

Survey showing 24% of firms hiring K-12 grads welcomed

The Philippine Star · 23 Apr 2018 · 2 · By JANVIC MATEO

The Department of Education (DepEd) has welcomed a recent survey showing 24 percent of companies are ready to hire senior high school graduates this year.

Education Undersecretary Jesus Mateo said the survey conducted by employment website JobStreet is a welcome opportunity for DepEd to have baseline data on employer's willingness to hire K-12 graduates.

"Twenty-four percent is about two in every 10 of company employers, a good enough percentage to take in K-12 graduates in entry level positions doing administrative and support work to technical, supervisory and managerial levels," he said.

"It is a challenge at the same time for K-12 graduates to develop their skills and be the company's engine to growth. Coupled with the right attitude, they will surely succeed in the labor market," he added.

The survey conducted by JobStreet as part of its 2018 Fresh Graduate Report showed that only 24 percent of employers using the website are ready to hire the first batch of graduates of the K-12 program.

It also revealed that 35 percent of employers on JobStreet are not ready to hire K-12 graduates, while 41 percent are still undecided.

The lack of available positions for noncollege graduates and the supposed insufficient work experience of K-12 graduates were the primary reasons cited by employers who said that they are not ready to accept senior high school graduates.

Those who were undecided said that they are either evaluating the readiness of their companies or are still finalizing the timeline on when they would hire K-12 graduates.

On Friday, business leaders called on companies to consider hiring senior high school graduates.

"There really are jobs that do not need a full four-year degree to start with. Just because there's surplus of college graduates does not justify discriminating against those who do not have a college degree," Philippine Business for Education (PBE) chairman Ramon del Rosario said.

"That's the appeal we're making — open our minds to the possibility that senior high school graduates do have enough competencies for certain jobs," he added.

Del Rosario said there are certain specific jobs that can be filled by people who do not have college degrees, particularly those who have benefited from the senior high school curriculum.

"While it is still a work in progress, they do have the competencies for some jobs. All we're saying is, do not discriminate against them," he said.

PBE has initiated an affirmative hiring initiative for K-12 graduates to provide opportunities to as many as 600,000 senior high school graduates who may want to join the workforce.

The program aims to enjoin companies to rethink their hiring policies by opening entry-level position for senior high school graduates.

“Maybe it’s time for us as companies to do away with this age-old requirement which says you have to be a college graduate,” Del Rosario said.

Cheap labor

Meanwhile, the League of Filipino Students (LFS) has reiterated its criticism against the senior high school program, noting that it would produce contractual and more unemployed Filipinos.

“Findings by various institutions and even government data have already proven that K-12 does not – and will not – work, nor does it solve problems besetting the country’s education system,” LFS spokesperson Kara Taggaoa said.

“Its sole purpose is to ensure the steady supply of cheap and docile labor needed by imperialists and oligarchs. It also institutionalized commercialization in basic education by ensuring millions of pesos in profit for capitalist-educators as it makes education further inaccessible to a majority of the youth,” she added.