

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular)



Senate
Office of the Secretary

'13 JUL -4 A11 :05

SENATE

S. No. 475

RECEIVED BY: *ji*

Introduced by Senator Antonio "Sonny" F. Trillanes IV

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article XIV, Section 2(1) of the Constitution stipulates that the State shall establish, maintain, and support a complete, adequate, and integrated system of education relevant to the needs of the people and society. It is in the public interest to support unique opportunities for high-achieving and underachieving pupils in the public elementary schools who are identified as gifted and talented. Special efforts should be made to ensure that economically-disadvantaged pupils be provided with full participation in these unique opportunities.

However, the country's school system does not have adequate programs that go beyond identifying gifted children by nurturing them until they have completed their education.

This bill seeks to improve the quality of existing programs for gifted and talented pupils and to provide for experimentation in the delivery of the programs that go beyond the structures of time-honored education system. Moreover, the bill provides for the creation of Bureau of Special Education to institutionalize and govern special education in the Philippines. Said Bureau shall be specifically tasked to formulate appropriate curriculum and developmentally-suited programs to achieve functional literacy of the children and youth with special needs and ensure their inclusion to society.

In view of the foregoing, approval of this measure is earnestly sought.

ANTONIO "SONNY" F. TRILLANES IV
Senator



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AN ACT
INSTITUTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION THROUGH SPECIAL EDUCATION IN ALL
PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS
NATIONWIDE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH SPECIAL NEEDS AND
ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BUREAU OF SPECIAL EDUCATION CREATING THE
IMPLEMENTING MACHINERY THEREOF, PROVIDING GUIDELINES FOR
GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND OTHER INCENTIVES AND
SUPPORT FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

1 **SECTION 1. Short Title.** – This Act shall be known as the "*Special Education Act.*"

2

3 **SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** It is hereby declared the policy of the State to protect and
4 promote the rights of children with special needs (CSN) to quality education and to take
5 appropriate steps to make such education accessible to them. The State recognizes, their vital
6 role in national development and that finding solutions to their problems forms an integral part of
7 national development strategies.

8 It is also the policy of the State to give full support for their welfare and development to
9 ensure their full integration to society as well as to facilitate their active participation in the
10 affairs of the State, Towards this end, and also pursuant to the mandate stated in Section 13 of
11 Article 2, Sec. 13 of Article 13 of the 1987 Constitution, Article 3 of P.D. 603, Sections 12-14 of
12 Republic Act No, 7277, Article 24 of the UNCRPD, Convention on the Rights of the Child

1 (CRC), the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education,
2 Education for All (EFA) the State shall institutionalize an adequate and relevant educational
3 program for every child with special needs through the establishment of SPED Centers and of
4 their vital support mechanisms. Thus, all CSN, irrespective of the degree of sensory, physically
5 or intellectual disability or need, will have the opportunity to be educated in the most
6 educationally enhancing environment consistent with the provision of a quality education that
7 best meets their needs.

8
9 **SEC. 3. Objectives.** The objectives of the Special Education Act are:

10 (a) To provide access to basic education among CYSN namely the gifted and talented,
11 children with developmental delays: those with intellectual disability, with visual impairment,
12 with hearing impairment, with orthopedic impairment, with physical impairment, with learning
13 disability, with speech defects, with behavior problems, with autism, and those with health
14 problems through the formal system and other alternative delivery service in education;

15 (b) To ensure that CYSN fully develop their abilities, talents, interests and all aspects of
16 their development to become more responsible for their lives and more effective partners in all of
17 the affairs and concerns of the country.

18 (c) To ensure the CYSN understand, appreciate and respect differences among groups
19 and members in society and also to understand the nature of society in which they live;

20 (d) To inform the parents about the full continuum of services, possible placement
21 options during discussions about their children'S education and other relevant information to
22 enable them to make informed deciSions and choices;

23 (e) To equip the parents and other caregivers and the teachers with the capabilities to
24 identify, prevent, refer and intervene with the developmental disorders and disabilities of
25 children as well as in the relevant individual programing, planning for the student where such
26 program differs significantly for the standard curriculum and other matters that enhance the role

1 of parents and other caregivers as the primary educators that caregivers of their children from
2 birth onward;

3 (f) To involve private groups, local government units and national agencies other than the
4 Department of Education, in the education of children with special needs;

5 (g) To effectuate significant and positive changes in community attitudes towards
6 disability and the need to provide special education, care and other needs of children with special
7 needs.

8

9 **SEC. 4. *Definition of Terms.*** For the purposes of this Act, these terms are defined as
10 follows:

11 (a) Disability shall mean

12 1) a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more
13 psychological, physiological or anatomical function of an individual or activities of such
14 individual;

15 2) a record of such an impairment;

16 3) being regarded as having such an impairment.

17 (b) Impairment is any loss, diminution or aberration or psychological, physiological or
18 anatomical structure or function;

19 (c) Handicap refers to a disadvantage of a given individual, resulting from an impairment
20 or a disability that limits or prevents the functions or activity that is considered normal given the
21 age and gender of the individual.

22 (d) Persons with disabilities are those suffering from restriction or different abilities as a
23 result of a mental, physical, sensory or neurological impairment, to perform an activity in the
24 manner or within the range considered normal for a human being;

25 (e) Marginalized/disadvantaged disabled persons refer to disabled persons who lack
26 access to rehabilitate service and educational opportunities due to poverty, abandonment, illness

1 and other form of neglect. For purposes of this Act, the word "poor" are those who either have no
2 means of livelihood or have incomes below poverty threshold;

3 (f) Children and youth with special needs are the gifted and talented and those who are
4 disabled, impaired and handicapped persons in need of special education as well as services for
5 rehabilitation. He/she differs from the average child in 1) mental characteristics; 2) sensory
6 abilities; 3) neuro-muscular or physical characteristics; 4) social; 5) multiple handicaps; and/or 6)
7 has a developmental lag to such an extent that requires modified school practices or special
8 education services to develop to his maximum capability. They include persons aged 0-21 years
9 old and may be as follows:

10 1. Gifted and Talented children are those capable of superior performance and
11 these include those with demonstrated achievements or potential ability in one or more of
12 the following areas: general intellectual ability, special aptitude, creative or productive
13 thinking ability, leadership ability or those individuals who consistently manifest the
14 following cluster of traits: above average ability (including intelligence), high creativity
15 (implies the developmental appreciation of innovative ideas) and high task commitment
16 (related to a high degree of motivation) and those who by reason thereof, require services
17 or activities not or ordinarily provided by the school

18 2. The Intellectually Disabled are those who have substantial limitation in present
19 functioning characterized by significant sub-average intellectual functioning, existing
20 concurrently with the related limitation in two or more of the applicable adaptive skill
21 areas; communication, self-direction, home living, social skills, community use, self-
22 direction, health and safety, functional academics, leisure and work;

23 3. The Visually impaired are those who are blind or having a low vision. A person
24 is blind if he has a visual acuity of 20/200 or less in a better eye after maximum
25 correction. The low vision person retains a relatively low degree of vision and can read
26 only enlarged print of regular or regular or regular print under special condition;

1 4. The Hearing Impaired are those who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. The deaf
2 person is one whose hearing is functional for ordinary purpose in life. The hard-of-
3 hearing has a sense of hearing which although defective is functional without a hearing
4 aid;

5 5. Children and youth with behavior problems are those who cannot adjust to the
6 socially accepted norms or behavior and consequently disrupt their academic progress,
7 the learning efforts of their classmates and interpersonal relations;

8 6. The Orthopedically Handicapped are those whose impairment permanently or
9 temporarily interferes with the normal functions of the joints, muscles or limbs;

10 7. Children and youth with special health problems are those who have health
11 conditions that tend to keep children out-of-school or those with chronic and/or illness
12 like cardiac (heart) diseases, asthma, diabetes, tuberculosis and other respiratory ailments,
13 carcinonza, epilepsy, malnutrition and others;

14 8. Children and youth with learning disabilities are those whose although normal
15 in sensory, emotional and intellectual abilities exhibit disorders in perception, listening,
16 thinking, reading, writing, spelling or arithmetic. They have such condition as perceptual
17 handicap, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia and developmental aphasia;

18 9. The Speech impaired are those whose speech differs from the average so far as
19 to draw unfavorable attention to the manner of speaking rather than the thought
20 conveyed;

21 10. Persons with Autism are those with developmental disabilities, having onset
22 before 30 months of age which is marked by disturbance in development, language and
23 relationship with persons, activities and objects and which may co-exist with intellectual
24 disability and epilepsy. Children afflicted with this disorder have perceptual, cognitive
25 communication and social difficulties which change over time.

1 (g) Auxilliary aids and services are services that are basically non-education but impinge
2 on the education process of the child with special needs. These include:

- 3 1. therapy;
- 4 2. qualified interpreters or other effective methods of delivering materials
5 to individuals with hearing impairments;
- 6 3. qualified readers, taped text or other effective methods of delivering materials
7 to individuals with visual impairments;
- 8 4. acquisition or modification of equipment or device;
- 9 5. other similar services and actions or all types of aids and services that facilitate
10 the learning process of people with mental disability;

11 (h) Augmentative and alternative communication devices are special instructional
12 materials like a textbook in Braille, large type or any other medium or any apparatus that
13 conveys information to student or otherwise contributes to the learning process.

14 (i) Private sectors participation encompasses all forms of indispensable, substantial and
15 meaningful participation of private individuals, partnership, groups or entities, community-based
16 organization or non-governmental organizations in the delivery of educational and rehabilitative
17 services for students and children with special needs.

18 (j) Basic Education consists of at least six (6) years of elementary education and at least
19 four (4) of secondary education including early years of education.

20 (k) Special Education is basic education that takes into account the special needs of both
21 the disabled children and the gifted and talented that requires a systematic and deliberate process
22 for them to achieve functional literacy and which will bring the individual to the highest level of
23 his (1)potential and capacity. It is also defined as the type of education tailored to meet the
24 needs of children who cannot profit because of disabilities or exceptional abilities.

25 (l) Functional literacy is the level of literacy necessary for the children and youth to
26 become useful citizens and effective members of the society.

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SEC. 5. Coverage. - This Act shall cover student and children and youth with special needs nationwide.

SEC. 6. Creation of the Bureau of Special Education - To attain the objectives of this Act, the Bureau of Special Education (BSPED), hereinafter referred to as the Bureau, is hereby created to institutionalize and govern special education in the Philippines. The Bureau is primarily tasked in the formulation and administration of an appropriate curriculum and developmentally-suited programs to primarily achieve functional literacy of the children and youth with special needs and ensure their inclusion to society. The full continuum of educational services shall also be made available by the bureau to those CSN below school age through regular home visits, consultations, day care activities and any other properties medium or program.

BSPED shall function as a regular bureau of the Department of Education, under the direct supervision of the Department Secretary and to be headed by a director and assistant director.

The divisions chiefs shall serve as heads for the (1) Gifted and Talented Children and Youth Division (GCYD); and (2) Children and Youth with Disabilities Division (CYDD) with the staffing needs to be equitably distributed in accordance with the current needs and concerns of their respective divisions. They shall assist the director in the formulation, implementation and improvement of the framework and components of the special education program.

The Philippine Printing House for the Blind under the existing organization structure of DepED shall become part of the CYDD.

SEC. 7. SPED Centers in Regular Schools. - At least one (1) special education (SPED) center for each school division and at least three (3) SPED Centers in big school divisions shall

1 be established in regular schools, where there are no existing SPED Centers. These SPED
2 Centers shall be administered by the principal of the regular school.

3 The SPED Center shall function as the Resource Center for the implementation of
4 inclusive education that will accept all kinds of children in regular schools. It shall support
5 children and youth with special needs integrated and included in regular schools and b) assist in
6 the conduct of school-based training; c) produce appropriate teaching materials, and d) conduct
7 of assessment of children and youth with special needs.

8 Each SPED Center shall have at least the following staff who shall have qualifications as
9 to DepEd standards. They will have a starting salary classification of Grade 13:

- 10 a) 1 SPED teacher for the gifted and talented;
- 11 b) 1 SPED teacher for children and youth with intellectually disabled;
- 12 c) 1 SPED teacher for children and youth with visual impairment;
- 13 d) 1 SPED teacher for children and youth with hearing impairment;
- 14 e) 1 SPED teacher for children and youth with autism;
- 15 f) 1 SPED teacher for children and youth with learning disability;
- 16 g) 1 SPED teacher for children and youth with behavior problems.

17 SPED teachers should work cooperatively with regular teachers.

18 There shall be an assistant principal for each SPED Center. He/she shall administer and
19 supervise the alternative educational program, early intervention programs, monitoring,
20 supervision and technical assistance and human resource training/SPED personnel enhancement
21 programs, referral and placement procedures, advisory services and other components of the
22 special education program in his/her jurisdiction. He/she shall also be responsible for the
23 formation and supervision of placement committee under his/her jurisdiction as well as in the
24 resolution of disagreement on placement and services.

25 **SEC. 8. Other Personnel of SPED Centers.** - One educational psychologist or
26 psychometrician, one social worker, one education supervisor and lone medical health officer for

1 each city, and province shall be appointed, among other responsibilities, shall comprise the
2 administrative core and placement committee of the SPED unit in the area. They shall also be
3 jointly tasked to develop and maintain a database in special education in their respective
4 jurisdiction. The placement committee shall, among others, ensure that students with disabilities
5 are educated as close as possible to their homes and alongside their age-appropriate peer groups,
6 and that these students attend their local schools or travel the distance possible in the availment
7 of educational services, in consultation with, and active participation of parents.

8

9 **SEC. 9. *Itinerant/Mobile SPED teachers.*** – Itinerant/Mobile SPED teachers shall also be
10 appointed whenever necessary and on a needs basis. He/she shall assist isolated or remote
11 schools with specialized equipment, individual programs, curriculum adjustment, teaching aids
12 and building modifications.

13

14 **SEC. 10. *Authority of the Secretary of Education to Give Grants to, or Enter into***
15 ***Cooperative Arrangement for the Creation of SPED Centers.*** - The Secretary of Education is
16 hereby authorized to give grants to, or enter into cooperative arrangement or contracts with
17 public or private non-profit agencies, institutions or organization for the establishment or
18 creation of SPED Centers for children and youth with special needs: Provided, That a grant made
19 pursuant to this Section may be made only for the following or similar programs:

20 (a) Technical assistance of SPED Centers providing educational assistance for children
21 with special needs (CSN);

22 (b) Pre-service or in-service training of professionals or related services personnel
23 preparing to serve or serving CSN;

24 (c) Replication of successful innovative approaches to providing educational or related
25 services to CSN;

26 (d) Facilities of parental involvement in the education of their CSN;

1 (e) Diagnosis and educational evaluation of CSN at risk of being certified CSN;

2 (f) Consultative, counseling and training services for the families of CSN;

3 (g) Familiarization of the municipality or city to be served by a SPED Center with the
4 problems and potentialities of such children.

5
6 **SEC. 11. *Provision for Continuing Research to Identify Special Needs of CYSN.*** - The

7 Bureau of Special Education (BSPED) by itself or in associate with such organizations or
8 institutions as are determined by the DepEd Secretary to be appropriate, shall undertake
9 continuing research to identify and design programs that meet the full range of children with
10 special needs: Provided, That such continuing research shall also be used to develop instructional
11 techniques for used by the SPED Centers that will improve the CSN's acquisition of skills
12 necessary for transition to independent living, vocational training or competitive development.

13 Provided, Finally, That such continuing research shall further be used to design physical
14 education and therapeutic recreation program for use by the Center to increase the potential of
15 CSN for community participation.

16 **SEC. 12. *Student Assistance.*** The Bureau shall provide financial assistance to

17 economically marginalized but deserving students with special needs at the elementary and
18 secondary levels, including any post-secondary or tertiary education which may come in the
19 form of scholarship grants, transportation allowance, food allowance, board and lodging
20 allowance, book allowance, student loan programs, artistic and cultural tours, training and
21 programs, subsidies and other incentives. Marginalized disabled persons and those coming from
22 indigenous communities shall be the priority in the grant of the aforesaid assistance.

23 Social equipment like wheelchair, crutches, special toilet and hygiene requirements,
24 hearing aids, eyeglasses and the like required by the children and youth to optimize education
25 and participation in the educational process shall also be provided for free and at discounted rates

1 to deserving students and at very affordable rates in general through a reasonable funding
2 scheme that shall be designated by the Bureau.

3
4 **SEC. 13. *Medical Assistance.*** The Bureau shall prepare a scheme that will ensure
5 adequate and free medical assistance and intervention programs, including those essential to the
6 student or child's rehabilitation like therapy, psychometric assessments, medical examinations
7 and the like with government clinics, hospitals and other health facilities. In case medical needs
8 are not offered by the nearest or accessible government clinics, hospitals and other health
9 facilities or cannot be obtained by reason of critical immediacy or the need to obtain a more
10 specialized or advance treatment, they can avail of the services of the private clinics, hospitals
11 and other specialized agencies through tax incentives. For this purpose, as far as practicable or
12 on a case-to-case basis, as may be determined by the Bureau, health care insurance programs
13 may be instituted.

14
15 **SEC. 14. *Nutritional Programs.*** The nutritional programs of CSN shall be supervised by
16 the National Nutrition Council and the Department of Health in coordination with the local
17 government unit health officer.

18
19 **SEC. 15. *Establishment of Child Development Center.*** Child Development Care Centers
20 especially designed for pre-school children and their parents, where early identification of
21 disabilities and special needs and early learning intervention will be administered, shall also be
22 established near or within SPED centers or those that will be created by the bureau with support
23 of the local government units in the area. As far as practicable, existing day care centers and
24 facilities shall be maximized.

25 **SEC. 16. *Recreational and Artistic Opportunities.*** The Bureau shall institute and include
26 a program for children and youth with special needs to provide them full opportunities for safe

1 and wholesome recreation and activities, individual as well as social, for the wholesome use of
2 his leisure hours and for the advancement of their physical, mental, social and cultural
3 development.

4
5 **SEC. 17. *Continuing Education and Assistance to Teachers or Instructors of Children***
6 ***and Youth with Special Needs.*** - The Bureau shall enhance the gift of the teachers/instructors to
7 professional advancement and ensure that the teaching staff attract the best available talents
8 through adequate remuneration, scholarship and training grants; teacher exchange programs,
9 incentives and allowance and other means of securing job satisfaction and fulfillment as well as
10 their lone and stable tenure in their respective posts. A similar program shall be designed for
11 support personnel like interpreters, psychologist, social workers and other also involved in the
12 education and rehabilitation of the children and youth.

13
14 **SEC. 18. *Parent, Sibling, and Caregiver Education.*** There shall be a formal training and
15 counseling program for parents, sibling and caregivers for them to acquire a working knowledge
16 of special education, gain an understanding of the psychology of children with special needs, be
17 aware of their crucial role as educators and gain knowledge and skills on how each parent,
18 sibling or caregiver could maximize his/her services for the optimum development of the
19 potential of the children and youth.

20 **SEC. 19. *Special Instructional Materials.*** Publishers shall grant to the DepEd BSPED
21 the authority to transcribe adopted instructional materials into Braille, large type and audio tape
22 without penalty or royalty. Furthermore, on or before the second working day after the adoption
23 of textbook titles by the DepEd, each publisher of newly adopted instructional materials shall
24 provide computerized files as specified by the DepEd which may be copied and distributed to a
25 school division, upon request, for instructional purposes.

1 Copies of these instructional materials shall be furnished without cost to either the
2 student or teacher who is blind or visually impaired. The materials are to be loaned to the public
3 school districts as long as needed and are to be returned to BSPED when no longer needed.

4
5 **SEC. 20. *Incentives to Private Sector Participation.*** Partnership between the
6 government and private institutions catering to the needs of children and youth with special
7 needs shall be encouraged. In this regard, the Department of Education, in coordination with the
8 Department of Finance, Department of Interior and Local Government, Department of Science
9 and Technology, Department of Trade and Industry, shall draw up a scheme to provide
10 incentives that will include tax deductions, loan assistance and technological or scientific
11 assistance to encourage private participation in the education and rehabilitation of CYSN.

12
13 **SEC. 21. *Local Government Unit Participation.*** - The local government units shall be
14 responsible for the:

15 a) Provision of building or centers and sites where there are no existing school facilities
16 that will house the special education of children/students with special needs as well as the
17 establishment of day care centers as mentioned in Section 15;

18 b) Organization of one (1) parent-teacher association in every school in their respective
19 jurisdictions offering special education to children and youth with special needs;

20 c) Identification, coordination and the tapping of public and private volunteers and
21 private organizations, national or international, for information dissemination campaigns,
22 funding programs and other projects to augment the funding of equipment for SPED programs,
23 among others;

24 d) Provisions of counterpart funds for the training and seminars of parents and teachers
25 and nutritional programs for the children and youth with special needs in their respective

1 localities to be determined by the Bureau, in coordination with the Department of Budget and
2 Management and the Department of Finance.

3
4 **SEC. 22. *Public Information, Education and Communication.*** – A nationwide
5 information dissemination campaign on prevention, early identification and intervention
6 programs for children with special needs shall be intensified. This shall be the joint responsibility
7 of the Philippine Information Agency (PIA), Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC) and the
8 Department of Education (DepEd). The DepEd, in collaboration with the Department of Health,
9 Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and the Local Government Unit shall also
10 disseminate materials and information concerning effective practices in working with, training
11 and education of CYSN.

12
13 **SEC. 23. *Appropriations.*** - For the implementation of this Act, the amount of Six
14 Hundred Million Pesos (P600,000,000.00) per year for five (5) consecutive years is hereby
15 appropriated for the SPED program to be included in the General Appropriations Act.

16 A supplementary appropriation in the amount of Twenty Million Pesos
17 (P20,000,000.00) to be sourced from the President's Social Fund and the Philippine
18 Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) shall be provided to BSPED as a reserve fund
19 for every year of operation immediately upon approval of this Act. This shall be used exclusively
20 to augment funding for auxiliary aids and services.

21 Government incentives and support provided by the DepEd, DOF, DOH, DILG,
22 LGU, CWC and the National Council for Disability Affairs shall also be included in their
23 respective annual budget in the General Appropriations Act.

24
25 **SEC. 24. *Implementation.*** - The Department of Education through the Bureau of Special
26 Education, in coordination with the Department of Interior and Local Government, Local

1 Government Unit, Department of Health, Department of Finance, Council for the Welfare of
2 Children, Early Childhood Care and Development Council, and the National Council for
3 Disability Affairs shall promulgate and issue the necessary implementing guidelines for the
4 creation and operation of the SPED Centers within sixty (60) days after the effectivity of this
5 Act.

6

7 **SEC. 25. *Separability Clause.*** If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or
8 unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain
9 valid and subsisting.

10

11 **SEC. 15. *Effectivity.*** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in
12 at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,