

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Philippines

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4214



INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE ALFRED VARGAS

EXPLANATORY NOTE

AN ACT

INSTITUTING INCLUSIVE AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION LEARNING RESOURCE CENTERS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS DIVISIONS, PROVIDING FOR STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Sec. 1, Article XIV of the 1987 Constitution provides that the State shall promote the "right of all citizens to quality education at all levels, and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all," calling for the establishment of a "complete, adequate and integrated system of education relevant to the needs of the people and society." Further, the right of persons with disabilities to education is guaranteed by international law, particularly Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Hence, the universality and inclusiveness of education is a fundamental policy aim of the country.

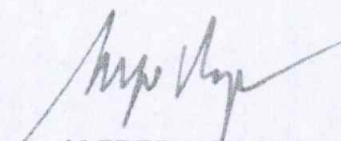
Several laws already affirm this policy directive, but gaps persist especially those concerning the delivery and quality of education for children with disabilities. A 2011 Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) showed that up to twice as many female persons with disabilities (PWDs) than male PWDs do not complete any primary education at all—hindered by cost and social barriers.

Inadequate resources are devoted to building up the tailored capabilities and expertise that allow even the differently abled to gain a meaningful education. In 2017, a

total of only 648 schools nationwide have been allowed by the Department of Education (DepEd) to offer the Special Education (SPED) program that provides the necessary educational interventions for students with certain exceptionalities.

This shows a very minimal increase in the number of SPED centers. In 2014, Rappler reported that only 620 out of 34,000 public elementary schools across the country either have a SPED center or least offers a SPED program.

This foregoing measure aims to fill in these policy gaps by calling for the establishment of inclusive education learning resource centers for children and youth with special needs nationwide-in a bid to further expand the avowed accessibility of Philippine education. Therefore, the immediate enactment of this measure is earnestly sought.



ALFRED VARGAS

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Philippines

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **4214**

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE ALFRED VARGAS

AN ACT

INSTITUTING INCLUSIVE AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION LEARNING RESOURCE CENTERS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS DIVISIONS, PROVIDING FOR STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

Section 1. Short Title. – This Act shall be known as the “*Inclusive Education Learning Resource Center Act of 2019*.”

Section 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to protect and promote the rights of children and youth with special needs to quality education and to take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to them. The State recognizes their vital role in society and endeavors to include their needs as an integral part of national development strategies.

It is also the policy of the State to fully support their welfare and development, ensure their full integration in society, as well as facilitate their active participation in the affairs of the State. Towards this end, and pursuant to the *1987 Constitution* specifically: Section 13, Article II; Section 13, Article XIII; and Sections 1 and 2, paragraphs 1 and 3, Article XIV, Article 3 and 12 of Presidential Decree No. 603 – *Third Child and Youth Welfare Code (1974)*, Sections 12-14 of Republic Act No. 9442 – *An Act Amending RA 7277, otherwise known as the “Magna Carta of Disabled Persons, and for Other Purposes” (2008)*, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), UNESCO Salamanca Statement (1984), UN Convention on the Rights of Persons

with Disabilities (2006) and Incheon Strategy to Make the Rights Real for Persons with Disability in Asia and Pacific (2012) and other relevant laws, the State shall institutionalize an adequate and relevant educational program for every child and youth with special needs by adopting the policy of inclusive education, the establishment of Inclusive Education Learning Resource Centers, and the provision of vital support mechanisms required to ensure their effectiveness. All children and youth with special needs in any degree of sensory, physical or intellectual disability or need, shall therefore have the opportunity to be developed in the most enhancing environment, consistent with the provision of a quality education that best meets their needs.

Section 3. Objectives. – This Act shall pursue the following:

- a) Provide children and youth with special needs free and appropriate public education and related services in accordance with their needs, and in preparation for adult living and community life;
- b) Provide children and youth with special needs access to general education curriculum through the formal systems and alternative delivery services in education;
- c) Institute Inclusive Education establish Inclusive Education Learning Resource Centers for inclusion of children and youth with special needs in the educational mainstream;
- d) Ensure that children and youth with special needs fully develop their potentials toward self-sufficiency and become fully participative members of society;
- e) Identify thru a child find system children and youth with special needs ages 3-24 and infants and toddlers under age 3 in compliance with the Early Years Act of 2013 (RA 10410);
- f) Develop, implement, and review Individual Education Program;
- g) Provide parents with information and opportunities to actively participate in the possible placement options for their children and to enable them to informed choices and decisions;
- h) Enable and empower parents and family members by training and equipping them with capabilities to identify, prevent, refer or intervene with regards disorder and disabilities of their children;

- i) Train and equip special education teachers, regular teachers, principal/administrators, non-teaching staff of the school, and caregivers a primary source of care, development, education and advancement of children and youth with special needs;
- j) Increase school retention and cohort survival of children and youth with special needs; and
- k) Create significant and positive changes in community attitudes towards disability and the need to provide inclusive education and proper care for children and youth with special needs.

Section 4. *Definition of Terms.* – As used in this Act:

- (a) *Basic education* refers to meeting the basic learning needs which provide the foundation on which subsequent learning can be based. It encompasses kindergarten, elementary and secondary education as well as alternative learning systems for out of school learners and those with special needs;
- (b) *Children and youth with special needs* refer to children and youth who are gifted or talented, or with neuropsychological retardation, learning disabilities, emotional or behavioral disorders, speech and language disorders, hearing impairments, visual impairments, autism, physical or health disabilities, deaf blindness and multiple handicapping conditions and are in need of special education as well as services for rehabilitation. They differ from the average children in neuropsychological characteristics, sensory abilities, neuromuscular or physical characteristics, and social attributes to such an extent that the use of modified school practices or special education services are required to develop them to maximum capability. They may be classified as children with exceptionalities such as the following:
 - 1) *Autism* – those with developmental disabilities marked by disturbance in development, language and relationship with

persons, activities and objects and which may coexist with intellectual disability and epilepsy. Children afflicted with this disorder have perceptual, cognitive, communication and social difficulties that change over time;

- 2) *Behavioral Disturbance* – those who cannot adjust to the socially accepted norms of behavior and consequently disrupt their academic progress, the learning efforts of their classmates, and their interpersonal relations;
- 3) *Gifted or talented* – those who are capable of superior performance including those with demonstrated achievement or potential ability in one or more of the following areas: general intellectual ability, specific academic aptitude, creative or productive thinking ability, leadership ability, ability in visual or performing arts, and psychomotor ability; or, those individuals who consistently manifest the following cluster of traits: above average ability (including intelligence), high creativity (implies the developmental appreciation of innovative ideas) and high task commitment (related to a high degree of motivation); and those who by reason thereof, require services or activities not ordinarily provided by a school;
- 4) *Deaf* – those who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. Deaf persons are those whose hearing is non-functional for ordinary purpose in life; the hard-of-hearing have a defective sense of hearing but are still functional with or without a hearing aid;
- 5) *Learning disabilities* – those, although normal in sensory, emotional and intellectual abilities, have a condition that causes impediment/impairment in perception, comprehension, listening, thinking, reading, writing, spelling or arithmetic;
- 6) *Multiple disabilities* – those with more than one disability such as the deaf-blindness (concomitant hearing and visual impairments)

or those diagnosed with autism and intellectual disability; mental retardation orthopedic impairment;

- 7) *Deaf blindness* – concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which results in severe communication and other development and education needs that cannot be served in programs solely for the blind and deaf.
- 8) *Neuropsychological retardation/ intellectual disability* – those who have substantial limitation in present functioning characterized by significant sub-average intellectual functioning co-existing with other limitations in two or more of the following applicable adaptive skill areas: communication, self-care, home living, social skills, community use, self-direction, health and safety, functional academics, leisure and work;
- 9) *Orthopedic/physical disabilities* – those who have impairments caused by any of the following: a) congenital anomaly (e.g. clubfoot, spinal cord injury, etc.); b) disease (e.g. poliomyelitis, bone tuberculosis, etc.); and c) impairments from other causes (e.g. gerbera palsy, amputations, and fractures, etc.). The impairment permanently or temporarily interferes with the normal functions of the joints, muscles or limbs;
- 10) *Special health problems* – those who have health conditions that tend to keep them out-of-school, or those with chronic and/or debilitating illnesses such as cardiac disease, asthma, diabetes, tuberculosis and other respiratory ailments, carcenonza, epilepsy, and malnutrition;
- 11) *Speech impairment and delays* – those who have difficulty in expressing or articulating words in a manner understandable by others;
- 12) *Visual impairment* – those who are blind or have low vision. Persons are blind if they have visual capacity of 20/200 or less in the better eye after maximum correction. Low vision persons retain

relatively low degree of vision and can read only enlarged print or regular print under special conditions;

- (c) *Handicap* refers to a disadvantage of an individual, resulting from an impairment or a disability that limits or prevents the function or activity that is considered normal, given the age and gender of the individual;
- (d) *Impairment* refers to any loss, diminution or aberration of psychological, physiological or anatomical structure or function;
- (e) *Individualized Education Program (IEP)* refers to the systematic, purposive and developmental educational programming of curricular and instructional priorities and contents designed to meet a learner's special needs and aimed at ensuring mastery learning of target skills behaviors; including periodic monitoring of child's progress and age appropriate transition plan relating to training, employment, and independent living beginning at age 16 or earlier as determined by the IEP team;
- (f) *Learning differences refer to any of the following:*
 - 1. a physical or mental or sensory and intellectual impairment that substantially limits one or more psychological, physiological, anatomical sensory or intellectual function of an individual;
 - 2. a record of such an impairment; or
 - 3. being regarded as having such as impairment;
- (g) *Private sector participation* refers to all forms of indispensable, substantial and meaningful participation of private individuals, partnerships, groups or entities, community-based organizations or non-governmental organizations, in the delivery of educational and rehabilitative services for children with special needs;
- (h) *Special Education* refers to the customized instructional program/service designed to meet the unique needs of individual children and youth with special needs, which may necessitate use of supplementary aids and services and teaching strategies in classroom and non-academic settings, and includes instructions on physical and vocational education and travel training. Special education addresses significant physical, sensory,

neuropsychological, cognitive or behavioral characteristics that may necessitate the use of specialized materials, equipment, services and/or teaching strategies. It is geared towards the integration of children with special needs into the education mainstream;

- (i) *Inclusive Education* means providing to all students, including those with significant disabilities, equitable opportunities to receive effective educational services, with the needed supplementary aids and support services, in age appropriate classrooms in their neighborhood schools, in order to prepare students productive lives as full members of society (National Center on Educational Restructuring and Inclusion, 1995). It requires that schools educate children and youth with special needs predominantly in general education classroom. Removal of children and youth with special needs from the regular educational environment, like special class or separate schooling, occurs only when education in regular classes even with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be made satisfactorily due to the nature of the special needs.
- (j) *Inclusive Education Learning Resource Center* is a resource hub that provide students, teachers, school personnel and other education stakeholders of children and youth with special needs appropriate instructional learning materials, tools, devices, gadgets, equipment to facilitate and enhance learning; assessment tools and instruments to evaluate developmental domains and specific areas of concern necessary in determining appropriate services and placement decisions;
- (k) *Special instructional materials* refer to textbooks in Braille, large type or any other medium or apparatus, that convey information to a student or otherwise contributes to the learning process;
- (l) *Universal Design for Learning* is a framework that provides educators with a structure to meet the wide range of diversity among learners by providing flexibility in the ways information is presented and by reducing barriers in instruction, providing appropriate accommodations and

supports. The three principles of UDL are access, assessment, and engagement (Higher Equal Opportunity Act, 2008).

Section 5. *Establishment of Inclusive Education Learning Resource Centers for Children and Youth with Special Needs in all Public Schools Divisions.* – An Inclusive Education Learning Resource Center for children and youth with special needs shall be established in all public schools divisions nationwide where there are no existing Inclusive Education Learning Resource Center. Existing Inclusive Education Learning Centers shall continue to function and additional ones shall be established when the need arises due to increased number of enrollees, upon recommendation of the Schools Division Superintendent and approval of the Secretary of the Department of Education (DepEd).

All Inclusive Education Learning Resource Centers will comply with the requirements of the Universal Design Principle.

Section 6. *Functions of an Inclusive Education Learning Resource Center.* – The Inclusive Education Learning Resources Center shall function as a resource center that shall assist in promoting inclusive education to capacitate regular schools to effectively handle the needs of children and youth disability. It shall:

- (a) Support children and youth with special needs so they could be integrated/included in regular classes;
- (b) Conduct assessment of children and youth with special needs to evaluate developmental domains and specific areas of concern and determine appropriate services and placement options;
- (c) Conduct school based training of children and youth with special needs;
- (d) Undertake case management and coordination of services;
- (e) Provide training to regular teachers, administrators, non-teaching personnel and parents on inclusive education;
- (f) Produce appropriate teaching materials for children and youth with special needs;

- (g) Implement the programs of the Inclusive Education Learning Resource Center such as the Individualized Education Program and other alternative educational programs; and
- (h) Provide auxiliary aids and services or services that are basically non-educational, but which enhance the education process of the child and youth with special needs. These services include:
 - 1. language and speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical and physiotherapy, among other modes of therapy;
 - 2. quality interpretations or other effective methods of delivering materials;
 - 3. quality reading, taped tests or other effective methods of delivering materials to individuals with visual impairments;
 - 4. acquisition or modification of equipment or devices;
 - 5. appropriate classroom accommodation; and
 - 6. other similar services and actions or all types of aids and services that facilitate the learning process of children and youth with special needs; and
 - 7. assist, facilitate monitor the transfer or admission of qualified children and youth with special needs to post-secondary or tertiary education institutions.

Section. 7. Staffing and Responsibilities. – In addition to teachers with special training to handle children and youth with special needs, each Inclusive Education Learning Resource Center shall have a Supervisor, an Administrative Core and Placement Committee. Mobile Special Education (SPED) teachers and the Mobile Multi-Specialist Inclusive Education Division Support Team who will serve as human resource complement.

(a) Supervisor – The Supervisor shall:

- i. head the Inclusive Education Learning Resource Center;
- ii. administer and supervise the Inclusive Learning Resource Center Program;
- iii. oversee the other components of the Inclusive Education Learning Resource Learning Resource Center Program;

- iv. monitor, supervise and provide technical assistance, training, and enhancement programs of the Inclusive Educational Learning Resource Center personnel;
- (b) Administrative Core and Placement Committee – The Placement Committee shall, in consultation with and active participation of parents, and developmental pediatrician among others, ensure that students with disabilities are educated by appropriate qualified personnel as close as possible to their homes and alongside their age-appropriate peer groups. It is also tasked to develop and maintain a data bank on special education in respective jurisdiction. This Committee shall be composed of:
 - (1) any one (1) of the following: developmental pediatrician, neurological psychiatrist, educational psychologist, guidance counselor or psychometrician
 - (2) one (1) physical therapist;
 - (3) one (1) occupational therapist;
 - (4) one (1) speech and language therapist/speech correction teacher;
 - (5) one (1) reading specialist;
 - (6) sign language specialist; and
 - (7) the Inclusive Education Learning Resource Center Supervisor.
- (c) Mobile SPED Teachers – Mobile SPED teachers shall be appointed whenever necessary. Their Principal task is CHILD-YOUTH FIND (find and identify children and youth with special needs unable to attend formal schooling due to accessibility and mobility limitations) and determine appropriate learning modalities using the program and services of the Inclusive Education Learning Resource Center. They shall share responsibility for program planning and scheduling, and assist isolated or remote schools with specialized equipment, individual programs, curriculum adjustment, teaching aids and building modifications. The Alternative Learning System (ALS) shall be an integral component of the Inclusive Education Learning Resource Center.

- (d) Mobile Multi-Specialist Inclusive Education Division Support Team – DepEd shall outfit each school division with a Mobile Multi-Specialist Inclusive Education Division Support Team comprised of a SPED Education Supervisor, Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, Speech Therapist/Pathologist, Sign Language Specialist, Guidance and Counseling Specialist, Developmental Pediatrician, Educational Psychologist, Materials Production Specialist and other specialists deemed necessary. They will serve as consultants and will be drawn from professional organizations based in the region or nearby region where the division is based.

Section. 8. Remuneration and Benefits for Inclusive Education Learning Resource Center Personnel. – The salary grades of SPED teachers and the Supervisor managing the Inclusive Education Learning Resource Centers shall be in accordance with the Revised Compensation and Classification System and other Civil Service Rules and Regulations.

The DepEd shall enhance the right of the teachers/instructors to professional advancement and ensure that the Inclusive Education Learning Resource Centers shall attract the best available teaching staff and talents through adequate remuneration, scholarship and training grants, teacher exchange programs, incentives and allowances and other means of securing their job satisfaction and fulfillment as well as their long and stable tenure in their respective posts. A similar program shall be designed for support personnel to include interpreters, psychologist, social workers involved in the education and rehabilitation of children and youth with special needs, teachers, and other personnel of Inclusive Education Learning Resource Center.

The DepEd, in coordination with the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), shall identify at least one (1) leading institution or university in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao whose faculty is considered or regarded as highly competent in the area of special and inclusive education and where a uniform or standardized curriculum for any post-graduate education program shall be designed to benefit SPED teachers and other personnel of Inclusive Education Learning Resource Centers. The manner of selection of such institution

shall be provided under the rules and regulations to be formulated to implement the provisions of this Act.

Section 9. *In Service Training of Teachers, Administrators, and Non-Teaching Personnel.* –

- (a) To build a culture for Inclusive Education, DepEd shall offer basic and advanced seminars on disability awareness and inclusive education for the following education stakeholders: principals and administrators, regular teacher's non-teaching staff and personnel.
- (b) Specialist teachers for children and youth with special needs will be provided opportunities for annual upgrading in the area of specializations like interventions for learning, sign language fluency and other topics deemed necessary by DepEd.

Section 10. *Authority of the Secretary of Education to Give Grants to, or Enter into Cooperative Arrangements for the Creation of Inclusive Education Resource Centers.*

– The Secretary of Education is hereby authorized to give grants to, or enter into cooperative arrangements or contracts with public or private non-profit agencies, institutions or organizations for the establishment or creation of Inclusive Education Learning Resource Centers or implementation of programs such as the following:

- (a) Technical assistance to Inclusive Education Learning Resource Center teachers who are preparing to serve or are serving children and youth with special needs for inclusion and mainstreaming;
- (b) Training of professionals or related services personnel including all regular teachers;
- (c) Replication of successful innovative approaches in providing educational or related services to children and youth with special need;
- (d) Facilitation of parental involvement in the education of their children and youth with special needs;
- (e) Diagnosis and educational evaluation of children and youth with special needs;

- (f) Consultative, counseling and training services for the families of children and youth with special needs; and,
- (g) Familiarization of the municipality or city being served by an Inclusive Education Learning Resource Center with the problems and potentialities of such children and youth.

Section 11. *Creation of an Inclusive Education Program Office at DepEd Central Office.* – DepEd shall set-up a new Inclusive ED Program Office that will focus on policy formulation and program development for children and youth with special needs. The Office is primarily tasked with the formulation and administration of policies and developmentally-suited programs primarily to achieve functional literacy of the children and youth with special needs to facilitate inclusion in society. The full continuum of educational services shall be made available by the Office to children and youth with special needs below school age through regular home visits, consultations, day care activities and other programs.

The Inclusive ED Program Office will be under the DepEd Undersecretary for Programs and Projects and will be headed by a director and assisted by division chiefs for the (1) Children and Youth with Disability Chiefs will assist in the formulation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies, programs and services for children and youth with special needs.

Section 12. *Continuing Research to Identify Needs of Children and Youth with Special Needs/Disability.* The DepEd, by itself or in coordination with organizations or institutions, shall undertake continuing research to identify and design programs that shall meet the full range of needs of children and youth with special needs: *Provided*, that such continuing research shall also be used to develop instructional techniques for use by the Inclusive Educational Learning Resource Centers towards improving the children's and youth acquisition of skills necessary for their transition to independent living, vocational training or competitive development: *Provided, further*, that such continuing research shall be used by the DepEd in designing a physical educational and therapeutic recreation

program to be used by the Centers to increase the potential of the children and youth for community participation.

Section 13. *Student Assistance.* – The DepEd shall provide financial assistance to marginalized or disadvantaged children and youth with special needs at the elementary and secondary levels which may come in the form of scholarship grants; allowances for transportation, food, lodging, and books; student loan programs; artistic and cultural tours; training programs; subsidies for educational assessment and diagnosis; and other incentives. These include those who lack access to rehabilitative services and educational opportunities due to being poor, as defined in R.A No. 8425 otherwise known as the Social Reform and Poverty Alleviation Act, been have abandoned, are ill, or are neglected.

Marginalized or disadvantaged children and youth with special needs coming from indigenous communities shall be given priority in the grant assistance.

Special equipment like wheelchairs, crutches, special toilet and hygiene requirements, hearing aids, eyeglasses, learning devices, and other assistive devices required by the Students to optimize education and participation in the educational process shall also be provided for free or at discounted rates to deserving students, and at very affordable rates, in general, through a reasonable funding scheme that shall be designed by the DepEd.

Section 14. *Recreational and Artistic Opportunities.* – The DepEd shall institute opportunities for safe and wholesome individual as well as interactive group recreation and social activities; optimal use of their leisure hours; and advancement of their physical, mental, social and cultural development.

Section 15. *Special Instructional Materials.* –Publishers shall grant the DepEd the authority to transcribe adopted instructional materials into accessible format, without penalty or payment of royalty in accordance with R.A No. 8293 otherwise known as the

Intellectual Property Code of the Philippines. Further, publishers of newly adopted materials shall provide, not later than the second working day after the adoption of textbook titles by the DepEd, the digital copy as specified by the DepEd for the purpose of producing accessible versions of the textbooks for students with reading disabilities. The accessible versions may be produced by the DepEd or by non-profit accessible book producers, which may be copied and distributed upon request, to a Schools Division for instructional purposes.

Copies of these instructional materials shall be furnished without cost to either the children and youth with special needs or the teacher who is handling their instruction.

Section 16. *Incentives for Private Sector Participation.* – Partnership between the government and private institutions catering to the needs of children and youth with special needs be encouraged. All revenues generated by the Inclusive Education Learning Resource Center in public elementary and high school, owned, operated and controlled by the DepEd shall be exempt from income tax. Any donation, contribution, bequest and grand which may be made to the Inclusive Education Learning Resource Center shall be exempt from donor's tax and the same shall be considered as allowable deduction from the gross income in the computation of the income tax of the donor in accordance with provisions of R.A No. 8424 otherwise known as the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997, as amended: *Provided*, that such donations shall not be disposed of, transferred or sold. Economic, technical and cultural books and publications shall be imported duty-free upon certification by the DepEd that such imported books and publications are for economic, technical, vocational, scientific, philosophical, historical or cultural purposes, in accordance with the provisions of the Customs Modernization and Tariff Act.

Section 17. *Integration/Inclusion of Children with Disability in Child Development/Day Care Centers.* – Child Development / Day Care Centers specially designed for pre-school children and their parents, where early identification of disabilities and special needs and introductory educational and intervention program will be administered, shall also be established near or within existing Inclusive Education Learning

Resource Centers, or in other Center that shall be supported by the DepEd with the support of Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Council, Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and Local Government Unit (LGU) in the area. As far as practicable, the use of existing day care centers and facilities shall be maximized.

Section 18. *Nutritional Programs.* – The National Nutrition Council (NNC) shall determine and prescribe appropriate nutritional programs for children with special needs for implementation by the Department of Health (DOH) and the DepEd.

Section 19. *Parent, Sibling, and Caregiver Education.* – A formal training and counseling program shall be develop through joint efforts of DepEd, DSWD, LGUs, Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Council, and Disabled People's Organizations (DPOs), Non-government organizations (NGOs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to equip parents, siblings, and caregivers of children and youth with special needs with a working knowledge of special education, an understanding of the psychology of children with special needs, and the awareness of their crucial role as educators so that they, in turn, can maximize their knowledge and skills to fully participate in developing the potentials of children and youth with special needs. Parents should also be appraised of procedural safeguards to protect the educational rights of children and their parents, and processes to resolve disputes and complaints related to the education of children and youth with special needs.

Section 20. *Local Government Unit Participation.* – The LGUs shall use their Special Education Fund for the following:

- (a) Provision of sites, buildings or centers where there are no existing school facilities that may be used for the special education of children with special needs, as well as the establishment of day care pursuant to Sec. 15 hereof;
- (b) Identification, coordination and the tapping of public or private volunteers and private organizations, national or international, for information dissemination

- campaigns, funding programs and other projects to augment the funding of Inclusive Educational programs and equipment, among others; and,
- (c) Provision of counterpart funds for nutritional programs, educational assessment program of children and youth with special needs in their respective localities that would be initiated by the DepEd, in coordination with the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) and the Department of Finance (DOF).

Section 21. *Public Information, Education and Communication.* – A nationwide information dissemination campaign on the prevention, early identification and the strategic intervention programs for children and youth with special needs shall be intensified. This shall be the joint responsibility of the Philippine Information Agency (PIA), Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC) and DepEd. Likewise, the DepEd, in collaboration with DOH, DOLE, LGUs shall disseminate materials and information concerning effective practices in working with, training and educating children with special needs.

Section 22. *Appropriations.* – The Secretary of the DepEd shall immediately include in the DepEd program the implementation of this Act, the funding of which shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act. Separate appropriation will be provided for children and youth with disabilities and talented or gifted children and youth.

Section 23. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The DepEd, in coordination with the DSWD, Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), DOH, DOF, Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), and CWC shall promulgate and issue the necessary guidelines for the creation and operation of Inclusive Education Learning Resource Centers within sixty (60) days after the effectivity of this Act.

Section 24. *Separability Clause.* – If for any reason, a provision or part hereof is declared invalid, other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

Section 25. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations contrary or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Section 26. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or any two (2) newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines.

Approved,