PITON Global

EXECUTIVE WHITE PAPER · WP-96

EDUCATION SUPPORT · PHILIPPINES

The retention-accuracy standard: the executive economics of education support outsourcing to the Philippines.

An analysis of why students contacted is a volume vanity metric, how enrollment integrity and student-support resolution — never contact throughput — decide the true cost of an education operation once mis-enrollments, financial-aid errors, FERPA lapses, and attrition are counted, and the vendor-selection discipline that enrolls the student right and keeps them to graduation.

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ABOUT THIS SERIES — VOLUME 96

Every education-support proposal is priced per contact or per applicant, because activity is easy to count. This volume is about the only outcome an institution's mission and budget actually depend on: the student enrolled correctly, supported through the friction points, and kept to graduation — with the financial-aid packaged right and the record protected. The gap between contacting a student and correctly serving one is where mis-enrollments, aid errors, and attrition live. The full series lives at piton-global.com.

THE PITON-GLOBAL LEADERSHIP TEAM

About the authors

John Maczynski

Chief Executive Officer

John has bought student-services capacity for three decades, and learned that the operation that contacts every prospect and mis-enrolls a share of them is the most expensive one a provost or registrar can hire — because a mis-packaged financial-aid award is a compliance exposure, a dropped support case is a student who withdraws, and a term of churned enrollment is tuition that never arrives. His standing question ignores the contact report: of the students you touched, how many were enrolled right, supported, and still here next term?

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Ralf has spent twenty-five years running Philippine education-support floors, and he judges a student-services team by its enrollment integrity and retention record, not its contacts-per-day: whether the student was enrolled accurately and supported to the next term, or churned out with a mis-keyed record. The student contract in Section 3 codifies what he learned rebuilding teams that dialed hard and enrolled loosely — the ones that hit the contact number and missed the class that actually persisted.

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PITON Global

ABOUT PITON-GLOBAL

PITON-Global is a buyer-side advisory practice, Manila-based since 2001, that has never operated a delivery floor or taken a placement commission. Its stock-in-trade is knowing the Philippine provider market at the operating level — 1,000+ mapped operations, re-verified continuously, including each education-support team's real enrollment integrity and retention record rather than its contacts-per-day headline — and converting that knowledge into a shortlist of six to ten genuinely qualified partners per engagement. Buyers from Tripadvisor, Garmin, TSYS, HealthPartners, Yetipay, Workrise, and Norman Disney & Young have run their searches through the practice.

SECTION 01

Executive summary

-58%	99.4%+	+11pt	6.2×
Fully-loaded cost per correctly-served student vs. US onshore	Enrollment-record accuracy on vetted teams, up from 90–95%	Term-over-term retention lift on supported cohorts	First-year ROI, reconstructed case (Section 6)

An education-support engagement is bought on the price per contact or per applicant and paid for on the students it serves wrong. The vendor reports hundreds of thousands of students contacted at a fraction of the onshore cost; the registrar, the financial-aid office, and the retention team find the enrollments keyed to the wrong program, the aid packages that missed a verification step, the support tickets that closed without resolving the hold that would stop registration, and the cohort that quietly melted between acceptance and the first day of class. The operation hit its contact number and the institution inherited mis-enrollments, aid-compliance exposure, and a retention problem. The gap between contacting a student and correctly serving one is where the real cost of cheap education support hides, because a mis-served student is not throughput delivered — it is tuition that walks and a record that will not stand.

The Philippines — English-fluent, culturally aligned with US and UK academic norms, and with a deep, empathetic student-services talent pool — is where education support is delivered with the most enrollment-integrity and retention discipline. Five findings:

1 **Students contacted is the industry's most flattering number.** Any floor can dial a list. Vetted teams are measured on outcome: enrollment accuracy, support resolution, and retention. Weak providers quote a low per-contact price the institution repays in mis-enrollments, aid errors, and melt. Section 2 shows the gap.

2 **The correctly-served, retained student, not the fast contact, is the product.** A student who persists comes from enrolling them right, resolving the friction, and protecting the record — not from clearing a call list. Teams that serve accurately grow the class that stays; teams that dial loosely enroll a cohort that melts and a record that fails the audit.

3 **A mis-served student cuts both ways — enrollment error and lost persistence.** Enroll them into the wrong program or mis-package the aid and the record is wrong and the compliance exposure is real; leave the support case unresolved and the student withdraws. Vetted teams hold enrollment accuracy above 99.4% and lift retention precisely because both tails cost — the error corrected and the student lost.

4 **The melt and the finding, not the call, are what cost.** A student served wrong costs the re-enrollment work, the aid-compliance remediation, and above all the tuition of a student who does not return — many times the per-contact saving. Teams that serve accurately keep students enrolled and records clean, and that retained tuition — not the offshore rate alone — is where the case study's return is built.

5 **Contract on the correctly-served student, not the contacted one.** The contracting failure of education support is paying per contact and hoping the enrollment is right and the student stays. Vetted deals price against enrollment-accuracy floors, resolution targets, and retention and FERPA-compliance standards, making correctly-served students the team's problem, which is where it belongs.

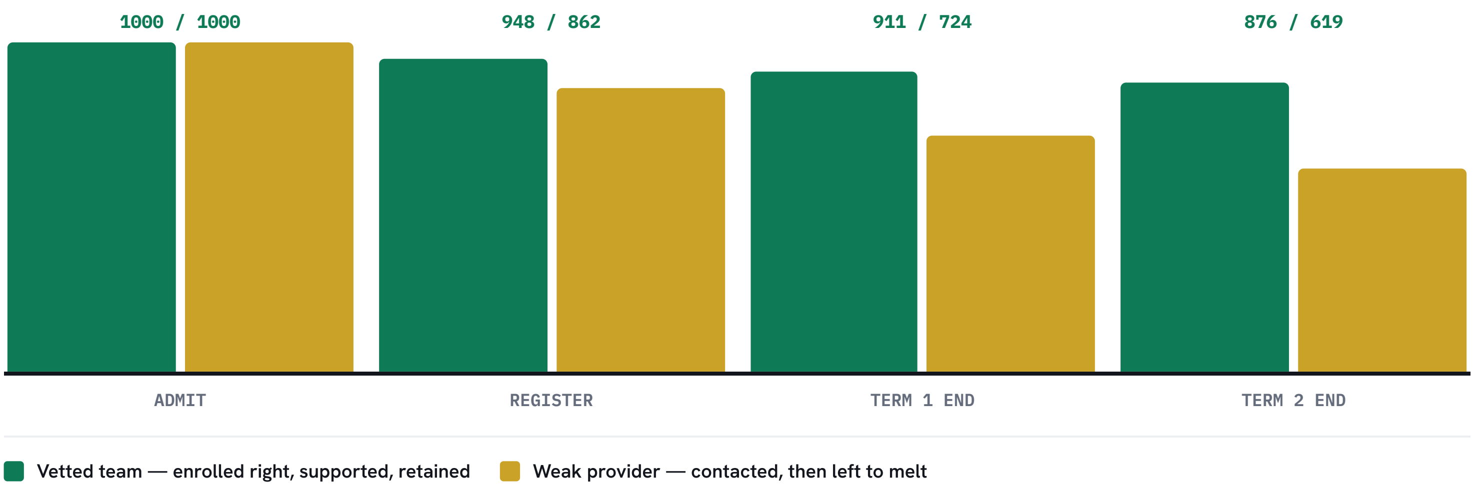
The intended reader is a provost, VP of enrollment management, registrar, or student-services leader buying education support per contact or per applicant and paying for it in mis-enrollments, aid errors, and attrition. Sections 2–4 separate the teams that serve accurately from the teams that clear contacts; Sections 5–7, the method and the proof.

SECTION 02

The volume mirage: students contacted versus correctly served

Figure 1 follows a single admitted cohort of 1,000 students across the terms that matter, two ways: the contacts-cleared line a weak vendor bills against, and the still-enrolled line the institution's tuition actually experiences. The contact number looks like progress while melt and mid-year attrition drain the class underneath it.

FIG. 1 — ONE 1,000-STUDENT COHORT: STILL-ENROLLED, STAGE BY STAGE



Left bars (green): PITON-Global engagement instrumentation, 2025–26, records audited. Right bars (amber): composite of pre-engagement vendor reporting. By Term 2 end, the gap is 876 vs. 619 of the original 1,000 — 257 students of persistence the contact number never revealed.

The economics follow the still-enrolled line, not the contact count. On the vetted side, records are accurate and support resolves the holds and doubts that cause melt, so the class that registered largely persists; on the weak side, the same contacts were logged but the cohort drains term over term — paying in re-recruitment, aid rework, and above all lost tuition. A low per-contact price that lets a cohort melt is not a saving; it is enrollment revenue forgone and a record that will not survive an aid audit. The enrollment-integrity-and-retention audit — record accuracy, resolution rate, term-over-term persistence — is the cheapest due-diligence instrument in this paper.

SECTION 03

The student contract: enroll it right, support the student, protect the record

Figure 2 lays out the three clauses of a working education-support contract as one left-to-right student lifecycle — the machinery a floor read verifies before any per-contact price is believed.

FIG. 2 — THE STUDENT LIFECYCLE, AS OPERATED ON VETTED TEAMS

ENROLL IT RIGHT

Applications are processed to the correct program and term, documents verified, and financial aid packaged to rule with every verification step completed — the record built accurately at intake, so nothing downstream rests on a mis-key or an unverified award.

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SUPPORT THE STUDENT

Registration holds, aid questions, advising handoffs, and the moments of doubt that cause melt are resolved — not just logged — with warm, empathetic, culturally-fluent contact. Support that resolves is what converts an admit into a student who shows up and stays.

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PROTECT THE RECORD

Student data is handled to FERPA and the institution's privacy standard, access is controlled, and every interaction is documented so the record ties out on an aid or accreditation audit. A protected record is what keeps the enrollment defensible long after the student has moved on.

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THE CORRECTLY-SERVED STUDENT

99.4%+ RECORD ACCURACY · RETENTION LIFTED · FERPA-CLEAN

The student is enrolled accurately, supported through the friction, and their record protected — so mis-enrollments and aid findings fall, the cohort persists, and the enrollment stands up to audit. The operation gets cheaper per correctly-served student and stronger on retention at the same time, which is the entire promise of outsourcing education support to people who measure enrollment integrity and persistence, not contacts logged.

Operating parameters from PITON-Global education-support engagements, 2025–26.

In diligence, the contract is tested from the record's and the cohort's side: pull enrolled records and re-check program, term, and aid packaging against the source for true accuracy; audit the FERPA-handling and access controls; and trace a sample cohort's term-over-term persistence against the support log. Perhaps one team in ten survives it cleanly. Steps 3 and 5 of the framework exist to find that one before the contract does — because everything in Table 3 of Section 6 depends on enrollment integrity and retention, not contacts logged.

SECTION 04

Cost and performance: cost-per-correctly-served-student economics and benchmarks

TABLE 1 — FULLY-LOADED COST PER CORRECTLY-SERVED STUDENT: THREE OPERATING MODELS (2026)

OPERATING MODEL	COST / STUDENT	VS. US BASELINE
US onshore in-house student services	$168	baseline
Low-cost offshore contact mill (per-contact)	$116	−31%
Vetted Manila team — enrolled right, retained	$71	−58%

Basis: PITON-Global engagement pricing 2025–26; cost per correctly-served student = fully-loaded operating cost divided by students enrolled accurately, supported, and retained to the next term (mis-enrolled, aid-erred, and melted students excluded); the contact mill looks cheap per contact but re-enrollment, aid rework, and lost tuition lift its true cost per served student; US comparator fully-loaded in-house cost.

TABLE 2 — EDUCATION-SUPPORT BENCHMARKS, VETTED VS. BASELINE (2025–26)			
METRIC	VETTED TOP TIER	BASELINE	EXECUTIVE READING
Enrollment-record accuracy	99.4%+	90–95%	The only number the aid audit follows
Support-case resolution rate	96%+	78–86%	Hold cleared, or a student stuck
Term-over-term retention lift	+11pt	baseline	"Support the student" — held or not
Financial-aid packaging error rate	<0.6%	4–8%	Packaged to rule, or a finding
FERPA-handling compliance	Full	Partial	Record protected, or exposed

Source: PITON-Global education-support engagement data 2025–26; baseline = typical pre-engagement operations billed on contacts.

The strategic read: the contact mill's −31% per contact is a false economy — re-enrollment, aid rework, and lost tuition lift its true cost per served student far above the per-contact gap, and a melted cohort is revenue no rate recovers. The vetted Manila team's −58% is real because it is measured where the value is: the student enrolled right, supported, and still here next term. Buy on students contacted and you buy the amber line of Figure 1; buy on cost-per-correctly-served-student and you buy enrollment integrity and retention — the same discipline every volume in this series keeps arriving at from a different door.

SECTION 05

Sourcing discipline: the 7-Step Vendor Vetting Framework, applied to education support

Education-support diligence adds one hard requirement to every step: a per-contact price is real only when the enrollment integrity and retention behind it survive a re-check of the records and a trace of cohort persistence. The funnel below is representative of a 40–90-seat student-services search.

FIG. 3 — THE 7-STEP FRAMEWORK AS AN EDUCATION-SUPPORT FUNNEL

	STEP	WHAT IT ELIMINATES IN AN EDUCATION-SUPPORT SEARCH	FIELD REMAINING
1	**Requirements definition**	Contact-first scoping: fixes the enrollment-accuracy floor, the resolution and retention targets, the aid-error ceiling, and the FERPA standard the operation must meet by function	1,000+
2	**Market mapping**	Contact mills: operations that bill dials and treat mis-enrollments and melt as the client's problem, and generalist floors with no enrollment, financial-aid, or student-services depth	~44
3	**Capability screening**	Teams without the machinery: audited record-accuracy history, financial-aid and SIS proficiency, a QA-and-resolution workflow, retention playbooks, and coverage across your programs	~13
4	**Compliance & security audit**	Weak governance: FERPA and student-data protection, access controls on the SIS and aid systems, Title IV-aware handling, SOC 2 scope covering the student-services stack	~8
5	**Operational diligence**	The record-and-cohort read: re-check enrolled records against source for accuracy; trace a sample cohort's persistence; audit FERPA handling; interview on how they resolve a melt-risk case	4–6
6	**Competitive RFP & negotiation**	Per-contact pricing: finalists bid against enrollment-accuracy floors, resolution and retention targets, and aid-error ceilings — all carrying credits for mis-enrollments and findings	2–3
7	**Transition & launch governance**	Cold start: the team calibrates against your programs, aid rules, and SIS on a sample before it owns live enrollment, with the accuracy floor and FERPA controls certified before peak season, PITON-Global embedded buyer-side	1

Field-remaining counts represent a 40–90-seat student-services search, PITON-Global engagements 2024–26.

The standing guarantees hold: **vendor neutrality** — PITON-Global operates no student-services floors, enrolls no students, and takes no placement economics, so the shortlist reflects audited enrollment-integrity and retention performance, not inventory; **right-sizing** — teams for whom your institution is a flagship account. Six to ten genuinely qualified providers, delivered within 48–72 hours, free to the buyer, competing through a fully transparent, fair, comprehensive, and highly competitive RFP.

SECTION 06 · ANONYMIZED CASE STUDY

Re-basing the operation on enrollment integrity: a 70-seat student-services rebuild, reconstructed

Engagement ED-080 is a US multi-campus institution and online-program group — running roughly 240,000 student contacts a year across admissions, enrollment, financial aid, and retention outreach — that had offshored student services to a per-contact vendor. The contact price was excellent; the outcomes were not: enrollment-record accuracy sat near 93%, financial-aid packaging errors had drawn an audit flag, support cases closed without resolving registration holds, and the admitted cohort was melting hard between acceptance and census day. The VP of enrollment management wanted the reach without the mis-enrollments and the attrition. Identifying details are anonymized under NDA.

SELECTION (WEEKS 0–8, RECORD + COHORT READS)

Requirements fixed a 99.4% enrollment-accuracy floor, a 96% resolution target, a retention-lift goal, and a <0.6% aid-error ceiling with full FERPA handling. Mapping produced 44 claimants; the machinery screen — audited accuracy, aid/SIS proficiency, retention playbooks, QA workflow — left 13; the compliance-and-security audit left 8. Blind record re-checks plus cohort-persistence traces shortlisted 5. A Manila team won priced against enrollment accuracy and retention, with a record re-check written into the reporting spec.

TRANSITION (MONTHS 2–7, CALIBRATED FIRST)

The team calibrated against the institution's programs, aid rules, and SIS on sample records before owning live enrollment; the accuracy floor and FERPA controls were certified in month 3, ahead of peak intake. The QA-and-resolution loop fed coaching from day one. By month 7 enrollment-record accuracy reached 99.5%, aid-packaging errors fell below 0.6%, support resolution hit 96%, and term-over-term retention rose 11 points on supported cohorts. PITON-Global chaired the enrollment-integrity review board to steady state.

TABLE 3 — ED-080 FIRST-YEAR VALUE BUILD-UP (US$)

VALUE COMPONENT	YEAR 1	BASIS
Labor arbitrage on the 70-seat operation	$1.74M	131.3k productive hrs × ($22.80 – $9.55)
Retained tuition (attrition & melt reduced)	$0.94M	Incremental persisted enrollments × net tuition
Aid-compliance & finding exposure avoided	$0.30M	Aid rework and audit-remediation removed
Re-enrollment & record-rework reduction	$0.16M	Correction of mis-enrollments removed
Gross value created	**$3.14M**	
Less: engagement & transition costs	($0.51M)	Calibration, QA-loop build, SIS/aid-system integration; advisory fee $0 (provider-paid model)
Net value ÷ cost = first-year ROI	6.2×	$3.14M ÷ $0.51M

Figures rounded; accuracy, aid, and retention effects audit-verified. Method in Methodology & notes.

Fifty-five percent arbitrage, forty-five percent from retained tuition, avoided aid findings, and reduced re-enrollment — a typical split for the series, earned because the operation was re-based on enrollment integrity and retention rather than contact volume. Every line traces to a diligence step: the accuracy floor to Step 1, the accuracy-and-retention pricing to Step 6, the QA-and-resolution workflow to Step 3's contract. The VP of enrollment management's line at the year-one review: "The contact price barely moved. What moved is that the class we admit is the class that shows up — and stays."

SECTION 07

The executive playbook: governance for the first 180 days

An education-support transition succeeds when the team is measured and paid on enrollment integrity and retention — client in command throughout.

DAYS 0–30

Define integrity, contract on it

Set the enrollment-accuracy floor, the resolution and retention targets, and the aid-error and FERPA thresholds with enrollment and aid leadership before launch, and document the enroll-support-protect workflow by function. Contract against enrollment integrity and retention — never per contact alone — with floors and targets carrying credits. Stand up the record re-check and cohort trace as the program's arbiters of truth.

DAYS 30–90 **Calibrate, prove the floor before peak**	Calibrate the team against your programs, aid rules, and SIS on sample records before it owns live enrollment; certify the accuracy floor, FERPA controls, and resolution loop ahead of peak intake. Switch on the QA-and-coaching loop from day one. Publish the student dashboard: record accuracy, resolution rate, retention, aid-error rate, FERPA compliance.
DAYS 90–180 **Own enrollment, certify steady state**	Hand live enrollment to the team only after it holds the accuracy floor and retention target. Review the board monthly with the aid-error and cohort-persistence trends on the table. Certify steady state on a full intake-through-census cycle; hand over on documented criteria; keep the quarterly record re-check and cohort trace standing.

THE FIVE FAILURE MODES WE ARE HIRED TO PREVENT

Paying per contact while students are mis-enrolled · dialing lists instead of resolving the holds that cause melt · mis-packaging financial aid · handling student records outside FERPA · owning live enrollment before accuracy and retention are proven. All five are settled at selection and contract.

The education-support argument, in one sentence: a contacted student is activity and a correctly-served one is an accurate record, a packaged aid award, and a student who persists to graduation, and a vetted Philippine team delivers −58% cost per correctly-served student with 99.4%+ enrollment accuracy, an 11-point retention lift, and aid errors under 0.6% on full FERPA handling — for buyers who audit the records and trace the cohort instead of counting contacts, and compete the finalists through a fully transparent, fair, comprehensive, and highly competitive RFP. Anyone can contact a student. We make sure you buy the team that enrolls them right and keeps them to graduation.

METHODOLOGY & NOTES

How the numbers were built

Accuracy and retention figures (Fig. 1, Table 2) derive from engagement instrumentation in PITON-Global education-support engagements, 2025–26. Enrollment-record accuracy and aid-error rate are measured by re-checking enrolled records against the source; support resolution and term-over-term retention are traced against a matched cohort baseline. The weak-provider column is a composite of pre-engagement vendor reporting reviewed in diligence, shown for contrast.

Cost-per-correctly-served-student figures (Table 1) are fully loaded — wages, benefits and statutory charges, facilities, SIS and aid-platform tooling, management and QA overhead including record auditors and retention specialists, attrition-driven recruiting — divided by students enrolled accurately, supported, and retained to the next term, with mis-enrolled, aid-erred, or melted students excluded from the denominator; US comparators reflect fully-loaded in-house cost. A correctly-served student is enrolled right, supported, retained, and FERPA-protected.

The case study (ED-080) is anonymized under NDA; volumes and dates are generalized, figures rounded. Accuracy, aid, and retention effects are audit-verified; the retained-tuition line reflects incremental persisted enrollments at net tuition, and the compliance line is a conservative estimate. ROI = net first-year value ÷ all engagement-related client costs. PITON-Global's advisory fee is provider-paid and appears at $0 in the client cost base; neutrality safeguards are documented at piton-global.com.

Market context draws on IBPAP reporting and PITON-Global's proprietary provider mapping (1,000+ operations; enrollment integrity and retention performance re-verified May 2026). Student-data handling follows FERPA and institutional privacy standards. Estimates and projections are PITON-Global analysis and should be cited as such. The full series is available at piton-global.com.

Would your provider's contact price survive a record-and-cohort audit?

Thirty minutes with John will tell you. Free to buyers, strictly vendor-neutral — an enrollment-integrity-verified shortlist within two to three business days.

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