

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

**EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS  
First Regular Session**

House Bill No. 3983



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Introduced by **Hon. RONNIE L. ONG**

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**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

The change in the Philippine academic calendar year has long been debated already. For those who have opposed it, the reasons revolved around apprehensions for the resulting changes- changes in schedule of entrance and licensure exams and Christmas and summer breaks, Holy Week during the second semester and more importantly, some classes in the second semester coinciding with the hot season.

On the other hand, those who have supported the change in academic calendar have cited the greater advantages. For one, the alignment of academic calendar with ASEAN and the rest of the world will facilitate learning and research, eliminate semestral overlaps and will encourage exchange programs or student and faculty mobility. There are also sectors or industries benefitting from common break schedule of students, especially families whose time and activities will be protected from disruptions. In addition, families in the provinces who are engaged in agriculture would have many helping hands as possible during harvest or planting periods. Hence, changing the academic calendar is pro-agriculture too.

At present, the CHED, along with institutions of higher learning, have acceded to the call of changing the academic calendars. However, DepEd, still bound by Section 3 of Republic Act No. 7797, have not followed through. This resulted to different academic calendars for public and private elementary schools, high schools and senior high schools on one hand and the colleges and universities on the other. There are also different breaks that have compromised the needs of families and other sectors.

DepEd reasoned that there are not enough student mobility for students of basic education. DepEd also believed that tropical cyclone occurrences are spread throughout the rainy season and will not necessitate a change in academic calendar.

Despite the prevailing position of DepEd, however, there remains a pressing need for the government to synchronize all academic calendars of schools at all levels. For one, circumstances have changed including the increased mobility opportunities

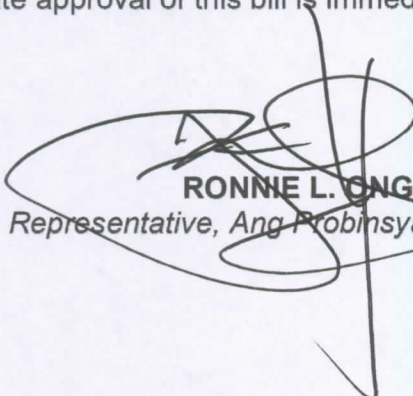
for high school and senior high school students. A synchronized academic calendar too respects the welfare and aspirations of Filipino families as described above.

More importantly, there is already scientific basis for the changing of academic calendar. In a 2016 study by DOST-PAGASA<sup>1</sup>, the old academic calendar (June-March) was compared to the new academic calendar (August-May) in terms of three climatic factors- rainy season, days with extreme rainfall and temperature and occurrence of tropical cyclone. It was found out that school days seemed to be better placed in the new academic calendar because there will be fewer rainy school days, lesser extreme rainfall events and, for the most parts in the country, a reduced number of possible class cancellations due to tropical cyclones. One of the downsides, however, was that some school days in the new academic calendar (second semester) also coincide with extreme hot days.

Based on the foregoing, synchronization of academic calendar at all school levels nationwide must already be mandated subject to a flexible policy that, to avoid extreme rainfall and temperature events, affected regions or areas may start the school year earlier or later based on scientific data from DOST-PAGASA but still within the one-month period mandated under this Act.

It is about time that we institute an academic calendar year that is not only taking into consideration the learning opportunities it may bring but also the unique national and regional climactic conditions we have.

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

  
**RONNIE L. ONG**  
*Representative, Ang Probinsyano Party-list*

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<sup>1</sup> "Climactic Insights on Academic Calendar Shift in the Philippines" (2016) by Marcelino Q. Villafuerte II, Edna L. Juanillo and Flaviana D. Hilario



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**AN ACT SYNCHRONIZING THE ACADEMIC CALENDAR IN ALL LEVELS OF  
PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS NATIONWIDE**

*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 "Synchronized Academic  
Calendar 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.

Towards this end, the State, in developing educational policies such as  
planning and instituting the academic calendar, shall take into account not only  
national and global opportunities that encourage or facilitate learning but also our  
unique national and regional climactic conditions that affect the safety and health of  
the youth. The State also recognizes that the welfare and aspirations of Filipino  
families can be promoted by instituting a uniform academic calendar.

**SEC. 3. Synchronized Academic Calendar.** All levels of public and private  
schools nationwide shall formally open or start the academic school year not earlier  
than the second Monday of August and not later than the second Monday of  
September every year.

In designating the Christmas break every year, no public and private school  
shall extend classes, including make-up classes, beyond December 15.

**SEC. 4. Actual Opening of Classes per Affected Region or Area.** Based on  
historical data and projections of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST)

and the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) on rainfall, tropical cyclone occurrence and temperature, the Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) may mandate different actual opening of classes or academic calendar per affected region or area, within the one-month period stated in the preceding section, in order to avoid extreme rainfall or temperature events.

This authority includes fixing the length of Christmas break for the affected region or area and actual re-opening of classes after the Christmas break therein.

**SEC. 5. Report to Congress.** Within two (2) years from the implementation of this Act and every year thereafter, the DepEd and CHED, in coordination with other concerned agencies, shall jointly report to Congress, through the proper Committees thereof, the following matters:

- a) The benefits of the academic calendar shift to students in general, in terms of improved learning and exchange program opportunities, number of classes held, number of class cancellations, etc.;
- b) Gaps in the implementation of the law or its effect alongside other academic policies such as class cancellation, length of classes, number of semestral periods, etc.; and
- c) Recommendations on maintaining or changing the academic calendar nationwide or per region or area based on unique climatic conditions.

**SEC. 6. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** The DepEd, CHED, in coordination with the DOST, PAGASA and other concerned agencies, shall jointly formulate the implementing rules and regulations within sixty (60) days after the effectivity of this Act.

**SEC. 7. Separability Clause.** If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining provisions not affected thereby shall remain valid and subsisting.

**SEC. 8. Repealing Clause.** The first paragraph of Section 3 of Republic Act No. 7797 and any other law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

**SEC. 9. Effectivity.** This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in any two (2) newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines.

Approved,