

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION | OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

**PRESS RELEASE**

**DepEd assures SHS voucher for Grade 11 in 2017**

*PASIG CITY, November 8, 2016* – The Department of Education (DepEd) maintained that the Senior High School (SHS) Voucher Program will remain to provide financial assistance for qualified Grade 10 completers who wish to enroll in non-DepEd SHS amid reports claiming that the voucher program will cease to accommodate recipients in school year 2017-2018.

In line with its commitment to provide quality education for all, DepEd issued on October 28, 2016 the Department Order No. 66, series of 2016 (DO 66, s. 2016) that aims to provide clear and detailed guidelines in the implementing processes related to the application for vouchers from prequalification to redemption. DepEd also opened the SHS VP online application on November 2, 2016.

“We will continue cooperation with the private sectors and private communities, as well as with bilateral and multi-lateral institutions. *Hindi natin sila maiiwasan dahil malaking contribution ang magagawa nila. Pero tayo ang magsasabi kung anong gusto natin.* We will cooperate with them,” Education Secretary Leonor Magtolis Briones stated as she marked her first 100 days in October.

The SHS VP aims to uphold the rights of students to a quality basic education, enable students’ choice, enhance the diversity of senior high schools, and to ease the financial impact on higher educational institutions that might experience reduced in enrolment during the first few years of the SHS implementation. In the Department’s 2017 budget of more than P550 billion, P23 billion is allotted to SHS VP, while the rest is for the public sector education—still the topmost priority of the Department.

**Eligibility, Application, Qualification**

All and only Grade 10 students in the current school year are eligible for SHS VP. These Grade 10 completers are subdivided into automatically qualified students and voucher applicants (VA). Applications are free of charge, and may be done manually (Deadline: January 13, 2017) or online (Deadline: February 10, 2017).

The Private Education Assistance Committee (PEAC) shall process all submitted applications and forward the results to DepEd for approval. All automatically qualified students and VAs who meet the qualification criteria are considered QVRs, which shall be tagged in the DepEd Learner Information System (LIS).

VAs who do not qualify will not receive voucher subsidy. Applications with false information or incomplete after the deadline are grounds for disqualification.

**Voucher Values**

Under the Department Order, the applicable voucher amount depends largely on the location, type, and fees of the non-DepEd SHS where the QVR wishes to enroll. The category of the QVR also affects the voucher amount. The values allotted represent the maximum payment a non-DepEd SHS provider shall be paid per voucher program beneficiary (VPB) per school year.

**Redeeming Vouchers**

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Vouchers shall be redeemed in the first semester of the school year immediately after Grade 10 completion by enrolling in a non-DepEd school. The voucher covers two years of the recipient's stay in SHS, regardless of the number of years it takes the student to finish SHS.

In September 2016, DepEd has started disbursing payments for the voucher program on billings received for the first semester of school year 2016-2017. As of October 2016, about P380 million worth of voucher subsidies have been already released to participating schools. Currently, another P1.4 billion worth of voucher assistance are being processed.

The comprehensive application procedure under the Department Order No. 66, series 2016, or the Detailed Guidelines on the Applications for the Senior High School Voucher Program, is available online at <http://www.deped.gov.ph/orders/do-66-s-2016>. More information on the voucher applications can also be found at the Online Voucher Application Portal (OVAP) website <http://ovap.deped.gov.ph>.

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