
Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

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.¹

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

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 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.

Miriam Defensor Santiago
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asst

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

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

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SENATE
S. No. 3122

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

19 (5) “Transfers out” means the students the school or local educational agency has
20 confirmed have transferred to another school or other educational program for which they are

1 expected to receive a regular high school diploma. Confirmation of a student's transfer to another
2 school or program requires formal documentation that the student enrolled in the receiving
3 school. Students enrolled in other alternative educational program that does not issue or provide
4 credits toward the issuance of a regular high school diploma are not considered transfers out.
5 Students who were enrolled, but for whom there is no confirmation of transfer or completion,
6 may not be labeled transfers or errors, but must remain in the cohort as non-graduates for
7 reporting and accountability purposes.

8 (6) "Treatment of other leavers and withdrawals" means students who were retained in
9 high school level, left school for any other reason may not be counted as transfers out for the
10 purpose of calculating graduation rates and must remain in the adjusted cohort.

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

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

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

21 SECTION 3. *Demonstration Project For Additional Secondary School Counselors.* – The
22 Secretary of Education (here called the "Secretary") shall carry out a demonstration project
23 under which the Secretary makes grants on a competitive basis to secondary public schools and
24 have a four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate of 60 percent or lower.

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

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

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

5 A participating school should aim to provide one additional counselor per 250 students at
6 risk.

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

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

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

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

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

6 For purposes of this Act, a school demonstrates adequate improvement over a grant
7 period if the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate increases (or is projected to increase) by
8 10 percent or more over that period.

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

12 SECTION 8. *Authorization of Appropriations.* – There are authorized to be appropriated
13 to carry out this Act Ten Million Pesos (P10,000,000.00) for each of fiscal years 2012 through
14 2015.

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

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

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

Approved,