of paramount importance. However, the ingenuity and resilience of our people have shown that the will overcomes mere circumstance. If there is a way to achieve our purpose, there is no reason not to pursue it.

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



**ROMAN T. ROMULO**  
Lone District, Pasig City

Republic of the Philippines  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
Batasan Hills, Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS  
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 6904

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Introduced by Representative ROMAN T. ROMULO

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AN ACT

INSTITUTIONALIZING THE BLENDED AND FLEXIBLE LEARNING IN ALL PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS, TECHNICAL-VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES DURING NATIONAL AND LOCAL EMERGENCIES 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 “Public Emergency Blended and Flexible Learning Act of 2020.”

**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 even in times of local or national calamity. Being unqualified, this means that the this right shall not be derogated unless it is necessary under the circumstances.

Towards this end, equitable access to quality education shall continue to be made available, even in times of local or national calamity, to all students and learners through means that will not pose a risk to their life, health, safety, and security.

**Sec. 3. *Definition of Terms***. – As used in this Act:

- a. *Public Emergency* refers to a declaration by the national or local Chief Executive due to the occurrence of natural or man-made calamity, including, but not limited to armed conflict, imminent threat of an illness or health condition caused by bio-terrorism, epidemic or pandemic disease, or a novel and highly fatal infectious agent or biological toxin, that poses substantial risk of significant number of human lives resulting to fatalities or incidents of permanent or long-term disability;



- b. *Flexible Learning* refers to a higher education student-centered, guided independent study, making use of well-studied teaching and learning pedagogies to deliver well-designed learning materials in various media.
- c. *Blended Learning* refers to the designation of a range of learning possibilities in an education program in which content and instruction are presented by combining online distance learning, modular distance learning, and television (TV) or radio-based instruction with established classroom set up, or other learning platforms that may be designed or created in the future.

**Sec. 4. Use of Blended and Flexible Learning in All Institutions of Learning in Public and Private Schools During Public Emergency.** –To ensure the safety and continued access of the students and learners to quality education, all basic, technical-vocational and higher education institutions are hereby mandated to adopt a suitable Blended and Flexible Learning system of education during a declared local or national emergency when physical presence of students in school is determined to be unsafe.

**Sec. 5. Blended and Flexible Learning Program Development.** – The Department of Education (DepEd), the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) shall initiate the development of the appropriate Blended or Flexible Learning system within their respective jurisdiction taking into consideration the availability and sufficiency of school resources. Schools, under the supervision and guidance of Regional Offices and Divisions, shall be authorized to decide on their specific learning delivery modalities which they deem appropriate: *Provided*, That these are consistent with the standards set by authorities. Technical and vocational institutions shall identify which course offering can be redesigned for Blended Learning Modality in collaboration with TESDA Regional and Provincial Offices. The DepEd, CHED, and TESDA shall provide effective modules and assessment tools for Blended and Flexible Learning. A flexible alternative grading system shall be adopted during the school year when there is a declaration of local or national emergency as provided in this Act.

The DepEd, CHED or TESDA may tap the expertise of other industry players in digital content production that can be used for teaching.

**Sec. 6. Online or Modular Distance Learning.** – Prior to the conduct of an online class, all teachers and faculty shall assess the information technology capacity of their students including their access to personal computers, laptops, or gadgets and to the internet. Orientation on utilization of alternative delivery modalities and corresponding learners' materials or modules and psycho-social support activities shall be given. Schools shall also ensure the readiness of parents and guardians in supporting learners while on remote learning at home setting.

**Sec.7. Training of Teachers.** –The information technology (IT) literacy of teachers and faculty and their access to computers and the internet shall be assessed prior to the conduct of online trainings. The DepEd, CHED, and TESDA shall provide the necessary training programs for public and private school teachers and faculty in the development and delivery of the curriculum content and instruction under the Blended and Flexible Learning system.



**Sec.8. Subsidized Data Rates for Access of Blended and Flexible Learning Materials Published Online.** – During the period of the declared local or national emergency, access to websites where the Blended and Flexible Learning materials are published or posted shall be subsidized by the government or may be accessed free of charge.

**Sec. 9. Face-to-face Interactions.** – Face-to-face learning shall only be allowed when local risk severity permits and subject to standards and measures set by the local or national authorities. A face-to-face class may have a reduced class size in compliance with the physical distancing measures set by the authorities.

**Sec. 10. TV and Radio-Based Instruction.** – The Presidential Communications and Operations Office (PCOO) and the government TV and radio stations under its supervision shall provide block time for the DepEd, CHED, and TESDA to broadcast TV and radio based lectures, instructions, or demonstrations in times of local or national emergencies especially in areas where students and teacher/faculty cannot meet face to face due to the exigency of the situation and online distance learning is not feasible. These broadcasts shall be supplemented by traditional printed self-learning modules to be distributed to students.

**Sec. 11. Other School Activities.** – Conduct of curricular and co-curricular activities involving gatherings such as science fairs, trade fairs, school sports, campus journalism, festival of talents, and other similar activities shall be cancelled, if the declaration so requires, during periods of local or national emergencies except those that will be conducted online.

**Sec.12 Appropriations.** – The amount necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be charged against the respective budgets of the DepEd, CHED, and TESDA in the annual General Appropriations Act.

**Sec.13. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** – Within ninety (60) days from the approval of this Act, the Secretary of Education, Chairperson of CHED and Director General of TESDA, in consultation with the Department of Health, Department of Information and Communications Technology, Department of the Interior and Local Government, PCOO, and other concerned government agencies, shall formulate the rules and regulations implementing the provisions of this Act.

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

**Sec.15. Repealing Clause.** – All laws, orders, and rules and regulations contrary to, or inconsistent with, the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

**Sec.16. Effectivity.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

*Approved,*