

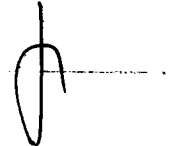
**TWENTIETH CONGRESS OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES  
First Regular Session**

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25 JUL -2 P6:00

**SENATE**  
**S.B. No. 55**

RECEIVED



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**Introduced by SENATOR WIN GATCHALIAN**

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**AN ACT  
INSTITUTIONALIZING AND STRENGTHENING THE ARABIC LANGUAGE  
AND ISLAMIC VALUES EDUCATION PROGRAM IN ALL PUBLIC AND  
PRIVATE BASIC EDUCATION SCHOOLS AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS  
THEREFOR**

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

This bill seeks to institutionalize and strengthen the Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education (ALIVE) Program in all public and private basic education schools outside the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) and make it a vital component of the national education system. It shall uphold the right of Muslim Filipinos to quality education as enshrined in the "Education for All" provision of the 1987 Philippine Constitution within the context of their cultures, customs, traditions, interests, and beliefs. The proposed law shall likewise be an instrument for their maximum participation in national development and nation-building,

involvement in achieving national unity in diversity among Muslim and non-Muslim Filipino learners, and contribution to national goals and aspirations.<sup>1</sup>

To provide Muslim Filipino learners the appropriate and relevant educational opportunities, this bill further mandates the provision of facilities, school furniture, and equipment, relevant textbooks and instructional materials, and recruitment and training or capacity-building of *asatidz* to include training of trainers, supervisors, and administrators, and technical and financial educational assistance to DepEd-accredited or recognized private *madaris*.

It likewise mandates the crafting of a multi-year roadmap for the ALIVE Program which shall serve as a guide to government agencies and private stakeholders for the optimal realization of the objectives of this proposed measure. Further, this bill creates the ALIVE Advisory Council to ensure the attainment of the objectives of the proposed law. This bill further mandates the Bureau of Learning Delivery of the Department of Education (DepEd) to implement the provisions of this bill by coordinating with other national government agencies and offices as partner implementing agencies.

Prior to the filing of this bill, the DepEd has provided initiatives to promote the ALIVE Program, as follows: (1) issuance of a standard curriculum for elementary public schools and private *madaris*<sup>2</sup>; (2) implementation of the Basic Education Madrasah Programs for Muslim Out-of-School Youth and Adults as a response to the call for global commitment for the Education for All Program<sup>3</sup>; and (3) implementation of Madrasah Education Program (MEP) in the K to 12 Basic Education Program.<sup>4</sup> The MEP aims to provide Muslim

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<sup>1</sup> Section 2, Republic Act No. 9997, otherwise known as the "National Commission on Muslim Filipinos Act of 2009".

<sup>2</sup> DepEd Order No. 51, Series of 2004, August 28, 2004.

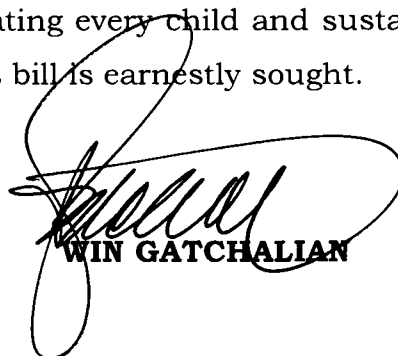
<sup>3</sup> DepEd Order No. 57, Series of 2010, May 17, 2010.

<sup>4</sup> DepEd Order No. 41, Series of 2017, August 11, 2017.

learners with appropriate and relevant educational opportunities while recognizing their cultural context and unique purposes for participating in the program offerings, and to integrate content and competencies which are relevant and of interest to Muslim learners.<sup>5</sup>

This proposed measure seeks to resolve the number of challenges in the implementation of the ALIVE Program, despite its institutionalization in the DepEd, in terms of Islamic knowledge<sup>6</sup>, curriculum implementation or contextualization, teachers' training, availability of instructional materials and school facilities, and low and delayed allowance or salary<sup>7</sup>, among others. Moreover, learners who finished basic education in traditional *madaris* which do not implement the DepEd-prescribed basic education curriculum, are not possessed with the expected competencies of basic education graduates as they were not trained with, and prepared for, the skills needed for employment and entrepreneurship. Furthermore, the country has no existing universities and colleges where *madaris* graduates proficient in Arabic could enroll for higher education.

With our country's aspiration of educating every child and sustaining national unity, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



WIN GATCHALIAN


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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Lamla, M. (2018). Issues and Concerns on Madrasah Education in Basilan, Philippines: The Asaatiz Perspectives. *International Journal of Novel Research in Education and Learning*, 5(4), 1–4. <https://www.noveltyjournals.com/upload/paper/ISSUES%20AND%20CONCERNS-1419.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Marasigan, A. (2019). *UP CIDS Discussion Paper Series 2019–09: Teacher Shortage and Quality of Madrasah Education in the Philippines: An Analysis of Madaris Teachers' Support System and Qualifications (No. 2019–09)*. University of the Philippines Center for Integrative and Development Studies. <https://cids.up.edu.ph/download/up-cids-discussion-paper-series-2019-09-teacher-shortage-and-quality-of-madrasah-education-in-the-philippines-an-analysis-of-madaris-teachers-support-system-and-qualifications/>

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THEREFOR**

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

1           Section 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “*Arabic Language*  
2           *and Islamic Values Education Act*”.

3  
4           Sec. 2. *Declaration of Principles and Policy.* – The State recognizes the  
5           vital role of the youth in nation-building and shall promote and protect their  
6           physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social well-being. Towards this  
7           end, it shall be the duty of the State to protect and promote the right of all  
8           citizens to quality education at all levels, and shall take appropriate steps to  
9           make such education accessible to all.

10           The State likewise recognizes the complementary roles of public and  
11           private institutions in the educational system and shall exercise reasonable  
12           supervision and regulation of all educational institutions.

1           It likewise recognizes the natural and primary right and duty of parents  
2 in rearing the youth for civic efficiency and the development of moral  
3 character, which shall receive government support.

4           To further this State policy, educational institutions shall promote the  
5 inclusion of all learners, especially Muslim Filipinos, in programs that  
6 preserve their unique culture which includes the teaching of Arabic Language  
7 and Islamic Values. Such programs shall serve as instruments in ensuring  
8 their maximum participation in national development and involvement in  
9 achieving national unity in diversity among Muslim and non-Filipino learners  
10 and the country as a whole.

11  
12           Sec. 3. *Objectives.* – This Act aims to achieve the following objectives:

13           a. Institutionalize an effective and efficient program in the basic  
14 education system of the country that promotes, strengthens, respects and  
15 preserves the Muslim Filipinos' distinct historical identity, culture, customs,  
16 and traditions;

17           b. Strengthen the existing Arabic Language and Islamic Values  
18 Education Program and make it a vital component of the national education  
19 system;

20           c. Ensure the contribution of Muslim Filipinos to national goals and  
21 aspirations aimed at making them partners in nation-building;

22           d. Recognize Muslim Filipinos whose values and competencies enable  
23 them to realize their full potential and contribute meaningfully to building the  
24 nation; and

25           e. Qualify and capacitate competent teachers of Arabic Language and  
26 Islamic Values Education.

27  
28           Sec. 4. *Definition of Terms.* – As used in this Act:

29           a. *Arabic Language* is the language of the Arabs as formally and  
30 grammatically taught under the Arabic Language and Islamic Values  
31 Education Program.

1        b. *Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education* refers to programs  
2 implemented in public and private schools that aim to provide additional  
3 subjects on Arabic Language and Islamic Values in the regular basic  
4 education curriculum.

5        c. *Asatidz* is the general Arabic term for teachers historically or  
6 traditionally used in most Muslim Filipino communities. It is the plural form  
7 of the Arabic word “ustadz”, a term that refers to a male teacher, and  
8 “ustadzah”, a term that refers to a female teacher. It includes *Ulama* (*singular*,  
9 *Ālim*) and *Alimat* (*singular*, *Ālimah*), male and female Muslim professionals,  
10 respectively, who specialized in Islamic Studies and obtained their education  
11 locally or abroad through Arabic Language.

12        d. *Accelerated Teacher Education Program* refers to a customized course  
13 approved by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and Professional  
14 Regulation Commission (PRC) to be delivered by Higher Education Institution  
15 partners. Through this program, the ALIVE asatidz deployed in public and  
16 private schools may earn a teaching degree and take the Board Licensure  
17 Examination for Professional Teachers.

18        e. *Cultural and Religious Learning Institutions (CRLI)* are the oldest forms  
19 of learning in the Philippines which teach Muslim Filipinos their culture,  
20 customs, beliefs, and practices. The CRLI is the technical term denoting these  
21 indigenous alternative systems of education.

22        f. *Islamic Values* refer to moral and ethical values or virtues that are  
23 based on the teachings of the Glorious Qur’an and exemplified by the practice  
24 of the Holy Prophet.

25        g. *Madrasah* (plural, *madaris*) is an Arabic term for school which is  
26 operationally defined as an educational institution that is community-based  
27 and operated privately wherein the medium of instruction is the Arabic  
28 Language. Islamic studies and Arabic literacy are its core emphasis.

29        h. *Private Madaris* refer to private schools or providers of madrasah  
30 education. These can be categorized as: (1) traditional madrasah that  
31 conducts Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education and Islamic studies,

1 and (2) private madrasah that conducts regular K to 12 classes and  
2 implements a madrasah curriculum recognized by the Department of  
3 Education (DepEd). For purposes of this Act, these shall include other types  
4 of relevant and similar learning institutions that teach Indigenous Knowledge,  
5 Skills and Processes which are part of Muslim culture and belief, key cultural  
6 and artisan skills of Muslim cultures, and Islamic Studies.

7  
8       Sec. 5. *Scope of Application.* – This Act shall be implemented in all  
9 public schools and private madaris in the country located outside the  
10 Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). It shall also  
11 apply to learners enrolled in the Alternative Learning System created  
12 pursuant to Republic Act No. 11510 or the “*Alternative Learning System Act*”.

13  
14       Sec. 6. *The Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education (ALIVE)*  
15 *Program.* – The ALIVE Program is hereby institutionalized to provide Muslim  
16 Filipino learners the appropriate and relevant educational opportunities while  
17 recognizing their cultural contexts and unique purposes for participating in  
18 the Program. It shall include, but not be limited to:

- 19       a. provision of facilities, school furniture, and equipment;
- 20       b. provision of relevant textbooks and instructional materials;
- 21       c. training or capacity-building of asatidz to include training of  
22 trainers, supervisors, and administrators;
- 23       d. provision of technical and financial educational assistance to  
24 DepEd-accredited or recognized private madaris;
- 25       e. monitoring and evaluation system of the ALIVE Program and its  
26 implementation;
- 27       f. accreditation or recognition criteria and system for private madaris;
- 28       and
- 29       g. forging of inter-agency or inter-governmental agreements on  
30 curriculum and standards.

1       Sec. 7. *Teaching of ALIVE.* – At the option expressed in writing by the  
2 parents or guardians of the learners, the subjects of Arabic Language or  
3 Islamic Values Education, or both, shall be taught to Muslim Filipino learners  
4 as well as to non-Muslim Filipino learners as an integral part of the ALIVE  
5 Program.

6       The teaching of Arabic language aims to develop the learners' functional  
7 literacy in Arabic, while the teaching of Islamic values aims to help learners  
8 acquire the desired Islamic values that would guide them to *be makatao,*  
9 *makaDiyos, makakalikasan, at makabayan.* The teaching of Islamic values  
10 must also emphasize the values of interfaith dialogue, multiculturalism, and  
11 respect for differences in belief.

12       Subject to the consent, in writing, by the parents or guardians of the  
13 learners, Islam shall be allowed to be taught to their children or wards within  
14 the regular class hours without additional cost to the government.  
15

16       Sec. 8. *The ALIVE Program Multi-Year Roadmap.* – Within sixty (60) days  
17 from the effectivity of this Act, the DepEd shall initiate the crafting of an ALIVE  
18 multi-year roadmap covering a minimum period of five (5) years. The multi-  
19 year roadmap shall serve as a guide to government agencies and private  
20 stakeholders for the optimal realization of the objectives of this Act. It shall  
21 set the overall direction of the ALIVE Program and shall contain the current  
22 policy, practices, gaps, and challenges affecting its integration and  
23 implementation in the basic education of Muslim Filipinos as well as of non-  
24 Muslim Filipinos. It shall likewise set detailed targets and outcomes for a  
25 minimum period of five (5) years and provide the public and private  
26 stakeholders' specific actions or interventions to include implementation and  
27 monitoring strategies, and annual budgetary requirements. It shall be subject  
28 to a periodic review and updating to determine its implementation status and



1 ensure that the institutionalization and strengthening of the ALIVE Program  
2 envisioned in this Act is realized and sustained.

3 The roadmap shall be completed within one (1) year from the effectivity  
4 of this Act and crafted in consultation with the ALIVE Advisory Council  
5 created hereafter, the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF), the  
6 CHED, the Technical Education And Skills Development Authority (TESDA),  
7 the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), the National  
8 Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), the University of the Philippines  
9 Institute of Islamic Studies (UP-IIS), the King Faisal Center for Islamic, the  
10 Arabic and Asian Studies (KFCIAAS) of the Mindanao State University  
11 (MSU), other concerned government agencies, and other relevant  
12 organizations and education stakeholders. The roadmap shall be periodically  
13 reviewed and updated not later than every five (5) years from its  
14 implementation until the ALIVE Program is fully institutionalized and  
15 integrated into the Philippine Education System.

16  
17 Sec. 9. *The Bureau of Learning Delivery as Implementing Bureau.* – The  
18 Bureau of Learning Delivery (BLD) of the DepEd shall implement the  
19 provisions of this Act. It shall:

- 20 a. Coordinate with other national government agencies and offices as  
21 partner implementing agencies;
- 22 b. Promote and strengthen the ALIVE Program;
- 23 c. Initiate the preparation and regular updating of an ALIVE Program  
24 multi-year roadmap, supported by annual work and financial plans, for the  
25 effective implementation of this Act;
- 26 d. Subject to the approval of the Secretary of the DepEd (Secretary),  
27 set the standards, approve, and ensure the availability of textbooks and other  
28 learning resources for use in the ALIVE Program. The BLD shall ensure that  
29 these textbooks and learning resources passed the standard screening and  
30 evaluation process prior to their publication, procurement, and distribution;

1 e. Ensure the training and capacity building of asatidz and the  
2 training of trainers, administrators, and supervisors;

3 f. Implement policies and standards for the use of learning delivery  
4 modalities, including the training of asatidz on distance education;

5 g. Subject to the approval of the Secretary, formulate standards and  
6 criteria in the establishment, accreditation or recognition of private madaris  
7 and CRLIs;

8 h. Supervise, monitor, evaluate, and assess the compliance,  
9 operations and performance of public and private madaris and their personnel  
10 pursuant to this Act, and regularly submit reports to the Secretary; and

11 i. Perform such other necessary functions for the effective and efficient  
12 implementation of this Act.

13 The head of the ALIVE Program in the DepEd and its regional and  
14 division offices shall be a Muslim Filipino who shall be qualified based on  
15 existing Philippine Qualification Standards.

16  
17 Sec. 10. *Hiring of Asatidz.* – The DepEd, through the BLD, and in  
18 consultation with the Civil Service Commission (CSC) and the Department of  
19 Budget and Management (DBM), shall hire a sufficient number of asatidz and  
20 create plantilla positions for the asatidz. It shall also establish a merit and  
21 classification system taking into consideration the position classification,  
22 salaries, career progression, and their duties and responsibilities.

23  
24 Sec. 11. *ALIVE Teacher Education and Training.* – The DepEd shall  
25 develop and conduct regular training programs and workshops for in-service  
26 asatidz, including the training of trainers, to ensure that they have the  
27 necessary knowledge and competence to teach ALIVE, as well as enhance  
28 their skills on their roles as asatidz taking into consideration the Muslim  
29 Filipinos' culture and values.

30 The CHED, under its established Technical Committee for Islamic  
31 Studies, shall likewise develop policies, standards, and guidelines for a

1 standardized and formalized madrasah education curriculum with tracks  
2 that include a specialized degree in Madrasah Teaching.

3 The DepEd shall likewise strengthen the Accelerated Teacher Education  
4 Program to ensure that there is a sufficient number of asatidz for the teaching  
5 of Arabic Language or Islamic Values Education, or both.

6  
7 Sec. 12. *Special Eligibility; Qualifying Examination.* – For the purpose of  
8 meeting the eligibility requirement for the position of asatidz, the PRC shall  
9 develop and administer special qualifying examinations for permanent  
10 appointment of asatidz positions in the DepEd. This shall include ulama,  
11 alimat, and other madrasah education teaching graduates and holders of  
12 degrees or sufficient units, or credentials earned from institutions of higher  
13 learning within or outside the country, or both, for them to become asatidz.

14 The PRC, in coordination with the CSC, shall grant special license for  
15 those enumerated in the preceding paragraph who passed the special  
16 qualifying examinations: *Provided*, That the eligibility herein granted may  
17 only qualify the grantee to permanent appointment as asatidz and shall not  
18 be considered as a substitute to second level eligibility unless authorized by  
19 the CSC.

20 Graduates with Latin honors, *i.e., summa cum laude, magna cum laude*  
21 *and cum laude*, from a recognized university or institution of higher learning  
22 in Arabic or Islamic Studies, whether local or international, may be exempted  
23 from the special qualifying examinations and shall be deemed to have met  
24 the eligibility requirement for permanent appointment to asatidz positions  
25 subject to applicable Civil Service rules on granting honor graduate eligibility.

26  
27 Sec. 13. *Data on ALIVE.* – Through its Information and Communications  
28 Technology Service, the DepEd shall gather relevant data on the  
29 implementation of the ALIVE Program. It shall include, but not limited to, data  
30 on learners in the ALIVE Program, asatidz, list of existing private madaris and

1 CLRIs, list of private partners, and other relevant data and information that  
2 the DepEd may identify.

3 For statistics purposes, the Learner Information System of the DepEd  
4 shall state if a learner is a Muslim Filipino.

5  
6 Sec. 14. *The ALIVE Program Advisory Council.* – The ALIVE Program  
7 Advisory Council (“Council”) is hereby created to ensure the attainment of the  
8 objectives of this Act. The Council, which shall directly coordinate and  
9 collaborate with the Secretary, shall have the following powers and functions:

10 a. Represent Muslim Filipino learners, asatidz, private madaris, and  
11 their respective organizations, and participate in consultative meetings of the  
12 DepEd and other organizations in the formulation of policies, plans and  
13 strategies, educational programs, rules and regulations, guidelines, or  
14 regulatory changes;

15 b. Conduct research and policy studies on the ALIVE Program;

16 c. Participate in crafting, amending, or updating the roadmap referred  
17 to in this Act, and monitor and evaluate its implementation;

18 d. Monitor and assess the implementation of the ALIVE Program as  
19 provided in this Act;

20 e. Review existing and recommend new legislation to promote the  
21 educational welfare of Muslim Filipino learners; and

22 f. Perform other similar functions as may be necessary.

23 Subject to prior consultation with Muslim Filipino professionals from  
24 the academe, organizations of asatidz in public and private madaris,  
25 organization of private madaris, and other relevant Muslim-Filipino  
26 stakeholders regarding the composition of the Council and the qualifications  
27 and terms of office of its members, the DepEd, within sixty (60) days from the  
28 effectivity of this Act, shall issue the necessary orders on the creation and  
29 composition of the Council, and direct the Department, bureaus, and its  
30 attached agencies to extend the required assistance and cooperation to the  
31 Council in the performance of its functions. The Implementing Rules and

1 Regulations (IRR) of this Act shall state the composition of the Council and  
2 the qualifications and terms of office of its members.

3 The Council shall be independent from the DepEd, and its members  
4 shall not be entitled to any compensation in the performance of their  
5 functions but shall be entitled to reimbursement or honoraria in the  
6 performance of their functions.

7  
8 Sec. 15. *Learning Continuity; Equivalency.* – The DepEd, in collaboration  
9 with the NCMF, the CHED, and the TESDA, shall establish programs to  
10 ensure the integration of the teaching of Islamic Studies and Arabic Language  
11 with the higher and technical-vocational education system towards continuity  
12 of learning and creation of opportunity for basic education graduates in the  
13 country to harness their potential, pursue higher education, or seek  
14 employment.

15 The CHED, the PRC, and other relevant government agencies shall  
16 likewise develop and implement a system of recognition, certification,  
17 accreditation or equivalency for the degrees and programs earned by Muslim  
18 Filipino graduates from institutions of higher learning outside the Philippines.

19  
20 Sec. 16. *Authority to Receive Donations or Grants.* – The DepEd may  
21 accept any donation, or grant, in cash or in kind, whether local or foreign,  
22 which may be made by individuals and organizations, public or private,  
23 which shall provide the appropriate services, facilities, materials, and other  
24 support services for the implementation of the ALIVE Program and the  
25 promotion and preservation of Muslim Filipino culture as provided in this  
26 Act.

27  
28 Sec. 17. *Private Sector Participation; Tax Incentives.* – Partnership  
29 between the government and the private sector in support of the ALIVE  
30 Program shall be encouraged. Any donation, contribution or grant, in cash or  
31 in kind, whether local or foreign, which may be made by individuals and

1 organizations, including private entities, which shall provide the appropriate  
2 services, facilities, materials, and delivery support services for the promotion  
3 and development of the ALIVE Program, shall be exempt from the donor's tax  
4 and the cost of which shall be considered as an allowable deduction from the  
5 gross income in the computation of the income tax of the donor in accordance  
6 with the provisions of the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997, as  
7 amended.

8  
9       Sec. 18. *Operation of Private Madaris.* – The DepEd shall adopt an  
10 accreditation mechanism for all private madaris and CRLIs in the country,  
11 regardless of their kind, as part of its external quality assurance process for  
12 every madrasah to ensure the continuous improvement of the madaris and  
13 for purposes of public accountability. They shall be subject to the reasonable  
14 supervision and regulations of the DepEd and the relevant provisions of this  
15 Act.

16  
17       Sec. 19. *Mandatory Review and Impact Assessment; Submission of*  
18 *Annual Report to Congress.* – In partnership with the other concerned  
19 government agencies, the DepEd shall conduct a mandatory review of the  
20 implementation of this Act five (5) years from its effectivity to determine its  
21 impact, measure its effectiveness, and ensure its proper implementation.

22       An annual report of the implementation of this Act shall be submitted  
23 to the Committees on Basic Education of both houses of Congress.

24  
25       Sec. 20. *Interpretation.* – The provisions of this Act shall be applied in  
26 harmony with any law on education implemented in the BARMM and shall be  
27 interpreted towards the attainment of the goals of “Education for All”.

28  
29       Sec. 21. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the implementation  
30 of this Act shall be charged against those authorized in the current  
31 appropriations of the DepEd. Thereafter, the amount necessary for its

1 continued implementation shall be included in the budget of the DepEd as a  
2 separate line item in the annual General Appropriations Act.

3  
4 Sec. 22. *IRR.* – Within sixty (60) days after the effectivity of this Act, the  
5 Secretary of Education, in consultation with the Council, the NCMF, other  
6 concerned government agencies, and other education stakeholders, shall  
7 issue the rules and regulations for its effective implementation. The IRR  
8 issued pursuant to this section shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its  
9 publication in a newspaper of general circulation.

10  
11 Sec. 23 *Transitory Provision.* – All existing madaris in the country,  
12 whether established or operating pursuant to the provisions of Republic Act  
13 No. 10533 or the “Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013”, DepEd issuances,  
14 rules and regulations, and other laws shall continue to operate pursuant to,  
15 and shall be regulated by, the provisions of this Act and its IRR and other  
16 applicable laws.

17  
18 Sec. 24. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is held invalid  
19 or unconstitutional, the other provisions not so declared shall remain in force  
20 and effect.

21  
22 Sec. 25. *Repealing Clause.* – All other laws, executive orders,  
23 presidential decrees, administrative orders, rules and regulations, issuances,  
24 or parts thereof contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are  
25 hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

26  
27 Sec. 26. *Effectivity.* – Notwithstanding the non-issuance of the IRR, this  
28 Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette  
29 or in a newspaper of general circulation.

*Approved,*