

# *Chile to Offer Free Higher Education in 2016*

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Santiago de Chile, February 20 (RHC-Xinhua) -- Chilean Education Minister Nicolas Eyzaguirre Thursday said the country's government will uphold its pledge to provide free higher education starting in 2016.

"President (Michelle) Bachelet has clearly said that free education will begin in 2016, and we are going to honor that promise," Eyzaguirre said in a ministry press release.

On Thursday, two weeks before the start of the 2015 school year here, the minister was supervising the distribution of textbooks, which are provided free to more than 11,300 public and private schools in the country.

Secondary and university students in Chile first protested the high cost of education in 2011, during the administration of former pro-business President Sebastian Pinera, who pushed the privatization of education.

His successor, Michelle Bachelet, made the students' demands for accessible quality education a bedrock of her government program.



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