



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**H. No. 8080**

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BY REPRESENTATIVES CABOCHAN, SUANSING (E.), SUANSING (H.), VARGAS, BIAZON, GATCHALIAN, OLIVAREZ, CASTELO, VILLAR, FORTUN, VILLARICA, GUICO, TAMBUNTING, DY (F.), VILLANUEVA (E.), RIVERA, RODRIGUEZ, ANDAYA, DELOS SANTOS, DE VENECIA, CASTRO (F.L.), ROMULO, YAP (E.), ARENAS, HERNANDEZ, GARCIA (P.J.), ROMUALDO, BELMONTE, ERMITA-BUHAIN, SALCEDA, CUA, TEJADA, VIOLAGO, GASATAYA, JALOSJOS, MATUGAS, GARCIA (J.E.), GONZAGA, HARESCO, CUARESMA, UY (J.), DAZA, LIMKAICHONG, ZUBIRI, SAGARBARRIA, BAUTISTA-BANDIGAN, CALDERON, CAMPOS, SUAREZ (D.), GONZALEZ, MOMO, FRASCO, ZAMORA (W.K.), BALINDONG, BARBA, BERNOS, BRAVO, BASCUG, CAMINERO, CARI, DALOG, DELOSO-MONTALLA, DIMAPORO (A.), ESPINO, FARIÑAS (R.C.), FORTUNO, HOFER, JIMENEZ, LABADLABAD, MARIÑO, NATIVIDAD-NAGAÑO, NAVA, ORTEGA, OUANO-DIZON, PLAZA, REVILLA, ROMAN, SANCHEZ, SILVERIO, SINGSON-MEEHAN, TIANGCO, TUTOR, TY (D.), VERGARA, CO (E.), CABATBAT, DAGOOC, GUYA, QUIMBO, BABASA, ENVERGA, MENDOZA, NOGRALES (J.J.), RAMIREZ-SATO, SANGCOPAN, SARMIENTO, SUNTAY, VILLAFUERTE, LARA AND MACEDA, PER COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 612

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**AN ACT**

**INSTITUTING SERVICES FOR LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES IN SUPPORT OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION, ESTABLISHING INCLUSIVE LEARNING RESOURCE CENTERS IN ALL SCHOOL DISTRICTS, PROVIDING FOR STANDARDS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

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

**Section 1. Short Title.** – This Act shall be known as the “Instituting Services for Learners with Disabilities (LWDs) in Support of Inclusive Education Act.”

**ARTICLE I  
POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES**

**Sec. 2. Declaration of Policy.** – The following are hereby declared the policies of the State:

- (a) Promote and protect the rights of LWDs to quality education on the basis of equal opportunity by making education compulsory and accessible to them;
- (b) Recognize the vital role of LWDs in society, consider their needs as integral part of national development strategies, and facilitate their active participation and integration in public service, civic and state affairs;
- (c) Give full support for the welfare and development of LWDs to ensure their full inclusion in society;
- (d) Consider the special requirements of persons with disabilities (PWDs) in the formulation of inclusive educational policies and programs;

- (e) Encourage learning institutions to take into consideration the special needs of LWDs with respect to the use of school facilities, class schedules, physical education requirements, and other pertinent considerations;
- (f) Support learning institutions, including higher learning institutions, in providing auxiliary services that will facilitate the learning process for PWDs, ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all;
- (g) Recognize the right of LWDs to the highest attainable standard of health and to facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health to ensure that no child is deprived access to such health care and rehabilitation services; and
- (h) Ensure that LWDs belonging to ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin shall not be denied the right to education, health treatment, or health rehabilitation in community with other members, to enjoy their own culture, profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language.

**Sec. 3. Objectives.** This Act shall pursue the following objectives:

- (a) To provide LWDs free and appropriate public education and related services in accordance with their needs, and in preparation for adult living and community life;
- (b) To provide LWDs access to general education curriculum through formal school systems and alternative delivery services in education in accordance with the “*United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*” and “the *Incheon Strategy to Make the Rights Real for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific*”;
- (c) To establish Inclusive Learning Resource Centers (ILRCs) for inclusion of LWDs in the formal school system in the least restrictive environment;
- (d) To ensure that LWDs fully develop their potential toward self-sufficiency and become fully participative members of society;
- (e) To ensure that LWDs are understood, appreciated, and respected for their differences by the members of their communities and by society in general;
- (f) To identify, through a Child Find System, LWDs ages three (3) to twenty-four (24), and infants and toddlers under the age of three (3), in compliance with Republic Act (R.A.) No. 10410, otherwise known as the “*Early Years Act of 2013*”;
- (g) To develop, implement, and review Individualized Education Plan;
- (h) To provide parents or guardians of LWDs with information and opportunities to actively participate in the decisions for school placement options and educational programs for their children and to enable them to make informed choices and decisions;
- (i) To enable and empower parents, guardians, and family members to assist in the prevention, referral or intervention with regard to disorders, disabilities, and abilities of their children;
- (j) To train and equip special education (SPED) teachers, regular teachers, principals or administrators, non-teaching staff of the school, and caregivers as primary sources of care, development, education and advancement of LWDs;
- (k) To increase school retention and cohort survival of LWDs;
- (l) To create significant and positive changes in community orientation towards disability and the need to provide inclusive education and proper care of LWDs; and
- (m) To regularly consult and actively involve PWDs, including LWDs, through their representative organizations, in the implementation of this Act and issues relating to it.

## ARTICLE II DEFINITION OF TERMS

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

- (a) Basic education – refers to a program of instruction intended to meet 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 (ALS) for out-of-school learners and those with special needs as provided in Section 3 of R.A. 10533, or the “*Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013*.”
- (b) Child Find System (CFS) – refers to the process of identifying, locating, and evaluating every LWDs so that the concerned child development teachers or workers who are under the jurisdiction of local government units (LGUs) can notify parents or guardians of those who are not receiving public education services of the right of their children to receive the same and facilitate such children’s integration into the school system.
- (c) Learners with disabilities (LWDs) – refer to children and youth with intellectual or learning disabilities, mental, emotional or behavioral disorders, speech and language sensory impairments, autism, long term physical or health disabilities, deafblindness and multiple handicapping conditions which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others and are in need of special education as well as services for rehabilitation. They differ from the average children in neuropsychological characteristics, sensory and cognitive abilities, neuromuscular or physical characteristics, and social attributes to such an extent that the use of adaptations in school practices or special education services are required to develop them to maximum capability.
- (d) Disability – refers to 1) long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment that substantially limit one or more physiological or anatomical function of an individual or activities of such individual; 2) limitation or difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; and 3) a participation restriction or problem experienced by an individual in coping with life situations.
- (e) Inclusive education – refers to providing all learners, including those with significant disabilities, equitable opportunities to receive educational services and the needed supplementary aids and support services in age-appropriate classrooms in their neighborhood schools in order to prepare them to live as fully functioning members of society. It requires that schools educate LWDs in general education classrooms. Removal of LWDs from the regular educational environment may occur 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 disability.
- (f) Inclusive Learning Resource Center (ILRC) – refers to a teaching or learning support system for students, teachers, school personnel and other education stakeholders of LWDs. It includes appropriate, accessible, disability-, cultural- and gender-sensitive instructional learning material, tools, devices, gadgets, equipment to facilitate and enhance learning; assessment tools and instruments to evaluate development domains and specific areas of concern necessary in determining appropriate services and placement decisions. It also provides and/or coordinates the services of a multi-disciplinary team.
- (g) Individual Education Program (IEP) – refers to the systematic, purposive and developmental educational programming of curricular and instructional priorities and contents designed to meet the needs of LWDs and aimed at ensuring mastery of target skills and behaviors. It specifies the services to be provided and the duration and frequency of such services; describes the learner’s present level of performances and how the learner’s disabilities affect academic performances; and specifies accommodations and modifications to be provided to the learner. An IEP shall be designed to meet the unique educational needs of a child in the appropriate and least restrictive environment.
- (h) Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) – refers to the situation where LWDs are accorded the opportunity to be educated with non-disabled peers to the greatest extent appropriate. The LWDs should have access to the general education curriculum, or any other program that non-disabled peers are able to access. The LWDs shall be provided with supplementary aids and

services necessary to achieve educational goals if placed in a setting with non-disabled peers, and shall receive an appropriate version of education and social benefits which non-disabled students routinely receive in school.

- (i) Multidisciplinary team – refers to a group of people that provides for the overall health and well-being of learners. The team shall include professionals for further and specialized assessment of learners.
- (j) Private sector participation – refers to all forms of indispensable, substantial and meaningful participation of private individuals, partnerships, groups or entities, organizations of persons with disabilities, community-based organizations or non-government organizations, and business and industry groups in the delivery of educational and rehabilitative services for LWDs.
- (k) Related services – refer to provisions of transportation and various developmental, corrective, and other support services, such as speech-language pathology and audiology services, interpreting services, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, recreation, social work services, school health services, counselling and rehabilitation services, orientation and mobility services, and medical services, as may be required to assist a child with a disability in order for them to fully enjoy the benefits from education services, including the early identification and assessment of any disabling condition.
- (l) Special Education (SPED) – refers to the customized instructional program or service designed to meet the unique needs of individual children and youth with special needs, which may necessitate the use of supplementary aids, devices, and services and teaching strategies in classroom and non-academic settings and includes instructions on physical and vocational education, social skills development and travel training.
- (m) Instructional Materials for Learners with Disabilities – refer to textbooks in Braille, large type, audio, digital or any other medium or apparatus that convey information to LWDs or otherwise contributes to the learning process.
- (n) Transition Program – refers to a coordinated set of courses and activities for LWDs that:
  - (1) Is designed within an outcome-oriented process, which promotes movement from school to post-school activities that includes post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment, supported employment, continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation;
  - (2) Is based upon the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests; and
  - (3) Includes instruction, related services, and community experiences.
- (o) Universal Design for Learning (UDL) – refers to a scientifically valid framework for guiding educational practice that:
  - (1) Provides flexibility in the way information is presented, students respond or demonstrate knowledge and skills, and their engagement; and
  - (2) Reduces barriers in instruction, provides appropriate accommodations, supports mental and physical challenges, and maintains high achievement expectations for all students, including LWDs.

It also refers to a set of principles that guides the design of inclusive classroom instruction and accessible course materials. The three principles of UDL are:

- i. Recognition – refers to multiple methods of representation that give learners a variety of ways to acquire information and build knowledge;

- ii. Strategic Learning – refers to multiple means of student action and expression that provide learners alternative modes for demonstrating what they have learned; and
- iii. Affective Learning – refers to multiple modes of student engagement that tap into learners’ interests, challenge them appropriately, and motivate them to learn.

**ARTICLE III  
INCLUSIVE LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER**

**Sec. 5.** *Establishment of Inclusive Learning Resource Center (ILRC).* – The DepEd shall establish an ILRC for LWDs in all school districts: *Provided,* That all ILRCs shall comply with the UDL as defined under Section 4, subparagraph (o) of this Act and the requirements of Batas Pambansa Bilang 344, otherwise known as the “*Accessibility Law.*”

**Sec. 6.** *Functions of the ILRC.* – The ILRC shall assist in the implementation of inclusive education. This includes capacitating schools to effectively handle the needs of LWDs. It shall:

- (a) Assess LWDs to identify specific developmental areas of concern and determine appropriate services and placement options;
- (b) Support LWDs in such a manner that they could be included in regular schools in the least restrictive environment;
- (c) Provide school-based trainings of LWDs;
- (d) Ensure the availability of appropriate educational materials for LWDs;
- (e) Facilitate school-based trainings of teachers, administrators, non-teaching personnel, and parents on inclusive education;
- (f) Monitor case management of LWDs within the school district;
- (g) Ensure that LWDs shall receive the appropriate services needed;
- (h) Support the implementation of IEP, transition program, alternative education programs, and early intervention program;
- (i) Provide access to auxiliary aids, devices, and services that are basically non-educational but which enhance the education process for LWDs. These aids and services may include:
  - (1) language and speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical and physiotherapy, among other modes of therapy, through a multi-disciplinary specialist team;
  - (2) quality reading or other effective methods of delivering reading materials to individuals with visual impairments;
  - (3) acquisition or modification of equipment or devices;
  - (4) appropriate classroom accommodation;
  - (5) other similar services and actions or all types of aids and services that facilitate the learning process; and
  - (6) assistance in the transfer of admission of qualified LWDs to post-secondary or tertiary education institutions.

The ILRC may provide the same services to other learners, as appropriate.

**ARTICLE IV  
PARTNERSHIP MECHANISM AND ROLES OF PARTNERS**

**Sec. 7.** *Partnership Mechanism.* – The DepEd and the concerned agencies may coordinate and enter into cooperative agreement, arrangement or contract with other government agencies, private and non-profit agencies, institutions or organizations duly accredited or recognized by the government

agencies, civil society, business and industrial sector, and other concerned sectors in the furtherance of the provisions of this Act:

- (a) Technical assistance to teachers who are preparing to serve or are serving in the ILRC;
- (b) Training of professional or related services personnel, including all regular teachers;
- (c) Replication of successful innovative approaches in providing educational or related services to LWDs;
- (d) Facilitation of parental involvement in the education of LWDs;
- (e) Diagnosis and educational evaluation of LWDs;
- (f) Consultative, counseling and training services for the families of LWDs;
- (g) Familiarization of the municipality or city being served by an ILRC with the problems and potentials of children and youth; and
- (h) Entering into agreements with medical and allied medical professional groups.

**Sec. 8. Responsibilities of Government Agencies.** – In conformity with their respective charters and mandates, government agencies shall define and delineate their respective areas of responsibility with respect to the implementation of this Act. These areas shall be subject to periodic assessment of the Inter-Agency Coordinating Council on Learners with Disabilities (IACC-LWDs), as provided in Sec. 9 of this Act, whenever necessary.

For purposes of this Act, the different agencies shall have the following roles:

- (a) Department of Education (DepEd) – The DepEd shall be the lead government agency responsible for the implementation of this Act and ensure inter-agency coordination and integration of services among school systems, early intervention programs, in coordination with the Early Childhood Care and Developmental (ECCD) Council, mainstreaming of LWDs in the regular classroom set-up, availability of access and classification of developmental domains, establishment of CFS, redress mechanism for parents or guardians.
- (b) Department of Health (DOH) – The DOH shall make available health care services for LWDs, child mental health service providers, health plans, oral health providers, family-to-family health information and education, advocacy organizations and other community organizations serving LWDs, and their families. Due to the importance of integrating primary care with mental health services, the DOH shall collaborate with the National Nutrition Council (NNC) and the ECCD in the provision of inclusive health and nutrition services for the implementation of this Act.
- (c) Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) – The DSWD shall be responsible for the effective management and provision of social welfare services for LWDs based on their assessed needs, subject to guidelines it shall prescribe.
- (d) Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) – The DPWH shall prescribe the proper physical set-up of the ILRCs and shall construct and maintain roads to ensure their accessibility.
- (e) Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) – The DOLE shall coordinate with the DepEd in developing a training program on transition from school to work of LWDs. It shall also provide the ILRC with current market analysis and job coaching sessions before and during employment until the learners become independent. The DOLE and its attached agencies, Technical Education and Skills Development Administration (TESDA) and Public Employment Service Office (PESO), shall facilitate apprenticeship and job placements. The TESDA shall provide vocational training when necessary. The PESO, on the other hand, shall conduct employability enhancement seminars, provide pre-employment counselling and orientation, and offer programs and activities on employment assistance pursuant to R.A. 8759, otherwise known as the “*PESO Act of 1999*,” as amended.

The DOLE, TESDA, and PESO shall lead the promotion of inclusion for people with disabilities among public and private institutions and comply with the requirements set forth under R.A. 7277, otherwise known as the “*Magna Carta for Disabled Persons*,” as amended.

- (f) Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) – The DILG shall promulgate the policies and guidelines relevant to the implementation of this Act by the LGUs.
- (g) Local Government Units (LGUs) – The LGUs shall allocate resources from their general funds or a portion of their Special Education Fund for any of the following:
  - (1) Provision of sites, buildings or centers where there are no existing school facilities that may be used for purposes of this Act;
  - (2) Identification, coordination and partnership with public or private volunteers and private organizations, national or international, duly recognized and accredited by appropriate government office, for information dissemination campaigns and funding support to augment the funding for the programs and activities pertaining to this Act;
  - (3) Provision of assistive devices, instructional materials and teacher’s training;
  - (4) Delivery of health and nutrition services and interventions and educational assessment program for LWDs in their respective localities that shall be initiated by the DOH and DepEd, respectively;
  - (5) Participation in all efforts concerning integration of LWDs to regular schools, health services, transport services and other social and welfare services;
  - (6) Development of government and community awareness and responsiveness to the needs of LWDs;
  - (7) Preparation of a means for redress in case parents are not amenable to educational program for LWDs under the jurisdiction of the Local School Boards;
  - (8) Coordination with other agencies in ensuring the proper implementation of the provisions of this Act within their territorial jurisdiction, including CFS;
  - (9) Provisions of trainings on livelihood and entrepreneurial skills, in coordination with DOLE and TESDA; and
  - (10) Enactment of appropriate ordinances to implement the LGU’s role in this Act.

**ARTICLE V**  
**INTER-AGENCY COORDINATING COUNCIL FOR LEARNERS**  
**WITH DISABILITIES**

**Sec. 9.** *Inter-Agency Coordinating Council for Learners with Disabilities.* – For purposes of policy integration, harmonization, and coordination of functions, there is hereby created an Inter-Agency Coordinating Council for Learners with Disabilities (IACC-LWDs), which shall be attached to the DepEd. The DepEd shall likewise act as the Council’s secretariat.

The IACC-LWDs shall be composed of the following officials or their duly authorized representatives, up to the level of Assistant Secretary or its equivalent, with subsections (d) to (j) as Members thereof:

- (a) DepEd Secretary, as Chairperson;
- (b) DOH Secretary, as Co-Chairperson;
- (c) DSWD Secretary, as Co-Chairperson;
- (d) DPWH Secretary;
- (e) DILG Secretary;
- (f) DOLE Secretary;
- (g) Secretary, Department of Finance (DOF);
- (h) TESDA Director General;

- (i) Chairperson, Commission on Higher Education (CHED); and
- (j) Executive Director, National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA).

The IACC-LWDs shall perform the following functions:

- (a) Implement appropriate and coordinated programs in health and related physiological and psychological health services, multidisciplinary domains, transportation and access for LWDs;
- (b) Act as catalyst of change and source of information for the benefit of both regular students and LWDs;
- (c) Constitute and authorize a multidisciplinary body to conduct an annual audit to determine the compliance of the ILRCs on its operations;
- (d) Document, monitor, evaluate, and assess the performance of the ILRCs and their personnel; and
- (e) Coordinate and disseminate information with partner agencies or LGUs.

The Council shall regularly convene at least once every quarter. The Council Chairperson may call a special meeting whenever necessary: *Provided*, That members are notified in writing at least three (3) days prior to said meeting.

**Sec. 10.** *The IACC-LWDs Technical Working Committee (TWC).* – The IACC-LWDs shall be supported by a TWC which shall be composed of representatives from the following agencies and institutions:

- (a) Bureau of Curriculum Development, DepEd;
- (b) Bureau of Learning Delivery, DepEd;
- (c) Bureau of Learning Resources, DepEd;
- (d) Bureau of Education Assessment, DepEd;
- (e) Early Childhood Care and Development Council (ECCD);
- (f) National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA);
- (g) Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC);
- (h) National Nutrition Council (NNC), DOH;
- (i) Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth);
- (j) Relevant healthcare service bureaus of the DOH;
- (k) Leagues of Provinces of the Philippines;
- (l) League of Cities of the Philippines;
- (m) League of Municipalities of the Philippines;
- (n) Civil society organizations on persons with disability and indigenous peoples' concerns;
- (o) Professional organizations; and
- (p) Academe.

The TWC shall provide groundwork technical support to the IACC-LWDs on its activities to capture varied clientele scope and needs, mainstream programs, and reach grassroots level. Representatives of civil society organizations, professional organizations, and the academe shall be nominated through a process designed by the IACC-LWDs.

## **ARTICLE VI ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES**

**Sec. 11.** *Staffing and Responsibilities.* – In addition to teachers with special training to handle LWDs, each ILRC shall have a Supervisor and an Administrative Core and Placement Committee. Mobile SPED teachers and the Mobile Multi-Specialist Division Support Team shall serve as human resource complements.

(a) Supervisor - The Supervisor shall:

- (1) head the ILRC;
- (2) administer and supervise the ILRC Program and oversee its other components; and
- (3) monitor, supervise and provide technical assistance, training, and enhancement programs of the Center personnel.

(b) Administrative Core and Placement Committee - The Administrative Core and Placement Committee shall, in consultation with and active participation of parents or guardians, ensure that LWDs are educated by appropriate and qualified personnel as close as possible to their homes and alongside their age-appropriate peer groups. The Committee is also tasked to develop and maintain a data bank on LWDs in its respective jurisdiction. This Committee shall be composed of the following positions:

- (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 or Speech Correction Teacher;
- (5) one (1) Reading Specialist;
- (6) one (1) Sign Language Specialist; and
- (7) ILRC Supervisor.

(c) Mobile SPED Teachers - Mobile SPED teachers shall be appointed whenever necessary. Their principal task is to undertake the CFS and determine appropriate learning modalities using the program and services of the ILRC. 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 ALS shall be an integral component of the ILRC.

(d) Mobile Multi-Specialist Division Support Team – DepEd shall set-up each school district with a Mobile Multi-Specialist Division Support Team comprised of the SPED Education Supervisor, Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, Speech Therapist or Speech 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.

To ensure the effective implementation of this Act, the DepEd, DOH, and DSWD may hire other necessary personnel and support staff for the ILRC.

**Sec. 12. *Remuneration, Benefits and Incentives for ILRC Personnel and Staff.*** – The remuneration, benefits and incentives of Special Education (SPED) teachers and the ILRC Supervisor shall be in accordance with the *Compensation and Position Classification System* and other civil service rules and regulations.

The DepEd shall endeavor to attract the best available teaching staff and talents for the ILRCs through adequate remuneration, benefits, scholarship and training grants, teacher exchange programs, incentives and allowances and other means of securing the job satisfaction and tenure in their respective posts. A similar program shall be designed for support personnel to include interpreters,

psychologists, social workers and health service professionals or workers involved in the education, health and rehabilitation of LWDs.

**Sec. 13. *In-Service Training of Teachers, Administrators, and Non-Teaching Personnel.*** – To enhance the services for LWDs, the DepEd shall coordinate with the appropriate national government agencies to offer basic and advanced seminars on disability awareness and inclusive education for the concerned education stakeholders.

The appropriate and necessary trainings, seminars and other opportunities for upgrading the performance of DepEd teachers for purposes of this Act shall be conducted and evaluated by the National Educators' Academy of the Philippines.

The DepEd shall likewise identify at least one (1) leading institution or university in Luzon, Visayas, Mindanao and in Metro Manila, Metro Cebu and Metro Davao whose faculty is regarded as highly competent in the area of special 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 the ILRC. 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.

## **ARTICLE VII RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIPS, AND OTHER SUPPORT MECHANISMS**

**Sec. 14. *Continuing Research to Identify the Needs of Learners with Disabilities.*** – The DepEd, by itself or in coordination with organizations or institution, shall undertake continuing research to identify and design programs that shall meet the full range of needs of LWDs: *Provided*, That such continuing research shall also be used to develop instructional techniques for use by the ILRCs for vocational training or competitive skill development and towards improving the acquisition of skills by LWDs necessary for their transition to independent living: *Provided, further*, That such continuing research shall be used by the DepEd in designing holistic programs for all schools and the ILRCs to enhance the potential of the children and youth to participate and be integrated into community life.

**Sec. 15. *Student Assistance.*** – The DepEd, DSWD, DOLE, NCDA and the LGUs shall develop programs to support the financial and educational needs of persons with disabilities, as mandated in R.A. 8425, otherwise known as the “*Social Reform and Poverty Alleviation Act.*” The benefits accorded by R.A. 6728, otherwise known as the “*Government Assistance to Students and Teachers in Private Education (GASTPE) Act*” shall likewise be extended to qualified LWDs in the secondary levels.

**Sec. 16. *Recreational and Artistic Opportunities.*** – The DepEd shall establish opportunities for the safe, wholesome, interactive individual as well as group recreation and social activities of LWDs, optimal use of leisure hours and advancement of physical, mental, social and cultural development.

**Sec. 17. *Special Instructional Materials.*** – Publishers shall grant the DepEd the authority to transcribe adopted instructional materials into accessible format, without royalty penalty, in accordance with R.A. 8293, otherwise known as the “*Intellectual Property Code of the Philippines*”: *Provided*, That publishers of a newly adopted instructional material shall provide, not later than the second working day after the adoption of a textbook title 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 by a Schools Division for instructional purposes.

Copies of these instructional materials shall be furnished without cost either to the LWDs or their teachers in charge.

**Sec. 18. *Family Members, Guardians, and Caregivers Education.*** – A formal training and counseling program for family members, guardians, and caregivers of LWDs shall be developed jointly by the DepEd, DSWD, LGUs, ECCD Council, organizations of persons with disabilities, parent-support organizations, health professional organizations, healthcare services, non-government organizations, and civil society organizations to provide them with a working knowledge of SPED and an understanding of the physical and mental needs of LWDs, so as to maximize their knowledge and skills to fully participate in developing the potentials of LWDs.

## **ARTICLE VIII PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION**

**Sec. 19. *Incentives to Private Sector Participation.*** – Partnership between the government and private institutions catering to the needs of LWDs shall be encouraged. Private entities which team up with the DepEd or provide the necessary educational assistance and service of LWDs with the consent or as referred by the public agency shall be entitled to the benefits and incentives provided under R.A. 8525, otherwise known as the “*Adopt-a-School Act.*”

## **ARTICLE IX PUBLIC INFORMATION AND DISSEMINATION**

**Sec. 20. *Public Information, Education and Communication.*** – A nationwide information dissemination campaign on prevention, early identification and intervention programs for LWDs shall be intensified. This shall be the joint responsibility of the Philippine Information Agency, CWC, and the DepEd. Likewise, the DepEd, in collaboration with the DOH, DOLE, CHED, TESDA, and DILG shall disseminate materials and information concerning effective practices in working with, training and education of LWDs.

## **ARTICLE X PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS**

**Sec. 21. *Procedural Safeguards.*** – The DepEd shall establish and maintain procedures to ensure that LWDs and their parents or guardians are guaranteed procedural safeguards with respect to the provision of free and appropriate public education. Procedural safeguards shall include the creation of policies, procedures, and other administrative approaches which include, but not limited to, the rights of the LWDs or their parents or guardians to be informed in their mother tongue, and be served written notice on matters affecting the education of the LWDs; the right to confidentiality of personally identifiable information, including the right of parents to written notice of and written consent to the exchange of such information among agencies. This shall also include the opportunity for the parents or guardians of LWDs to examine all related records and to participate in meetings with respect to the identification, evaluation, educational placement, and provision of education programs to LWDs.

The DepEd, through its district office, shall likewise ensure the speedy and timely administrative resolution of complaints filed by LWDs, their parents, guardians, caregivers, or other immediate family members, which shall be promptly acted upon and resolved not later than thirty (30) calendar days from receipt of the complaint. Any DepEd official, teacher, or employee, and CDC or ILRC personnel who shall cause any undue delay and fail to comply with the said prescribed period shall be held administratively liable.

**ARTICLE XI  
PROGRAM SUPPORT FUND**

**Sec.22. *Program Support Fund.*** - To ensure the institutionalization of services for LWDs, a Program Support Fund (PSF) shall be provided to guarantee the implementation of the provisions of this bill, including the following:

- (a) Contract specialists for the diagnosis and assessment of LWDs and the prescription of appropriate intervention;
- (b) Defray expenses in the delivery of related services as stated in Sec. 4, subparagraph (k) of this Act, such as transportation and various developmental, corrective and other support services; and
- (c) Purchase assistive devices, equipment, learning materials and other needed resources to deliver services effectively.

The PSF shall be used solely for the delivery of services for LWDs and for the performance of the functions of ILRCs and the IACC-LWDs.

**ARTICLE XII  
FINAL PROVISIONS**

**Sec. 23. *Appropriations.*** – The Secretaries of the DepEd, DOH, and DSWD shall immediately include in their respective Department’s programs the implementation of this Act, the funding of which shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

**Sec. 24. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** – Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DepEd, DOH and DSWD, in coordination with other concerned agencies of the government, shall promulgate necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

**Sec. 25. *Separability Clause.*** – If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the remainder of this Act or any provision not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

**Sec. 26. *Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, executive orders, presidential decrees, proclamations, rules, regulations, issuances and enactments or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

**Sec. 27. *Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,