

PRESS RELEASE**Statement on the Senior High School Voucher Program for School Year (SY) 2019-2020**

PASIG CITY, April 3, 2019 – In response to various queries on and challenges in the implementation of the Senior High School Voucher Program (SHS VP) for School Year (SY) 2019-2020, the Department of Education (DepEd) assures the public of its commitment to continue with the program.

It is the mandate of the Department to uphold the right of every Filipino to quality basic education by providing access, whether through public programs or through arrangements based on the principles of public-private partnership. Consistent with Section 10 of Republic Act (RA) No. 10533 (An Act Enhancing the Philippine Basic Education System by Strengthening its Curriculum and Increasing the Number of Years for Basic Education, Appropriating Funds Therefor and for Other Purposes), DepEd will continue to engage the services of private educational institutions and non-DepEd public schools offering SHS through the voucher program under the Expanded Government Assistance to Students and Teachers in Private Education (E-GASTPE)¹.

Pending the issuance of the 2019 General Appropriations Act (GAA), the national budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 is deemed reenacted². The reenacted budget shall remain in force until such time that the GAA is passed into law by Congress³. Subsequently, the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) has released Circular Letter No. 2019-01 (Release of Funds for the First Quarter of FY 2019) stating that in the absence of the 2019 GAA, the budgetary support to cover the operations of all national agencies is equivalent to the appropriations based on the FY 2018 GAA (R.A. No. 10964, or the “General Appropriations Act 2018,” as reenacted) or on the FY 2019 National Expenditure Program (NEP)—whichever is lower⁴.

Under the FY 2018 GAA, the total appropriation for the SHS VP in private and non-DepEd schools is P14.4 billion, while the 2019 NEP is P20.3 billion. As a result, the program is short of funds equivalent to P5.9 billion. In view of this, the application for the SHS VP for SY 2019-2020 is yet to be opened pending the issuance of the FY 2019 GAA.

However, Grade 10 completers in SY 2018-2019 who fall under the following categories are automatically eligible and do not need to apply for vouchers: 1) all Grade 10 completers in public schools operated by DepEd; 2) all Grade 10 completers in state and local universities and colleges (SUCs and LUCs); and 3) all Grade 10 completers in private schools who are ESC grantees. These automatic voucher recipients shall be accommodated in the program upon enrollment in any SHS VP-participating school.

END

¹ DepEd Order No. 19, s. 2017

² 2As mandated by Section 25 (7), Article VI of the Constitution

³ <https://www.dbm.gov.ph/index.php/secretary-s-corner/press-releases/list-of-press-releases/1319dbm-sets-guidelines-for-reenacted-budget-in-first-quarter-of-2019>

⁴ DBM Circular Letter No. 2019-01

PRESS RELEASE