

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

SEVENTEENTH (17TH) CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **3681**



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 decision and to achieve 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 an ever increasing globalization. More importantly, 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 provided in *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 Philippines 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 schemes being presently implemented is continuous quality improvement via of programs in private schools on the elementary, high school, college and graduate levels.

Accreditation is a means of promoting educational excellence through voluntary 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 accredited schools as compared to those which are non-accredited.

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 private colleges and universities, which number more than 2,000, that meet the criteria set forth by private accrediting bodies.

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

In more than forty years now, the voluntary accreditation movement even without government financial assistance, succeeded in raising the quality of education at all levels of about 15% of the more than 2,000 private schools. This achievement showcases the success of public private partnership.

This bill purports to motivate and enjoin many more private schools to undergo continuous quality improvement through voluntary accreditation and thereby ensure that the value and quality of education being received by the Filipino People is of high quality and comparable to the best in the

world. The bill's immediate implementation into law will ensure quality assurance in Philippine education and optimal capacity to participate actively in the forthcoming ASEAN community and mutual recognition agreements (MRA) with American and European continents.

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

Eric L. Olivarez
ERIC L. OLIVAREZ

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

SEVENTEENTH (17TH) CONGRESS

First Regular Session

House Bill No. **3681**

Introduced by Representative ERIC L. OLIVAREZ

**AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE VOLUNTARY
ACCREDITATION OF PRIVATE SCHOOLS IN THE
PHILIPPINES BY INSTITUTIONALIZING THE EXISTING
POLICIES AND PRACTICES AND PROVIDING
GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE THEREOF**

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 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 known as accrediting agency or association 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 effectiveness of the management and operations of the private school offering the program as exceeding the minimum standards or criteria for government recognition in the context of the philosophy and objectives of the school. 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 a learning institution or a school and determined through the level of accreditation.

Section 3. Membership – Voluntary membership of private schools in accrediting associations or agencies shall be 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 above mentioned 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. *Accreditation Process*– 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) Self- evaluation for the program to be applied for accreditation

(c) 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;

(d) 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

(e) 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 for particular program and level as applied for.

(f) 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 deficiency. Provided however, that the deficiency 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 decide whether the school has complied or corrected its minor lapses within the reasonable time given to such institution.

(g) The accrediting agency must submit its decision to FAAP for certification, within six months from the last formal survey visit, stating therein the comprehensive and detailed report of the evaluation of the program of a certain school and stating clearly the standards used vis-à-vis the comparative score of the program. Provided, however, that in cases falling under paragraph (e), the six 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* – In the event that students transfer from a private school to a 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 programs in schools, colleges and universities to be conducted by the accrediting agencies to be certified as such by FAAP:

- a) *Candidate 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 I 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 by the latter, the level is granted for a period of three years;
- c) *Level II accredited status:*** for programs which successfully underwent reaccreditation visit after three years of Level I status;
- d) *Level III accredited status:*** for programs which have at least been reaccredited and have met the additional requirements based on criteria/guidelines set by FAAP and the accrediting agency;
- e) *Level IV accredited status*** - programs which have distinguished themselves in a broad area of academic disciplines and

enjoy prestige and authority comparable to that of international universities.

- f) Institutional accredited status:* refers to the recognition of the entire institution and is anchored on the strength, depth and breadth of program accreditation.

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. Candidate status – partial administrative deregulation

b. Level I accredited and II reaccredited status – 1) a full administrative deregulation; 2) financial deregulation in terms of setting tuition and other fees; 3) financial deregulation in terms of setting tuition and other fees; 3) partial curricular autonomy 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 I and II; and, 2) full curricular deregulation; and 3) authority to open new curricular programs allied to its existing level III reaccredited programs without need for prior approval of DepED/CHED.

d. *Level IV accredited status* - 1) all the benefits for Levels I, II, and III; 2) award of grants/subsidies from the CHED's Higher Education Development Fund (HEDF) for the program for the duration of its level IV accredited status.

e. *Institutional accredited status*- 1) all the benefits for level I, II, III, and IV; 2) grant of full autonomy for the institution for the duration of its institution accredited status; 3) authority to offer new programs allied to existing accredited status without the need for prior approval by the Department of Education and Commission on Higher Education.

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 accrediting agency, 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, in consultation with FAAP 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.* 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 in coordination with the Department of Education (DepED) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED).

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,