

**[ REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10648, November 27, 2014 ]**

**AN ACT PROVIDING SCHOLARSHIP GRANTS TO TOP GRADUATES OF ALL PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS IN STATE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the "*Iskolar ng Bayan Act of 2014*".

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the declared policy of the State to protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality and accessible education at all levels and to establish and maintain a financial assistance system that shall be available to deserving students, especially the underprivileged.

For this purpose, the government shall democratize access to higher education by institutionalizing a college scholarship program to be named the "*Iskolar ng Bayan Program*" for top graduates of public high schools in the country, subject to the academic standards, application and admission policies and such other reasonable rules and regulations of state universities and colleges (SUCs).

SEC. 3. *Coverage.* – The academic scholarships provided under the "*Iskolar ng Bayan Program*", hereinafter referred to as the Program, shall cover all public high school students belonging to the top ten (10) of the graduating class, based on the guidelines and criteria set by the Department of Education (DepED), who will enroll in SUCs as freshmen: *Provided*, That they meet the admission requirements of the SUCs where they intend to enroll in.

A public high school with more than five hundred (500) graduates shall be entitled to one (1) additional scholarship slot in SUCs for every five hundred (500) graduates. The additional slots shall be given to graduates whose ranks immediately follow the top ten (10) students and who will enroll in SUCs after meeting the admission requirements for freshmen.

SEC. 4. *Admission in SUCs.* – Any public high school student who belongs to the top ten (10) bracket of the graduating class shall be entitled to the scholarship grant provided under this Act in any SUC of choice upon compliance with the following conditions:

- (a) The student has graduated from any public high school in the country within two (2) years prior to the academic year being applied for in the SUC;
- (b) The student has complied with the application requirements of the SUC;

(c) The student's rank is reported by the public high school principal or administrator in a certificate bearing the name of the school and its location, the number of students, the rank of the student applicant in the graduating class, and other relevant information; and

(d) After taking the entrance examination in the chosen SUC, the student has obtained a rating which has been designated by the SUC as the minimum rating for a student to be able to qualify for the scholarship program.

*Provided:* That for the next six (6) years in the implementation of this Act, beginning SY 2015-2016, admission to their SUCs of choice within their region shall be automatic for the top ten (10) graduating students of public high schools.

*SEC. 5. Limitation in the Acceptance of Top Public High School Graduates by SUCs.*

– All SUCs shall provide scholarships to qualified public high school graduates under this Act: *Provided,* That the applicants have successfully passed the entrance examination and have complied with the admission requirements of the SUCs.

The SUC, however, may limit the number of students to be admitted under this Act if the number of applicants eligible and applying for admission exceeds by more than five percent (5%) the average number of first-time freshmen admitted to the SUCs during the first two (2) academic years preceding the entry of the applicant.

The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the concerned SUCs shall establish the appropriate guidelines in the acceptance of top public high school graduates.

*SEC. 6. Support to the Program.* – The following government agencies/entities shall provide support for the effective implementation of the Program:

I. Government Agencies – these government agencies shall implement the following mandates:

(a) CHED

(1) Conduct a review of the number of graduating public high school students in each province to ensure that the SUCs therein have the capacity to absorb the *Iskolars ng Bayan*;

(2) Together with the SUCs, develop a system, including the appointment of advisers, which shall provide assistance and guidance to the scholars in the determination of the appropriate course and the SUC which will best suit their aspirations and strengths; and

(3) Ensure the SUCs' compliance with the law.

(b) DepED

(1) Disseminate information to all public high schools on the implementation of the Program and the availability of scholarship slots;

(2) Conduct a census of the number of graduating public high school students in each province for submission to the CHED;

(3) Identify the top ten (10) graduates in each public high school, as well as the additional top graduates in case the public high school has more than five hundred (500) graduates;