

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Constitution Hills, Quezon City

SIXTEENTH (16th) CONGRESS
First Regular Session



House Bill No. **2162**

Introduced by Representative ERIC L. OLIVAREZ

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Education plays a vital role in nation-building primarily because it empowers the people to become active participants in the transformation and betterment of society. Education undeniably equips a person with knowledge, intelligence and skills that serve him multiple purposes in life. In the individual level, education improves a person's well-being and enables him to make informed decisions and self-actualizations. In a more practical sense, education allows him to be more competitive in the work field especially now that the trend is leaning towards the ever-increasing globalization. More importantly so, education has a very crucial part in ensuring that there is equality in opportunities for members of all racial, national or ethnic groups of a nation.

The 1987 Constitution expressly recognizes the importance of education in the nation's progress and development. As per *Article II, Section 7* thereof, it is the policy of the state to give priority to education, science and technology, arts, culture, and sports to foster patriotism and nationalism, accelerate social progress, and promote total human liberation and development.

Likewise, *Article XIV Section 1* of the said Constitution provides 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.

Furthermore, the state is likewise cognizant of the academic freedom accorded to all institutions of higher learning.

In line with this policy, certain governmental bodies have been mandated to implement strategies that will ensure that quality education is being afforded to our citizens.

One of the many schemes being presently implemented is the accreditation of private schools- elementary, high school and college alike.

Accreditation is a means of promoting educational excellence through self-regulation and peer evaluation. Private accreditation refers to the accreditation being done by the private accrediting bodies. The nature of the said accreditation is voluntary.

Private or voluntary accreditation of learning institutions in the country is classified into two – that which pertains to basic education is governed by the Department of Education (DepEd) and that which refers to tertiary or higher education is regulated by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED).

Accreditation, as more particularly defined in the DepEd Order No. 08 Series of 2010, otherwise known as *the 2010 Manual of Regulations for Private Schools for Basic Education*, refers to the process leading to the issuance of a certificate of accredited status by an organized body of educational institutions attesting to the quality or standards of a private school or to any of its educational programs or courses, and to the effectiveness of the management and operations of the private school offering the program as exceeding the minimum standards or criteria for government recognition.

Basic Education as used in this context covers five main programs, mainly: pre-school, elementary, secondary, special needs education and alternative learning systems. DepEd encourages voluntary membership by private schools in accrediting associations by granting greater flexibility in the exercise of government supervision and regulation to the member schools as compared to those which are non-members.

On the other hand, accreditation is regulated by CHED when it comes to higher education institutions which basically cover college and graduate studies. CHED encourages accreditation by giving incentives and greater autonomy to the colleges and universities that will meet the criteria set forth by private accrediting bodies.

Voluntary accreditation positively drives private schools, colleges and universities to go beyond the minimum standards and guidelines pegged by the government in light of the promise of generous incentives, deregulation and autonomy. As such there is an entailed assurance that the education being afforded to our citizens is in fact the best of what that these schools can provide.

This bill pursues to invite and persuade more private schools to undergo private accreditation and thereby ensure that the value and quality of education being received by the Filipino People is optimized.

It is for the foregoing reasons that the approval of this bill is strongly recommended.



ERIC L. OLIVAREZ

Representative

1st District, Paranaque
City

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AN ACT
STRENGTHENING THE VOLUNTARY ACCREDITATION OF
PRIVATE SCHOOLS IN THE PHILIPPINES.

Section 1. *Short Title* – This Act shall be known as the
“VOLUNTARY ACCREDITATION ACT OF 2013”.

Section 2. *Definition of Terms* – For purposes of this
Act, the following terms shall mean or be understood as
follows:

a) School – means an educational undertaking
educational institution, private or public, undertaking
educational operations with an organized group of
pupils or students pursuing defined studies at defined
levels, receiving instructions from teachers, usually
located in a building or group of buildings in a
particular physical or cyber site recognized by the State
and specifically intended for educational purposes.

b) Private School – means a privately owned and
managed institution for teaching and learning,
established and authorized to operate certain
educational programs in accordance with law and the
prescribed policies and rules of the Department of

Education (DepEd) and/or Commission of Higher Education (CHED).

c) Accreditation – means the process leading to the issuance of a certificate of accredited status by an organized body of educational institutions attesting to the quality or standards of a private school or to any of its educational programs or courses, and to the effectiveness of the management and operations of the private school offering the program as exceeding the minimum standards or criteria for government recognition. Accreditation shall be voluntary in nature.

d) Deregulation – is a necessary consequence of voluntary accredited status whereby the private school is accorded certain benefits and advantages as may be provided for by the appropriate authorities and in applicable legislation. Deregulation, however, is not absolute, rather, it represents degrees in the liberalization of rules and regulations applicable to learning or school institution.

Section 3. Membership – Voluntary membership of private schools in accrediting associations or agencies are encouraged as a scheme to promote and improve the quality of education in the country.

Section 4. Authorized Accrediting Agencies – The following agencies enumerated below shall be the officially recognized accrediting bodies to conduct accreditation activities, to wit:

a) The Philippine Association of Accrediting Agencies of Schools, Colleges and Universities (PAASCU);

b) The Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities-Commission on Accreditation (PACU-COA);

c) The Association of Christian Schools and Colleges Accrediting Association Inc (ACSC-AAI);

d) The Accrediting Association of Chartered Colleges and Universities of the Philippines (AACCUP);

Section 5. *Federation or Association of Accrediting Agencies* – The Federation of Accrediting Agency of the Philippines (FAAP) consisting of PAASCU, PACUCOA, ACSC-AAI, and AACCUP as its members shall be recognized as the sole organization to certify, pursuant to its general or common standards, the accredited status of schools and their programs granted by the abovementioned different accrediting agencies. This recognition, however, is without prejudice to the subsequent authorization of other accrediting agencies in the future as deemed necessary or desirable by the DepEd and/or CHED. The additional accrediting agencies as may be determined by DepEd or CHED or any other existing accrediting agencies shall be required to join as members of FAAP to ensure order and coherence in the manner of evaluation and accreditation of schools, colleges and universities.

For purposes of this Act, there shall only be one Federation or Association of accrediting agencies or bodies to be officially recognized by the DepEd or CHED.

Section 6. *Process Overview* – Without prejudice to the internal rules promulgated by the accrediting agency or by the FAAP, the accreditation process shall be comprised of the following basic steps:

(a) Institutional self-evaluation;

(b) Preliminary visit - This shall be done within four to six months after the start of self-survey and must be conducted by bona fide member/ officer of the accrediting agency;

(c) Formal survey visit - This shall be done by the bona fide member/officer of the accrediting agency within a span of six months after preliminary visit; and

(d) Decision by governing board of accrediting agency – Within four months after the last formal survey visit, the accrediting agency may deliberate and decide on whether or not the subject school should be granted an accredited status in a particular accreditation level as applied for.

(e) Any accrediting agency may notify the school of any minor lapses, shortcomings and/or failure to meet a certain standard or requirement for a particular accreditation level and may give the said school reasonable time and opportunity to comply or meet the lacking requirement. Provided however, that the lacking requirement is of minor character only and can be completed without great loss of time. Immediately thereafter, the governing board of the accrediting agency shall deliberate and evaluate and decide whether the school has complied or corrected its minor lapses within the reasonable time given to such institution.

(f) The accrediting agency must submit its decision before the FAAP for certification, within four months from the last formal survey visit, stating therein the comprehensive and detailed report of the evaluation of a certain school and stating clearly the standards used vis-à-vis the comparative score of the school. Provided, however, that in cases falling under paragraph (e), the four month period to decide is suspended until compliance or until the lapse of the reasonable time or opportunity granted by the accrediting agency to the school.

Section 7. *Automatic Credit of Course Units* – Private schools need not be accredited. However, when students transfer from private school to public school, course credits completed at the former is guaranteed to be recognized in the

latter if they were completed at a state-recognized accredited private school.

Section 8. *Levels of Accreditation Status* – There shall be four levels of accreditation of schools, colleges and universities to be conducted by the accrediting agencies to be certified as such by FAAP:

a) ***Level I applicant status:*** for programs which have undergone a preliminary survey visit and are certified by the FAAP as being capable of acquiring an accredited status within two years;

b) ***Level II accredited status:*** for programs which have been granted accredited status by any of the member agencies of the FAAP and whose status is certified by the latter;

c) ***Level III accredited status:*** for programs which have at least been reaccredited and have met additional requirements based on criteria/guidelines set by FAAP; and

d) ***Level IV accredited status:*** institutions which have distinguished themselves in a broad area of academic disciplines and enjoy prestige and authority comparable to that of international universities.

Section 9. *Benefits and Incentives per Accreditation Level* – The benefits and incentives for the different accreditation levels of schools, colleges and universities shall be as follows:

a. *Level I applicant status* – partial administrative deregulation.

b. *Level II accredited status* – 1) a full administrative deregulation; 2) financial deregulation in terms of setting tuition and other fees; 3) partial curricular autonomy 3) authority

to graduate students without prior approval of DepEd or CHED, as the case may be, and without need for Special Orders; 4) priority funding assistance; 5) priority for government subsidy for faculty development; 6) right to use on its publications or advertisements the word "ACCREDITED", and, 7) limited visitation/inspection and/or supervision by CHED.

c. *Level III accredited status* – 1) all the benefits for Level II; and, 2) full curricular deregulation.

d. *Level IV accredited status* – 1) all the benefits for Levels II and III; 2) award of grants/subsidies from the CHED's Higher Education Development Fund (HEDF), and, 3) grant of charter or full autonomy.

Section 10. *Validity of Benefits and Incentives* – The benefits and other incentives as mentioned in Section 9 hereof shall be available to the private school only for as long as its accreditation status and specific accreditation level subsists.

Section 11. *Retraction of Benefits and Incentives* – Any benefit and incentive granted to a private school by virtue of its accredited status and level may be withdrawn and retracted, if after due notice, investigation, and hearing, the DepEd or CHED, as the case may be, finds that the superior standards of accreditation based on which the benefits and incentives have been granted are not observed and/or maintained.

Section 12. *Retraction of Authority of the Accrediting Agencies* – The authority granted to any certified accrediting agency may be forfeited, if after due notice, investigation and hearing, the DepEd or CHED, as the case may be, finds any irregularity, partiality and or bias in the evaluation and granting of accreditation status to any school.

Section 13. *Subsidy and funding assistance* – The DepEd or CHED, as the case maybe, shall allocate an amount for the subsidy or funding assistance of accreditation activities by the FAAP and its members for its efficient administration and implementation and for the grants of incentives and other benefits given to accredited schools, colleges and universities. The said amount shall be charged to the appropriations of the DepEd and CHED. Thereafter, such amount shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

Section 14. *Implementing Rules and Regulations*. – The Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) in consultation with the FAAP and/or all the member accrediting agencies or bodies shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations for the effective and immediate implementation of this Act.

Section 15. *Repealing Clause* – All laws, decrees, executive orders, letters of instructions, rules and regulations or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

Section 16. *Separability Clause* – If any provision of this Act is judicially declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining provisions of this Act not affected thereby shall be continue to be in full force and effect.

Section 17. *Effectivity Clause* – This act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its publication in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

APPROVED.