

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



15 JAN -5 P3 53

SENATE  
S. No. 2549

RECEIVED BY: *J*

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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

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AN ACT  
CREATING A DEMONSTRATION PROJECT TO FUND ADDITIONAL  
SECONDARY SCHOOL COUNSELORS IN TROUBLED SCHOOLS TO REDUCE  
THE DROPOUT RATE

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Constitution, Article 14, Section 1 provides: “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.”

According to UNICEF, while net enrolment in primary school is high at 85 percent as of school year 2007 to 2008, this rate reportedly drastically declines to 62 percent in high school in the same school year.

On the other hand, drop-out rates are doubled as children reach secondary school. Around 11.64 million out-of-school youth and others situated in impoverished urban cities and far-flung communities still need to be reached.<sup>1</sup>

The American School Counselor Association and the American Counseling Association reportedly recommend a ratio of one school counselor to 250 students and a lower ratio for counselors working primarily with students at risk.<sup>2</sup>


Hence, this bill seeks to provide funding for additional counselors in high schools with high drop-out rates. These additional counselors would work intensively with

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.unicef.org/philippines/8900.html>.

<sup>2</sup> <http://lindasanchez.house.gov/index.php/press-room/archived-news/2010-press-releases/563?task=view>.

students at risk and would collaborate with parents, teachers, tutors, employers, and others to create a comprehensive plan to get these students back on the right track.<sup>3</sup>


  
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO  
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<sup>3</sup> This bill was originally filed in the U.S. House of Representatives by Representatives Linda Sanchez, Grijalva, Brown, Cummings, Chu, Norton, Roybal-Allard, Ryan, Wilson, Cartwright, Carson, Jackson Lee, Honda, Hinojosa, Napolitano, Negrete McLeod, Polis, Kaptur, Clarke, Loretta Sanchez, Rangel, Davis, Pierluisi, Cicilline, Lowenthal, Holt, Garamendi, Bass, and Takano, during the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress.

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

1  
2 AN ACT

3 CREATING A DEMONSTRATION PROJECT TO FUND ADDITIONAL  
4 SECONDARY SCHOOL COUNSELORS IN TROUBLED SCHOOLS TO REDUCE  
5 THE DROPOUT RATE

6 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as “Put School Counselors  
7 Where They Are Needed Act”;

8 SECTION 2. *Definition of Terms.* – For purposes of this Act, the term:

9  
10 (1) “Adjusted Cohort” means the students who entered third year high school  
11 together, and any student that transferred into the cohort in third year through fourth year  
12 high school minus any student removed from the cohort.

13 (2) “Cohort Removal” means to remove students from the cohort, the school or  
14 local educational agency must confirm that the student has (a) transferred out; (b) is in  
15 the custody of the juvenile justice system; (c) or is deceased.

16 (3) “Four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate” means the number of students who  
17 earned a regular high school diploma at the conclusion of their fourth year, before their  
18 fourth year, or during a summer session immediately following their fourth year, divided  
19 by the number of students who formed the adjusted cohort for that graduating class.

20 (4) “Transfers in” means the students who enroll or re-enroll after the beginning of  
21 the entering cohort's first year in high school, up to and including in fourth year.

1 (5) "Transfers Out" means students the school or local educational agency has  
2 confirmed as transferred to another school or other educational program for which they  
3 are expected to receive a regular high school diploma. Confirmation of a student's  
4 transfer to another school or program requires formal documentation that the student  
5 enrolled in the receiving school. Students enrolled in other alternative educational  
6 programs that do not issue or provide credits toward the issuance of a regular high school  
7 diploma are not considered transferred out. Students who were enrolled, but for whom  
8 there is no confirmation of transfer or completion, may not be labeled transfers or errors,  
9 but must remain in the cohort as non-graduates for reporting and accountability purposes.

10 (6) "Treatment of Other Leavers and Withdrawals" means students who were  
11 retained in high school level, left school for any other reason may not be counted as  
12 transferred out for the purpose of calculating graduation rates and must remain in the  
13 adjusted cohort.

14 For purposes of this Act, those high schools that start after third year high school,  
15 the cohort shall be calculated based on the earliest high school grade.

16 (7) "Regular high school diploma" means the standard high school diploma  
17 awarded to the preponderance of students, or a higher diploma, and does not include  
18 certificates of attendance, or any lesser diploma award.

19 For those students who have significant cognitive disabilities and are assessed  
20 using an alternate assessment aligned to alternate achievement standards, receipt of a  
21 regular high school diploma or government-defined alternate diploma shall be counted as  
22 graduates with a regular high school diploma for the purposes of this Act. No more than  
23 one percent of students can be counted as graduates with a regular high school diploma  
24 under this subparagraph.

25 SECTION 3. *Demonstration Project For Additional Secondary School*  
26 *Counselors.* – The Secretary of the Department of Education (here called the "Secretary")

1 shall carry out a demonstration project under which the Secretary makes grants on a  
2 competitive basis to secondary public schools and have a four-year adjusted cohort  
3 graduation rate of 60 percent or lower.

4 A grant under this Act shall be for a period of four years and may be used for the  
5 following:

6 (1) to provide additional school counselors during that period; and

7 (2) to provide additional resources (such as professional development expenses or  
8 travel expenses for home visits, and any services and materials referred to in this Act) and  
9 to pay overhead expenses.

10  
11 A participating school should aim to provide one additional counselor per 250  
12 students at risk.

13 SECTION 4. *Scope of Counseling.* – The additional school counselors shall  
14 identify students who are at risk of not graduating in four years and shall provide  
15 counseling primarily to those students. The counselors may identify such students at any  
16 time, but shall strive to identify them before they enter third year high school. Services  
17 shall be provided as long as necessary, including to the extent allowable and appropriate,  
18 after the student’s cohort graduation date. The counseling:

19 (1) may include a full panoply of services, including an individual graduation plan  
20 and other resources, such as appropriate course placement and supplemental services (to  
21 include not only supplemental educational services tutoring if available at the school site,  
22 but also other tutoring as necessary, along with supplemental books and materials); and

23 (2) shall include meetings with each student so identified and with the teachers,  
24 tutors, supplemental educational services providers, and parents of the student, and may  
25 also include meetings with other relevant individuals, such as a probation officer, mentor,  
26 coach, or employer of the student.

1           SECTION 5. *Supplement Not Supplant.* – The additional school counselors  
2 provided through funds under this Act must be in addition to any employees who work in  
3 the secondary school guidance or counseling office, such as counselors, college  
4 admissions specialists, career development specialists, guidance information specialists,  
5 or any other professional or paraprofessional.

6           SECTION 6. *Additional Grant Periods.* – A school that receives a grant under this  
7 Act and demonstrates adequate improvement over the period of the grant is eligible to  
8 receive a second grant for a second period. If the school again demonstrates adequate  
9 improvement over that second period, the school is eligible to receive a third grant for a  
10 third period. The third grant shall provide amounts that decrease for each year of the third  
11 period.

12           For purposes of this Act, a school demonstrates adequate improvement over a  
13 grant period if the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate increases (or is projected to  
14 increase) by 10 percent or more over that period.

15           SECTION 7. *Selection.* – The Secretary shall carry out the demonstration project  
16 in at least 10 schools. The first five schools selected to participate shall each be from a  
17 different region.

18           SECTION 8. *Authorization of Appropriations.* – There are authorized to be  
19 appropriated to carry out this Act Ten Million Pesos (₱10,000,000.00) for each of the  
20 first four fiscal years after the effectivity of this Act.

21           SECTION 9. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act shall be declared  
22 unconstitutional, any other provision not affected thereby shall remain in full force and  
23 effect.

1 SECTION 10. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, orders, rules and  
2 regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or amended  
3 accordingly.

4 SECTION 11. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its  
5 publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,

/fldpdec2014