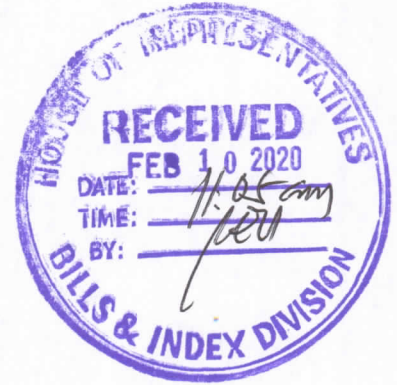


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

6231
House Bill No. _____



Introduced by Representative JOEY SARTE SALCEDA

**AN ACT CREATING MECHANISMS TO AUGMENT AND SUPPORT THE
TEACHING WORKFORCE AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

Explanatory Note

This Act shall be known as the Teacher Empowerment Act of 2020 to provide free CPD trainings to public school teachers and limit teachers' administrative functions to 8 hours per week. This bill will also allow highly qualified individuals to teach their expertise.

This Bill is preparing the country for a series of reforms that will lead closer to the Finnish model of education: absolutely free, absolutely high-quality, light on workload, heavy on critical thinking and comprehension, and with universal access to nutrition. The first building block is the empowerment of teachers.

This Bill includes the following:

1. Alternative routes to teaching for highly qualified individuals
2. A statutory 8-hour weekly limit to teachers' administrative work
3. The creation of support administrative staff such as school and district statistician, and government programs coordinator.
4. The establishment of an administrative internship program where qualified high school students may assist in teachers' administrative functions
5. Preferential scholarship grants for teacher-deficit and remote areas to ensure that there are available teachers who live near remote schools and to dispense with the need to assign teachers from far places
6. Free learner-based professional development programs for public school teachers
7. Merit-based grants to create professional development programs

This bill will allow teachers to focus on what they do best: TEACHING. Public school teachers should not be made to pay for professional development programs when the direct beneficiary is the public. And besides, most CPD programs for teachers have very little relation to what our learners need. Teachers should not have to pay for their trainings.

The Bill also creates a scholarship for residents of remote areas so that they can be teachers in their local schools, instead of having to assign teachers who do not live in those areas, often with risks to their safety.

While the national teacher-to-student ratio has improved in 2018 to 1:31 for the elementary level, 1:36 for Junior High School level, and 1:31 for Senior High School level from 1:45 in previous years, this improvement does not take into account some realities on the ground, including the lack of available teachers in remote areas. This meant that teachers from urban or suburban areas are assigned to these areas, far from their places of residence, often jeopardizing their safety and often at the expense of their familial responsibilities.

The passage of this Bill is earnestly sought as the first bill of the Comprehensive Education Reform Agenda, which will overhaul the education system of the country to make it more learner-centered and focused on improving learning outcomes.



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Section 1. Short title. This Act shall also be known as the “Teacher Empowerment Act.”

Section 2. Declaration of principles. The State shall ensure that teaching will attract and retain its rightful share of the best available talents through adequate remuneration and other means of job satisfaction and fulfillment. Towards this end, the state shall ensure that its administrative policies and professional service requirements do not discourage such talents from entering and remaining in the teaching profession, especially in public schools.

Furthermore, the State shall ensure that public school teachers are adequately supported and not overburdened with non-teaching functions, so that they may be able to provide dedicated and high-quality teaching to the country’s learners.

Section 3. Definition of terms. As mentioned in this Act, the term

- (a) “Highly qualified individuals” shall refer to individuals with considerable professional experience and achievements in a field or area of study;
- (b) “Master Teacher” shall refer to a public-school teacher with the rank of “Master Teacher I” and above;
- (c) “Mid-career professionals” shall refer to individuals with at least five (5) years of professional experience in a field or practice;
- (d) “Remote schools” shall refer to schools with limited physical accessibility;
- (e) “Teacher-deficit communities” shall refer to municipalities where the ratio of residents who are licensed teachers to school-age residents falls below a target set by the DepEd.

Section 4. Alternative routes to teaching. The Department of Education shall administer alternative routes to teaching to provide opportunities to highly qualified individuals with a baccalaureate degree, including mid-career professionals from other occupations, and recent college or university graduates with records of academic distinction.

Towards this end, the Department of Education shall:

1. Allow highly qualified individuals with a baccalaureate degree, including mid-career professionals from other occupations, and recent college or university graduates with records of academic distinction to teach courses aligned with their area of expertise on a part-time basis, at hourly salary rates comparable to those of teachers with the same years of career experience;
2. Allow qualified individuals to participate as student teachers to be able to fill teaching needs in academic subjects in which there is a demonstrated shortage of teachers;
3. Designate Master Teachers to mentor and train said student teachers within their schools of assignment;
4. Include reasonable service requirements for the implementation of this section.

Section 5. Administrative work limit – The State shall not require public school teachers to perform non-teaching and administrative functions for more than eight (8) hours each week.

Section 6. Administrative assistance. The DepEd shall create the following non-teaching, administrative positions in each national high school and elementary schools district:

- a. At least one (1) Statistician, who shall assist in the compiling, collation, analysis, and submission of statistical data required of teachers and teaching departments.
- b. At least one (1) Government Programs Coordinator, who shall assist in the compiling, collection, analysis, and submission of reports on government programs and projects implemented by agencies other than the Department of Education.

In addition, there shall be, in each national high school and elementary schools district, an “administrative internship program” where qualified high school students may assist teachers, the Statistician, and /or the Government Programs Coordinator as paid interns. The funds allotted for each school and schools district under this program shall be based on the number of teachers in the school or schools district.

Section 7. Preferential scholarship grants for teacher-deficit areas. There shall be administered under the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) an Educators-for-the-Countryside Scholarship Program. The Program shall provide financial assistance fully covering costs of school fees, books, and basic living expenses to qualified scholars from “teacher-deficit” communities and from communities of remote schools. Beneficiaries of the scholarship program shall be required to serve for four (4) years in non-Central, rural schools within the municipality of which they were a resident when they applied for the grant.

A list of such teacher-deficit communities and communities of remote schools shall be issued by the DepEd, with support from the Professional Regulatory Commission, every year preceding the acceptance of applications for the scholarship program created herein;

The DepEd and CHED shall jointly issue the rules and regulations necessary for the implementation of this section within ninety (90) days upon the effectivity of this Act.

Section 8. Professional development of public-school teachers –In every schools division, the Department of Education shall administer accredited programs that provide adequate units to allow public school teachers to complete statutory requirements for professional development. Such programs shall be administered free of charge for public school teachers.

Section 9. Merit-based grants for model professional development – The model professional development activities specified in this section are activities providing ongoing professional development opportunities for teachers, such as

- (a) innovative programs and model curricula in the area of professional development which may serve as models to be disseminated to other schools and local educational agencies; and
- (b) developing innovative techniques for evaluating the effectiveness of professional development programs.

The Department of Education shall administer a merit-based grant program for qualified personnel and schools divisions to participate in or develop model professional development activities, *Provided* that recipients of such grant program shall be required to administer in their respective schools divisions accredited continuing professional development programs developed through the grant.

Section 10. Report to Congress. – To monitor the implementation of this Act, the House and Senate Committees on Basic Education shall require the Department of Education, the Commission on Higher Education, and the Professional Regulatory Commission to submit reports to Congress on the implementation of provisions assigned to their respective agencies before December 31st of every year. No part of this Act shall be construed as to limit the oversight powers inherently or actually possessed by the same committees.

Section. 11. Implementing Rules and Regulations – Unless specifically assigned to a different agency, the Department of Education shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the implementation of this Act within ninety (90) days upon its effectivity.

Section. 12. Separability Clause. — If any portion or provision of this Act is subsequently declared invalid or unconstitutional, other provisions hereof which are not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

Section. 13. Repealing Clause. — All other laws, acts, presidential decrees, executive orders, presidential proclamations, issuances, rules and regulations, or parts thereof which are contrary to or inconsistent with any of the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

Section 14. Effectivity. — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,