

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

**EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS**  
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **4210**



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**INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE ALFRED VARGAS**

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#### **EXPLANATORY NOTE**

Section 1, Article XIV of the 1987 Philippine Constitution states that:

*The State shall 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.*

In the National Achievement Test for S.Y. 2016-2017, national performance in math has worsened, with the grade 10 students posting an average score of about 37% and therefore exhibiting Low Proficiency with respect to the subject matter.

However, despite the increasing government commitment to improving the state of Philippine education, recent editions of the Global Competitiveness Survey have Consistently ranked the Philippines in the bottom 50% of participating countries in terms of the quality of math and science education at the tertiary level.

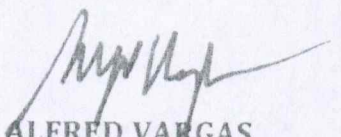
A universal tenet of quality education, consistently reported by reputable education experts and enshrined in the 1987 Philippine Constitution, is ensuring equitable access to education. This entails ensuring access to all forms of education, including specialized math and science curricula.

Nevertheless, this type of valuable, oft-sought-after education is only available to the lucky few that are admitted to the Philippine Science High School system, one of the Regional

Science High Schools, or those who are fortunate enough to live near one of the other science high schools scattered across the country.

This bill seeks to provide equitable access to quality education in the pure and applied Sciences, Mathematics, and Technology for all Filipinos as a means to nurture future generations of scientists, mathematicians, engineers, and other professionals who will serve the nation as a catalyst for scientific, technological, and industrial progress.

Thus, the passage of this measure is earnestly sought.



ALFRED VARGAS



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**AN ACT**

**PROMOTING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PUBLIC MATH AND SCIENCE HIGH  
SCHOOLS IN PREVIOUSLY UNDERSERVED AREAS, AND  
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFORE**

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

**SECECTION. 1.      *Short Title.*** - This Act shall be known as the "*Equitable Access  
to Math and Science Education Act of 2019*".

**SECTION.      2.      *Declaration of Policy.*** - It is hereby declared a policy of the  
State to provide equitable access to quality education in the pure and applied Sciences,  
mathematics, and technology for all Filipinos as a means to nurture future generations of  
scientists, mathematicians, engineers, and other professionals who will serve the nation as  
catalyst for scientific, technological, and industrial progress.

Pursuant to this declaration, the State shall work hand-in-hand with local government units  
(LGUs) to eliminate economic and geographical barriers that restrict the access of otherwise  
willing and qualified students to said education.

**SECTION.      3.      *Coverage.*** - All provinces of the Republic of the Philippines  
which do not have at least one (1) public math and science high school currently operating  
within their respective geographical boundaries at the time this Act takes effect shall be  
required to fulfill the establishment requirements prescribed by Section 4 of this Act.



For the purposes of this Act, the term *public math and science high school* shall refer to a school principally financed through national or local government funds that implements an advanced curriculum focused on science, mathematics, and technology subjects, for grade 7-12 students.

**SECTION. 4. *Establishment of Schools.*** - All provinces covered by the preceding Section of this Act are hereby mandated to work with the Department of Education (DepEd) to establish at least one (1) public math and science high school within their respective provincial capitals.

Schools established in compliance with this Act may be established through the construction of new school facilities, the conversion and/or reorganization of an existing school or the renovation and re-opening of currently non-operational school facilities or other idle government-owned property: *Provided, That* these school must be fully operational by Academic Year 2020-2021: *Provides, further,* That any utilization of idle government-owned assets shall follow pertinent procedures as prescribed by law: *Provided, finally,* That schools which have been designated by the DepEd as fully compliant under this Act may start operations earlier than the prescribed deadline.

**SECTION. 5. *School Operations.*** - Schools established in compliance with this Act shall be operated by the DepEd, with the proper participation of the applicable LGUs and other community shareholders as prescribed by law. Said schools shall be funded in full under the budget of the DepEd and shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

**SECTION. 6. *Admissions.*** - Schools established in compliance with this Act shall accept applicants based on the results of a competitive entrance examination. A student may be eligible to apply for admission to said school only if he or she has established continuous residence within the establishing province for at least one (1) year by the date of examination.

**SECTION. 7. *Curriculum*** - Schools established in compliance with this Act shall implement a six-year integrated junior-senior high school curriculum that focuses on advanced science, mathematics, and technology subjects under the guidance of the DepEd and the Department of Science and Technology (DOST). The revised curriculum of the Philippine Science High School system for Grades 7-12 shall be used as a basis for the formulation of said curriculum.

**SECTION. 8. *Higher Education Bond*** - A graduate of a school established in compliance with this Act shall be required to enroll in a four or five-year Bachelor's Degree in Science program at an accredited college or university. Said graduate must enroll in a



course-of-study in one of the following fields: pure and applied sciences, mathematics, engineering, technology, or any other field deemed appropriate by the commission on Higher Education (CHED). A graduate who shifts or transfers to a course in any unrelated field prior to completion of the degree program shall pay a fine equivalent to the total full cost incurred by the government in subsidizing the secondary education program of said graduate, as calculated by the DepEd. Any fine collected under the terms of this provision shall be allocated to any government program that promotes the advancement of science, mathematics, and technological education in the Philippines.

**SECTION. 9. Appropriations.** - The amount of Five Hundred Million Pesos (P500,000,000.00) is hereby initially appropriated to implement the provisions of this Act. Thereafter, such amount necessary to effectively carry out the provisions of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

**SECTION. 10. Implementing Agencies.** - The DepEd, in coordination with the DOST and the CHED, shall be responsible for implementing the provisions of this Act. Within (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the implementing agencies shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations as may be necessary to ensure the efficient and effective implementation of this Act.

**SECTION. 11. Separability Clause.** - Should any part of this Act be declared unconstitutional, the rest of the provisions of this Act shall continue to be in effect and subsisting.

**SECTION. 12. Repealing Clause.** - The provisions of other laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

**SECTION. 13. Effectivity.** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* and/or in at least two (2) national newspapers in general circulation.

*Approved,*