

BTA-Parliament Bill No. 37

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE BANGSAMORO SCIENCE HIGH SCHOOL SYSTEM, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

A'udhubillahi minas shaytaanir rajeem. Bismillahi Rahmani Raheem. Alhamdulillah was-salatu was-salaamu a'la mal-laa nabiyya ba'dah, ammaa ba'd. Assalaamu 'alaykum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuhu.

I would like to extend my utmost respect and warm greetings to the Speaker, Atty. Pangalio Balindong, to the Deputy speakers of the Bangsamoro Parliament. Esteemed Floor Leader, Atty. Sha Elijah B. Dumama-Alba, and the Deputy Floor Leaders.

My greetings to all the distinguished Members of Parliament present here today, guests, friends, ladies and gentlemen, isang mapayapang araw po sa ating lahat.

Mr. Speaker, the broader issue before us is how education should work better in the region. What institution do we need to have, values, and norms, that are essential for our learners?

How do we protect these norms and values? Can we establish and secure our educational system for the future of the Bangsamoro people, so that it can contribute to the progress of an individual, family, community, our region, and our nation? *These are the fundamental questions that I wish to discuss today.*

The bedrock and quality of a region's development hinges on its people's education, values, and experiences: what they judge to be right or wrong, the principles they embrace, and the causes they espouse.

Whichever example you look at, in human history, a good and functioning educational system has clear, strong norms. These norms are upheld both by the learners and those who teach them. A healthy educational system can elect well-educated, incorruptible people clothe with the right values, and drive a virtuous cycle where a good system begets good learners; good learners begets good professionals; good professionals begets good leaders; good leaders begets governance; good governance begets good politics and good politics begets prosperity and development.

This cycle must be underpinned and sustained by strong institutions. This august body, the Parliament sits at the apex of our system of governance. This is where we discuss the most important matters of the region; we enacted laws; appropriations voted, and with the BTA setting the direction and proposing quality legislation, we are accountable to the people. To fulfill our roles, in making quality and free education accessible to the people, we have to legislate to further the people's right to access education of the utmost quality in the region.

To have a good educational system in the region will depend on how we support this principle and come up with legislation that will put everything in place. As a member of this august body, I wish to see and experience the joy of finally having access to a quality education we can only dream of in the past. We were given an opportunity, as legislators, to make it happen for the Bangsamoro people.

Bangsamoro Science High School System will be a legacy that will last till the end of time.

The establishment of Science High Schools in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) is of paramount importance for fostering young talents with keen interest and aptitude for scientific knowledge and critical thinking. By providing an environment conducive to scientific learning and research, Bangsamoro Science High School can nurture students who possess the potential to become future scientists, researchers, and front-runners in various scientific fields.

Additionally, BSHS will play a vital role in bridging the educational gap between BARMM and other regions in the Philippines, enabling students from BARMM to compete on par with our counterparts nationwide. Bangsamoro Science High School will serve as a catalyst for socio-economic development as they equip students with the skills and knowledge required by industries that contribute to regional growth. They will also be given the necessary resources and opportunities to contribute meaningfully to national development and address pressing challenges through science and innovation.

Thus, investing in Science High Schools is not only an investment in education but also an investment in the progress and prosperity of BARMM.

However, what distinguishes Bangsamoro Science High School from other Science High Schools is that the BSHS has set its sights on incorporating values education into its curriculum by ensuring that the school obtains Islamic perspectives that align with the religious beliefs of the Bangsamoro people. As a result, it will strengthen the foundations of science and faith as a commitment to holistic and inclusive education.

Commonly, people say, “Seek knowledge from cradle to the grave”. The phrase is used to encourage people to seek knowledge or education in their lifetime. This shows how important education is. It is an obligation of every Muslim to seek knowledge even if they have to travel as far as China. On the other hand, it is the leaders’ obligation to make this knowledge or education accessible. When we say accessible, we mean it is located in a strategic area, has the necessary facility and equipment, and with highly qualified manpower.

As they say, ‘Public Office is a Public Trust’. Therefore, on matters related to the right of Bangsamoro people to free education, it is incumbent upon us – and each succeeding generation of leaders – to establish, protect and maintain an educational system that will address the needs of Bangsamoro learners.

This also requires us to pass a law that will not just establish the *Bangsamoro Science High School System* but will also uphold the Bangsamoro integrity, and values, enforce rules and standards, apply the same rules equally to everyone, make sure nobody is favored by the law. The privilege must be granted to those who rightfully deserve it. If we can fulfill that – consistently, persistently, unflinchingly – then we have a good chance of making things work.

To the committee members, that is what is at stake as we deliberate on Parliament’s response to the call to deliberate on **BTA-Parliament Bill No. 37**. In the process of our deliberations in the committee, many significant issues arose. But our honorable intentions favored the need to establish the *Bangsamoro Science High School System* in the region for the benefit of every qualified and deserving Bangsamoro learner.

Mr. Speaker, the Honorable members of this august body, the Bangsamoro people, the Committee has taken all necessary actions during deliberations and consultations to come up with a Bill that will serve significantly the interest of every Bangsamoro family to quality education.

Our call for quality education in the region is a cry from the heart of Bangsamoro. With their lives and future at stake, beneficiaries under the system must be held to the same standards. There can be no favoritism, no double standards.

Mr. Speaker, we have scrutinized the referred **BTA-Parliament Bill No. 37** carefully, to come up with sensible provisions. Today, it is incumbent upon the Parliament to undertake the fitting course of action.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, **THE BANGSAMORO PEOPLE’S RIGHT TO EDUCATION IS NON-NEGOTIABLE**. A good educational system is crucial for BSHS to work well. Being of service to further quality education in the region is fundamental to establishing trust and that we are truthful in serving our constituents.

Having said that, I call on all Members of the BTA Parliament to support the passage of **BTA-Parliament Bill No. 37** into law.

WE MUST ALL PUT THE INTEREST OF EVERY BANGSAMORO ABOVE ALL INTERESTS. WE MUST SERVE THEM TO THE BEST OF OUR ABILITY. INSHA ALLAH

Mr. Speaker, the Committee Report.