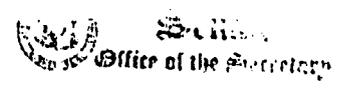


EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Second Regular Session)



21 APR 15 P3 56

SENATE

S. B. NO. 2134

RECEIVED 

Introduced by SENATOR JOEL VILLANUEVA

**AN ACT IMPROVING TEACHER QUALITY AND ESTABLISHING A
TEACHER EDUCATION FOR ACHIEVERS PROGRAM,
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Quality education is the cornerstone of progress and wealth of a nation. The wisdom of this statement is enshrined in the 1987 Philippine Constitution. It clearly provides that *"the State shall 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"* (Article II, Sec. 17).

Article XIV of the 1987 Philippine Constitution pushes this further as it highlights 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. It likewise explicitly provides that *"the State shall enhance the right of teachers to professional advancement"* (Art. 14, Sec. 5). Thus, in establishing, maintaining, and supporting the complete, adequate and integrated system of education relevant to the needs of the people and society, it is important to uplift the image of the teaching profession by encouraging the best and the brightest to teach, and attracting them to the teaching profession.

Acknowledging that the quality of an education system depends on the quality of its teachers,¹ let us examine the present quality of our teachers and education system.

The 2019 TIMSS report showed remarkable decline in scores in Mathematics and Science Achievement of Grade 4 students in the Philippines, the lowest among

¹<https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/mckinsey/industries/public%20and%20social%20sector/our%20insights/how%20the%20worlds%20best%20performing%20school%20systems%20come%20out%20on%20top/how%20the%20worlds%20best%20performing%20school%20systems%20come%20out%20on%20top.pdf>

the 58 countries involved in the study.² The SEA-PLM 2019 Main Regional Report revealed that only ten percent (10%) of our Grade 5 students met the proficiency standards of reading, two percent (2%) in writing, and seventeen percent (17%) in mathematics. The same report showed that more than half of our Grade 5 students are taught by teachers who got training in the language of instruction from in-service trainings or none at all.

The OECD 2018 PISA Country Note for the Philippines summarized that *“fifteen-year-old students in the Philippines scored lower in reading, mathematics and science than those in most of the countries and economies that participated in PISA 2018. xxx No country scored lower than the Philippines and the Dominican Republic. xxx Over 80% of students in the Philippines did not reach a minimum level of proficiency in reading, which is one of the largest shares of low performers amongst all PISA-participating countries and economies.”*³ The highest performing Filipino students scored only around OECD average. Consequently, the World Bank recommended strengthening the enrollment requirements and providing merit-based scholarships for students entering pre-service teacher training institutions.⁴

It is reasonable to expect that the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic which continues to plague the world will aggravate this cycle of underperformance. Under the new normal, minimum health standards and protocols require minimal to zero face-to-face interaction. Moreover, the prevalence of poor content quality in modules and distance learning materials continue to surface. This has resulted into a learning crisis.

According to the UNESCO, research has shown that teachers, more than any other constituent group in education, determine educational quality and student achievement. *“Research studies have shown positive associations between student achievement and teachers’ academic skills, level of content knowledge, years of experience, and participation in content-related professional development opportunities.”*⁵

The Education Commission of 1991 (EDCOM) reported poor teacher’s training, as the heart of the problem in our education system. The Commission recommended, among others, to strengthen pre-service teacher education. The EDCOM called for higher admission requirements in teacher education programs, which included aptitude and motivation.⁶

Among the policies enacted, following the EDCOM, was Republic Act No. 7784, *“An Act to Strengthen Teacher Education in the Philippines by Establishing Centers of Excellence, Creating a Teacher Education Council for the Purpose, Appropriating Funds Therefor, and for Other Purposes.”* This law provided for a system of incentives,

² In the 2019 TIMSS report, the Philippines score decreased by 61 points (from 358 in 2003 to 297) and 83 points (from a score of 332 in 2003 to 249) in mathematics and science achievements, respectively.

³ https://www.oecd.org/pisa/publications/PISA2018_CN_PHL.pdf?fbclid=IwAR35Uhcq2t2SI7zm1aC9vO8gSRSXGhc-ThSQCMtGpRrPX5BQWhEBkmVaU

⁴ World Bank Group (2020) PISA 2018 Country Report.

⁵ http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/teachers-and-educational-quality-monitoring-global-needs-for-2015-en_0.pdf

⁶ Congressional Commission on Education (1991) Making Education Work: An Agenda for Reform

including strengthening the education and training of teachers nationwide through a national system of excellence for teacher education.

The underperformance of Filipino students remained and worsened amidst the many initiatives granting financial assistance to targeted beneficiaries, such as scholarships under (1) Technical Education and Skills Development Authority TESDA, the (2) Indigenous Peoples Rights Act, the (3) National Agriculture and Fisheries Education System, (4) Agriculture Competitiveness Enhancement Fund Scholarship, the (5) Science and Technology Scholarship Act of 1994, the (6) Fast-Tracked Scholarship Act of 2013, the (7) Expanded Government Assistance to Students and Teachers in Private Education Act, the (8) Student Grants-in-Aid Program for Poverty Alleviation of the CHED, and the (9) Department of Social Welfare and Development, which shall be harmonized and strengthened under the (10) Unified Student Financial Assistance System for Education (UNIFAST) established under Republic Act No. 10687, as amended by Republic Act No. 10931, among others.

It is worth noting that none of the above initiatives ever considered producing high-quality teachers for the primary and the secondary public education system.

Attempts to address teacher education and training (Sec. 7, RA 10533) as well as hiring of graduates and other specialists in subjects with a shortage of qualified applicants (Sec. 8, RA 10533) were incorporated into Republic Act No. 10533 or the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013. However, the consistent underperformance of young Filipino students in international rankings evidences the deep-seated, widespread, and pervading neglect of quality teacher education and training.

The Teacher Education for Achievers (TEACH) Program, which this bill seeks to enact, implements the recommendations of above-mentioned international and local studies. It brings incentives to develop high-achiever students as effective teachers. The TEACH Program is a merit-based program where applicants have to pass competitive examinations, both in partner schools and in the program application. It follows a fast-tracked model of teacher education program recruitment. It recruits career-shifters to pursue a Certificate in Teaching Program (CTP) and junior-level undergraduates to complete teacher education programs.

As a corollary to this and without prejudice to established laws against academic discrimination, the bill also mandates TEIs to set and establish higher quality admission and retention standards proper and appropriate to the characteristics, dignity, importance, and nobility of the teaching profession. The TEIs must see to it that their admission standards are appropriate to the teacher education level and specialization that a prospective student seek.

Our teachers have to be prepared academically, socially, and psychologically. A proven means to do this is through mentorship, which is at the heart of the TEACH Program, where grantees will be guided by vetted and qualified mentors. The SEAMEO Innotech study on Teacher Motivation showed that mentors inspired students to take up a similar path of teaching. In turn, the students, when they become teachers, have more commitment in staying in the teaching profession.

This crisis in learning is a strong and urgent call for the state to respond and address the quality of learning outcomes through policies and practices that have been successfully applied in best-performing school systems of other countries where pre-service and in-service teacher education is prioritized.

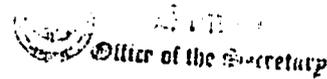
There is a necessity to attract and encourage the best and the brightest to pursue a career in teaching. We need to uplift the image and the social and professional position of the teaching profession. We must provide for job placement, a well-defined career path, and appropriate remuneration for quality teachers especially in our K-12 public education system. We must accord DepEd with the dignity and reputation it deserves, as the government unit responsible for ushering into actuality the best potentials of our young people. Let us accord everyone working with DepEd the reasonable pride proper to the nobility of the teaching profession. Change begins in education and change always happens now!

It is with the permanent utmost urgency of change for the better that support for the immediate passage and approval of this timely legislation is earnestly sought.



SENATOR JOEL VILLANUEVA

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Second Regular Session)



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SENATE
S. B. NO. 2134

REC'D BY

Introduced by **SENATOR JOEL VILLANUEVA**

**AN ACT IMPROVING TEACHER QUALITY AND ESTABLISHING A
TEACHER EDUCATION FOR ACHIEVERS PROGRAM,
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES**

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

CHAPTER I

GENERAL PROVISIONS

SECTION 1. Short Title. – This Act shall be known as the "Teacher Education for Achievers (TEACH) Act of 2021."

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. – The State recognizes the invaluable role of teachers as agents of constructive social, economic, moral, intellectual, cultural and political change in the school and the community, within the context of national policies. To this end, the State promotes and uplifts the image of the teaching profession as a source of national pride. It is likewise declared that in order to protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels, the State shall prioritize accessible and quality teacher education and development, placement and professionalization.

To implement this, the State shall provide scholarships to qualified applicants to enable them to pursue education and training in the areas of teaching and learning and to provide incentives for them to be teachers in the K-12 public education system.

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CHAPTER II

ESTABLISHING THE TEACHER EDUCATION FOR ACHIEVERS PROGRAM

SEC. 3. Establishment of the Teacher Education for Achievers Program. – The Teacher Education for Achievers Program (the “TEACH Program”) is hereby established. The Program shall provide quality pre-service teacher education to deserving students. It shall ensure that future teachers are classroom-ready and contributors to improved learning outcomes by providing the best training, full financial and psychosocial support, and employment assistance.

SEC. 4. Approved Courses and Priority Programs. – Recipients shall pursue priority education degrees or programs in teacher education in the partner Teacher Education Institution (“TEI”), as identified and approved by the Department of Education (the “DepEd”).

The TEACH Program shall offer three tracks: (1) Undergraduate Level track – for incoming first year education students; (2) Certificate in Teaching Program (CTP) track – for those who are graduates of any bachelor’s degree except in Education; and (3) Program Shifters track for junior-level undergraduates to complete teacher education programs. The recipients may pursue the appropriate degree from any of the following:

- (a) Bachelor of Early Childhood Education;
- (b) Bachelor of Special Education;
- (c) Bachelor of Elementary Education;
- (d) Bachelor of Secondary Education (major in any of the following: English, Biology, Chemistry, General Science, Mathematics, Physics, Social Studies and Values Education, among others);
- (e) Bachelor of Technical-Vocational Teacher Education
- (f) Bachelor of Science in Chemistry for Teachers;
- (g) Bachelor of Science in Mathematics for Teachers;
- (h) Bachelor of Science in Physics for Teachers;
- (i) Bachelor of Science in Biology for Teachers;
- (j) Certificate in Teaching Program or its equivalent;
- (k) Similar degrees, as may be approved by the DepEd.

SEC. 5. Qualifications. – The minimum qualifications that the applicants must possess to apply for the TEACH Program are:

- (a) Must be a Filipino citizen residing in the Philippines;
- (b) Must pass the qualifying examination system, comprised of the selection process and the aptitude test for teachers as well as the appropriate examination and assessment by the TEI;
- (c) Must have obtained at least 85% general weighted average or its equivalent in senior high school or in the degree that he or she is currently enrolled in or graduated from;
- (d) Must not have service obligations under other programs in conflict with the TEACH Program obligations.
- (e) The DepEd shall promulgate and periodically review the qualification criteria of applicants for the TEACH Program.

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CHAPTER III

PROGRAM COMPONENTS, INCENTIVES AND RETURN OF SERVICE

SEC. 6. Key Components of the Program. – The TEACH Program is designed and structured to provide holistic support for the grantees, whether it be physical, psychosocial and academic, to help them towards their career as future teachers. This includes the following:

- (a) Scholarship package outlined in Section 7 hereof;
- (b) Provision of continuous mentorship and training and development to the TEACH Program grantees, based on their actual needs;
- (c) Teaching position upon passing the Licensure Examination for Teachers; and
- (d) Other incentives outlined in Section 10 hereof.

The DepEd and CHED, through the Teacher Education Council, shall provide screening guidelines for highly competent faculty and professionals from the TEIs who will qualify and serve as mentors under this Program.

SEC. 7. Scholarship Component of the TEACH Program. – TEACH Program grantees shall be eligible to receive the following:

- (a) Tuition and other school fees;
- (b) Allowance for prescribed books, supplies, and equipment;
- (c) Clothing or uniform allowance;
- (d) Transportation allowance or allowance for dormitory or boarding house accommodation, whichever is appropriate;
- (e) Financial assistance during practicum;
- (f) Graduation and related miscellaneous fees;
- (g) Relocation allowance, if applicable;
- (h) Professional Teachers board review fees and licensure fees: Provided, that the support shall only be limited to the first licensure examination of the scholar, taken within one (1) year from graduation;
- (i) Annual medical and accident insurance, and related health reimbursements; and
- (j) Other education related miscellaneous subsistence or living allowance.

DepEd shall be responsible for the proper implementation and disbursement of the monies arising from this Section.

SEC. 8. Conditions for the Grant of Scholarship. – Scholars accepted to the TEACH Program must execute a return service contract, subject to the following:

- (a) Commitment to immediately pursue his or her pre-service teacher education program and must finish the entire program within the prescribed time frame and subject to the admission and retention policies of the TEI; Provided, that the scholar may be allowed, for valid and justifiable reasons, to file for a leave of absence for one (1) academic period;
- (b) Commitment to take the Licensure Examination for Teachers one (1) year after graduation;
- (c) Commitment to teach full-time in the public basic education system, where public interest requires;

- 1 (d) Commitment to repay the full amount disbursed pursuant to the terms of their
2 return service contract, if the grantee drops out from the approved degree
3 program where grantee is currently enrolled in; and
4 (e) Commitment to all the other terms and conditions of the scholarship, as
5 provided under this Act and as may be prescribed in the implementing rules
6 and regulations.
7

8 **SEC. 9. Sanctions.** – A scholar who has availed of the TEACH Program but fails or
9 refuses to comply with the mandatory return service and integration provided under
10 this ACT shall be required to pay the full cost of scholarship including other benefits
11 and expenses incurred by reason of participation in the TEACH Program.
12

13 **SEC. 10. Service Obligations.** – As their Return of Service (“ROS”), the TEACH
14 Program grantees shall teach full-time in the public primary and secondary education
15 system, where public interest requires, upon passing the Licensure Examination for
16 Teachers. The Program scholar’s ROS shall be at least three (3) years for each year
17 of the scholarship or a fraction thereof, in a public school primary or secondary school,
18 as may be approved by the DepEd; Provided, that the DepEd shall not consider
19 practicum teaching as return service under this provision. These service obligations
20 may be amended, subject to the service contract, as approved by the DepEd.
21

22 **SEC. 11. Incentives.** – Successful TEACH Program grantees are entitled to the
23 following incentives:

- 24 (a) Scholarships in identified TEIs for the approved courses and priority programs
25 under Section 4 of this Act;
26 (b) Immediate and priority deployment upon eligibility in a public primary,
27 secondary, or senior high school according to DepEd standards for deployment
28 of teachers, with a starting salary grade equivalent to Teacher III or equivalent;
29 (c) Receipt of appropriate salaries and other benefits for services rendered under
30 the mandatory job placement as ROS under Section 10 (c) of this Act; and
31 (d) A one-time relocation allowance, should he/she be assigned in a place other
32 than his/her permanent residence.
33 (e) Continued teacher education and training through the scholarships granted
34 under Republic Act No. 10533 or the “Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013”.
35

36 CHAPTER IV

37 IMPLEMENTATION

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39
40 **SEC. 12. Program Recruitment Plan.** – The DepEd and CHED, through the Teacher
41 Education Council (“TEC”) created under Republic Act No. 7784, shall develop an
42 annual implementation plan which will include a thorough teacher demand analysis
43 and recruitment campaign to attract incoming undergraduate students, program
44 shifters and graduates of other disciplines to the Program.
45

46 **SEC. 13. Selection of Eligible Teacher Education Institution.** – TEACH Program
47 grantees may only complete their approved course/program under Section 4 of this
48 Act through eligible partner TEIs. There shall be at least one (1) TEI per region that
49 will implement the program.
50

1 A public or private TEI may be eligible for partnership/coverage under this Program,
2 subject to compliance with any of the following conditions:

- 3 (a) must have its teacher education program accredited as a Center of Excellence
4 level, or
- 5 (b) must have its teacher education program accredited as a FAAP Level IV, or
- 6 (c) must have a BLEPT passing rate of at least 75% passing rate in five (5) of the
7 last ten (10) BLEPT.

8
9 The TEI shall be subject to a service partnership contract that will outline the terms
10 and conditions of its coverage under this Program.

11
12 **SEC. 14. Department of Education (DepEd).** – The DepEd shall be the lead
13 implementing agency of the provisions of this Act. It shall establish a TEACH Program
14 Management Unit that shall be responsible for the evaluation, award-giving, and
15 monitoring and evaluation of all scholarship grants and awardees and provide
16 continuous mentoring of beneficiaries upon integration in the service; Provided that,
17 administrative expenses must not exceed five percent (5%) of the total budget per
18 year.

19
20 DepEd shall ensure hiring of qualified graduates under this Program as public-school
21 teachers with the incentives outlined under Section 10 of this Act, and coordinating the
22 same with the Civil Service Commission and the Department of Budget and
23 Management.

24
25 DepEd shall provide forward estimates of teacher needs for every specialization and
26 level to help in mapping out the scholar recruitment plan under Section 11. It shall
27 coordinate with its regional offices to ensure regional support and coordination with
28 other offices in the implementation of this program; Provided that, additional staff shall
29 be provided to DepEd regional offices in support of the Program, as necessary. The
30 DepEd, through the TEC, shall ensure that the policies for the program are supported
31 by relevant stakeholders; and shall ensure the continuous monitoring and evaluation,
32 including the impact of hiring of teaching professionals facilitated through Section 8 of
33 Republic Act No. 10533 or the “Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013” and Republic
34 Act No. 10612 or the Fast-Tracked S&T Scholarship Act of 2013.

35
36 **SEC. 15. Commission on Higher Education.** – CHED shall lead in setting the
37 standards for and validation of the qualifications of partner TEIs and continue to
38 monitor the eligibility of the partner TEIs, to ensure the Program’s effective and
39 efficient implementation. CHED shall submit the necessary information to DepEd to
40 help with the implementation of this Program. It shall continue to improve and uplift the
41 quality standards for TEIs and higher education to expand the number of eligible TEIs
42 for the TEACH Program.

43
44 CHED shall take the lead in coordinating with the Unified Student Financial Assistance
45 System for Tertiary Education (UniFAST) Board under Republic Act No. 10931, to
46 ensure complementarity and harmonization with this Act. CHED shall ensure that the
47 scholarships for in-service teacher education under Section 11(e) are made available
48 to the Program grantees.

1 **SEC. 16. Teacher Education Council.** – The TEC will provide multi-stakeholder
2 support for the TEACH Program in determining the policy, monitoring and evaluation
3 assistance for the Program. It will lead the creation of a monitoring and evaluation plan
4 for the Program, including an impact evaluation study to be initiated in the fifth year of
5 the Program and every two years thereafter, including an outcome tracking system for
6 the scholar-graduates. From the impact evaluation study, it will make
7 recommendations regarding teacher education policies, planning and teacher
8 education development projects.

9
10 **SEC. 17. Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs).** – Partner TEIs shall help in the
11 administration of the Program in their respective schools, subject to the terms and
12 conditions of their commitments under Section 13 of this Act.

13
14 The partner TEI shall be tasked with the rigorous selection and monitoring of the
15 mentors for the Recipients of the Program. It shall ensure pre-service teacher
16 education that is innovative and responsive, taking into account student-learning-
17 centered professional teaching of knowledge and skills for educators who will have a
18 strong sense of professionalism, moral character and with strong respect for diversity,
19 and ethnic cultures, concern for society, and international vision.

20 21 CHAPTER V

22 23 PROVISIONS PROPER TO IMPROVING TEACHER QUALITY 24 COROLLARY TO THE TEACHER EDUCATION FOR ACHIEVERS PROGRAM

25
26 **SEC. 18. Raising Teacher Education Institutions Admission and Retention**
27 **Standards.** – Without prejudice to established laws against academic discrimination,
28 TEIs are hereby mandated to set and establish higher quality admission and retention
29 standards, and/or revise their respective admission and retention standards proper
30 and appropriate to the characteristics, dignity, importance, and nobility of the teaching
31 profession. Furthermore, TEIs shall ensure that their admission and retention
32 standards are appropriate to the teacher education level and specialization that a
33 prospective student seek. TEIs shall ensure further the global competitiveness of their
34 respective admission and retention standards.

35
36 **SEC. 19. Appropriate Senior High School Teacher Education.** – The CHED in
37 coordination with the DepEd and the PRC is hereby mandated to prepare a separate
38 curriculum with the required specializations for Senior High School (SHS) Teachers'
39 Education.

40
41 **SEC. 20. Appropriate License for Senior High School Teachers.** – In congruence
42 with the preceding section, the PRC is mandated to release a unique license for SHS
43 teachers with proper and appropriate specialization categories, and to make the
44 necessary adjustments in the administration of the LET.

45
46 **SEC. 21. Priority in the Hiring of Licensed Senior High School Teachers.** – The
47 DepEd shall always give first and top priority for licensed Senior High School teachers
48 in hiring SHS teachers. Likewise, DepEd shall give higher priority in training and
49 promoting licensed Junior High School (JHS) teachers who already excel in the area
50 they teach than training, licensing, and hiring other professionals to teach in the SHS.

1 Furthermore, DepEd shall employ high standards for accepting graduate of other
2 courses to teach in the SHS to ensure that only the best will be taken in for training,
3 licensing, and hiring as SHS teachers.
4

5 The training, licensing, and hiring of other professionals in order to teach in the SHS
6 must be taken only as a last resort in the absence of all possibilities of training and
7 hiring already licensed teachers from the JHS or even the basic education.
8

9 CHAPTER VI

10 MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

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13 **SEC. 22. Appropriations.** – The amount necessary for the implementation of this Act
14 shall be charged against the available appropriations of the Department of Education,
15 under the current General Appropriations Act. The Secretary of Education shall
16 immediately include in the DepEd's budget the amount necessary for the effective
17 implementation of this Act. Thereafter, the amount necessary for its continuous
18 implementation shall be included in the Annual General Appropriations.
19

20 **SEC. 23. Other Sources of Funding.** – Other sources of funds such as grants,
21 donations, collections and other forms of assistance from public or private entities,
22 whether domestic or foreign, may be tapped and facilitated by the DepEd in relation
23 to the implementation of the TEACH Program.
24

25 **SEC. 24. Review and Monitoring.** – The DepEd, through the TEC, shall report to the
26 President and Congress after the first five (5) years, and every two (2) years thereafter,
27 on the implementation of the provisions of this Act and shall submit recommendations
28 for its improvement. All the TEC government agencies are also tasked to monitor the
29 implementation of the TEACH Program as well as the actual hiring in public schools
30 of the TEACH Program graduates, and to undertake such studies and include these
31 in their respective annual reports.
32

33 **SEC. 25. Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).** – Within one hundred twenty
34 (120) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Education through the
35 Teacher Education Council, and in consultation with the National Economic
36 Development Authority, Commission on Higher Education, Department of Science and
37 Technology, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, Civil Service
38 Commission, Department of Budget and Management, and relevant stakeholders
39 shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation
40 of this Act.
41

42 The IRR issued pursuant to this section shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
43 publication in the Official Gazette or a newspaper of general circulation. Copies of the
44 IRR as published shall be transmitted to the Chairs of the Committees on Basic
45 Education and Higher Education in the Senate and the House of Representatives, no
46 later than six (6) months after the effectivity of this Act.
47

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

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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. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in any newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,