

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 3847



Introduced by **HON. GUSTAVO S. TAMBUNTING**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

A new term known as “learning poverty” pertains to those who are unable to read and understand a simple text by age of 10.¹ A formula to measure such is crafted by the joint efforts of the World Bank and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics. In their study, they found that those belonging to low to middle-income countries have 53% of children who are unable to read and understand a short story upon completion of primary school. Worst, in poor countries, the percentage can be as high as 80% of illiteracy because learning poverty is interconnected with the structure and size of the family and the availability of tools for remote learning such as internet connection.

Uncertain when this pandemic will wind up continuously to result in school closures and an interruption of educational achievement for both teachers and learners. Thus, this ARAL program with the assistance of the Department of Education (DepEd) and Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) will do its best to relieve the nation’s learning loss. This agenda will apply to the following: those learners who did not enroll in the school year 2020-2021, those lagging academically, and those who are marginally above the minimum level of mastery required in other subjects such as Mathematics, Language, and Science. These subjects are those linked to developing analytical and rational development of a child.

This legislation that provides an instructive program can resolve the increasing learning gap brought about the remote learning brought about by COVID-19. If the education system cannot catch up with the changing times, there will be a learning crisis that will pose a threat to our country in the sense that our massive human capital does not have the necessary fundamental skills to join the workforce. The Philippine Constitution supports the purpose of this proposal as expressed in Section 1, Article XIV 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.

On behalf of the people of Parañaque City’s Second District, and for the common good of the Filipino people, the approval of the said measure is earnestly sought.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "GUSTAVO S. TAMBUNTING".

GUSTAVO S. TAMBUNTING
2nd District, Parañaque City

¹ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/education/brief/what-is-learning-poverty>

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AN ACT
ESTABLISHING AN ACADEMIC RECOVERY AND ACCESSIBLE LEARNING PROGRAM,
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

Section 1. Short Title. – This Act shall be known as the “Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program Act.”

Sec. 2. Coverage. – This Act shall apply to the following learners under the Department of Education (DepEd): (a) those who did not enroll in School Year 2020 to 2021; (b) those who are lagging academically; and (c) those who are at and marginally above the minimum level of mastery required in Language, Mathematics, and Science.

Sec. 3. Declaration of Policy and Objectives. – It is the declared 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 shall endeavor to support learners by establishing a free and effective national remedial program to provide learners who experienced learning loss as a result of the pandemic school closures, with supplemental lessons to close learning gaps and enable them to catch up to their cohorts.

Sec 4. Establishment of the ARAL Program. – The ARAL Program is hereby established to provide a national learning intervention program that shall be grounded on the following areas:

- a) Well-systematized tutorial sessions which demonstrate higher achievement gains;
- b) Well-designed remediation plans tailored fit to the learning needs of learners;
- c) Careful assessment and evaluation of the progress of learners;
- d) Well-chosen and trained remedial instruction facilitators; and
- e) Adequate provision of nutritional, social, emotional, and mental health support to ensure the holistic well-being of learners, and for them to prosper academically, build resilience against adversity, and be equipped with skills and confidence to seek help for early intervention during their educational journey.

The program shall further ensure that learners shall be provided optimal instructional time to ensure mastery of essential competencies and make up for learning loss.

Sec. 5. Most Essential Learning Competencies in Language, Mathematics, and Science.

– The ARAL Program shall cover the most essential learning competencies under the K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum covering the subjects of Language and Mathematics for Grades 1 to 10, and Science for Grades 3 to 10.

Reading, which is included in the most essential learning competencies in Language, shall be prioritized to develop the critical and analytical thinking skills of learners.

For Kindergarten learners, the ARAL Program shall focus on building foundational skills aimed at strengthening their literacy and numeracy competencies.

Sec. 6. Determination of Learners under the ARAL Program. – The DepEd shall determine the learners to be covered by this program using its Learner Information System (LIS) and other relevant databases.

The DepEd may likewise use the learners' academic performance in school years before School Year 2020-2021 to determine those who are at and marginally above the minimum mastery requirements of the subjects covered by this Act.

Priority shall be given to younger learners.

Sec. 7. Tutors under the ARAL Program. – Teachers and para-teachers shall be responsible for tutoring learners under the ARAL Program. Tertiary level students may volunteer as tutors provided that they are at or above the 75th percentile of their respective school cohorts in the subject that they will be teaching and have passed a mock tutoring session to be administered by the DepEd.

The tutors shall employ a step-based approach that provides corrective feedback on each question or problem faced by learners. They shall be supportive and empathetic of their needs, motivation, and behavior. To facilitate positive tutor-learner relationships, a stronger understanding of the learners' learning needs, and greater academic, social, and motivational outcomes, the ARAL Program shall strive to pair a learner or learners with the same tutor for the entire duration of the program.

For purposes of this Act, teachers refer to all persons engaged in teaching at the elementary and secondary levels, whether on a full-time or part-time basis, including technical-vocational teachers and all other persons performing supervisory or administrative functions, or both, in all schools in the aforesaid levels and qualified to practice teaching under existing laws. Para-teachers are those who have taken the Licensure Examination for Teachers but were unable to qualify and have been issued by the Board for Professional Teachers a special permit indicating their area of assignment.

Sec. 8. Conduct of Tutorial Sessions; Group Size of Learners. – Tutorial sessions may be held on weekends during the school year or during semestral breaks, as may be deemed

necessary. Learners may be grouped according to their assessed learning needs. One-on-one tutorials may also be provided to learners taking into consideration their particular learning needs.

Sec. 9. Instructional Materials. – The ARAL Program shall use high-quality instructional materials that are aligned with core classroom content or grade level standards to enable tutors to reinforce and support teachers’ classroom instruction. The instructional materials shall address concepts and build foundational skills which are most critical to the improvement of learning outcomes.

Sec. 10. Delivery Modes for Tutorial Sessions. – Tutorial sessions shall be conducted using any of the following delivery modes to ensure that the sessions are accessible to or within the reach of learners:

- a) Face-to-face tutorials where tutors and learners are physically present in the same place;
- b) Online tutorials where tutors facilitate the tutorial sessions and engage the learners’ active participation by using various technologies so that learning can be accessed anytime while they are geographically remote from each other; and
- c) Blended learning where a specified number of tutorial sessions include online and face-to-face tutorials.

In determining the venue for the tutorial sessions, the DepEd shall consider accessibility, cost-effectiveness, and health-safety risk. The DepEd, in collaboration with the local government unit, shall provide a safe learning environment for face-to-face tutorials by investing in hygiene facilities and supplies and establishing safety health protocols therein.

Sec. 11. Assessment of the ARAL Program and its Learners. – To ensure the effectiveness and success of the ARAL Program, the determination of the learning status and progress of learners, the establishment of appropriate tutoring strategies and interventions, and the evaluation of teaching effectiveness shall be grounded on evidence-based practices.

In addition to pre- and post-assessments, tutors shall conduct formative assessments of their learners to allow them to provide timely feedback on each learner and effectively tailor their instruction based on the learners’ individual learning needs.

Sec. 12. Capacity Building and Assessment of Tutors. – To successfully improve learning outcomes as envisioned by the ARAL Program, tutors shall receive adequate training, focusing on innovative instructional techniques, interpersonal skills, social-emotional learning, and cultural competency, among others, as may be deemed necessary.

To engage learners effectively during online tutorials, the ARAL Program shall further support and develop tutors to incorporate online tools into their tutoring practices and methods and help learners overcome their online learning difficulties.

Sec. 13. Campaigns for Learners to Return to School. – The ARAL Program shall create mass awareness campaigns on media and through community engagement to encourage learners to re-enroll and return to school through the following strategies:

- a) Flexible enrollment dates;

- b) Accessible physical or digital enrollment forms. Digital enrollment forms shall be available on the website of the DepEd, while physical enrollment forms shall be made available at accessible locations to be established in schools and barangay halls;
- c) Extension of deadlines for submission of required enrollment documents;
- d) Presence of health and sanitation facilities;
- e) Establishment of public health and safety protocols upon resumption of face-to-face classes; and
- f) Continuous implementation of school feeding programs.

Sec. 14. Updated Learner Information System (LIS). – The DepEd shall update its LIS which shall contain the following additional information:

- a) Name and academic background of tutors;
- b) Name, grade level, and school of learners and their corresponding scores and grades in their remedial subjects;
- c) Performance of learners on tasks and activities administered during the tutorial sessions;
- d) Assessment of learners; and
- e) Tutorial materials, lectures, or modules used.

Sec. 15. Free Access to All of DepEd’s Learning Platforms; Special Services for Learners and Tutors. – Public Telecommunications Entities (PTEs) shall provide free access to all of DepEd’s learning platforms, including online educational platforms, digital libraries, and other online knowledge hubs without any additional financial burden on all learners and tutors. No data charges shall also be incurred in the download of data from these sites and applications. Learners and tutors shall also be provided subsidized data plans by the DepEd for the use of these learning platforms.

Sec. 16. Allotment of Air Time for Educational Tutorial Programs. – Under Republic Act No. 8370, otherwise known as “Children’s Television Act of 1997”, a portion of the daily total air time of each broadcasting network shall be allotted for educational tutorial sessions within the regular programming of all networks granted franchises or as a condition of renewal of broadcast licenses hereinafter, to be included as part of the responsibility of the network in serving the public.

In addition to the most essential learning competencies under the K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum covering the subjects of Language, Mathematics, and Science, the programs may include Storytelling, Wellness, Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education, Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao, and Health for a comprehensive learning experience for all learners.

Sec. 17. Remuneration of Teachers and Para-teachers Who Serve as Tutors. – Teachers who serve as tutors shall be compensated subject to the existing rules and regulations of the DepEd and the Department of Budget and Management.

Para-teachers who serve as tutors under this Act shall be compensated from the budget of the DepEd and the Special Education Fund of the Local School Board of the local government unit where the schools of the learners are located.

Sec. 18. Incentives for Tertiary Level Students Who Serve as Tutors. – Tertiary level students who serve as tutors under the ARAL Program for two (2) semesters shall be deemed to

have completed the Literacy Training Service under the National Service Training Program, by Republic Act (RA) No. 9163, otherwise known as the "National Service Training Program (NSTP) Act of 2001".

Under RA No. 9163, the Literacy Training Service is a program designed to train students to become teachers of literacy and numeracy skills to school children, out-of-school youth, and other segments of society in need of their service.

Sec. 19. Parental Involvement. – Tutors shall develop linkages and maintain regular communication with the parents of the learners. The parents, being a primary resource and essential support in the education of their children, shall enhance their parental roles by assisting their children through home learning activities and making significant contributions to their educational development at home.

Sec. 20. Implementing Agencies. – The DepEd shall coordinate with the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) in the implementation of the provisions of this Act and the continuous delivery of quality online tutorial sessions.

Sec. 21. Tax Incentives. – Any donation, contribution, or grant, in cash or kind, made by individuals or organizations, public or private, local or foreign, shall be exempt from the donor's tax and the cost of which shall be considered as an allowable deduction from the gross income of the donor by the provisions of the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997, as amended.

Sec. 22. Mandatory Review and Impact Assessment. – The DepEd shall conduct a mandatory review of the implementation of this Act, and submit an assessment report to Congress on its impact and effectiveness, not later than one (1) year from the effectivity of this Act.

Sec. 23. Joint Congressional Oversight Committee. – There is hereby created a Joint Congressional Oversight Committee to oversee, monitor, and evaluate the implementation of this Act. The Oversight Committee shall be composed of five (5) members each from the Senate and the House of Representatives, including the Chairmen of the Committees on Education, Arts and Culture, and Finance of both Houses. The membership of the Committee for every chamber shall have at least one (1) minority member.

Sec. 24. Appropriations. – The amount of Twenty Billion Pesos (Php 20B) for the implementation of this Act shall be charged against those authorized in the current appropriations of the DepEd.

Sec. 25. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DepEd, in consultation with the DICT and other relevant government agencies and private stakeholders, shall issue the necessary rules and regulations for its effective implementation. The rules and regulations issued under this section shall take effect thirty (30) days after its publication in a newspaper of general circulation.

Sec. 26. Separability Clause. – If any provision or part of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining provisions or parts not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

Sec. 27. Repealing Clause. – All other laws, executive orders, presidential decrees, administrative orders, rules and regulations, issuances, or parts thereof inconsistent with or contrary to the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

Sec. 28. Effectivity. – Notwithstanding the non-issuance of the IRR, this Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,