

**EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES  
First Regular Session**

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**Senate**  
Office of the Secretary

20 JUN -1 P5:12

**SENATE**

RECEIVED

**S.B. No. 1565**

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**Introduced by SEN. WIN GATCHALIAN**

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**AN ACT  
ESTABLISHING POLICIES FOR EDUCATION AND LEARNING IN THE  
NEW NORMAL, PRESCRIBING FOR THE PURPOSE STANDARDS FOR  
THE REOPENING OF SAFE SCHOOLS, CREATING THE SAFE SCHOOLS  
REOPENING TASK FORCE, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND  
FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

The declaration of a State of Calamity throughout the country by President Rodrigo R. Duterte due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the subsequent imposition of an Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) in Luzon, led to the unprecedented suspension of classes at all levels. As a consequence, a total of 28,451,212 learners from the pre-primary to the tertiary level in the country were affected, while globally, more than 1.2 billion students and youth were affected by school and university closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse>, affected learners as of May 30, 2020, 10:00 am.

History will also tell us that the Philippines is prone to natural disasters such as earthquakes and volcanic eruptions as the Philippines sits within the Pacific Ring of Fire.<sup>2</sup> The country has 24 active volcanoes<sup>3</sup> and major eruptions of a number of these volcanoes such as Mt. Mayon with latest eruption in 2018, Mt. Pinatubo in 1991, and Taal Volcano this 2020, caused massive destruction and loss of lives, not to mention the suspension of classes that affected thousands of learners. On December 15, 2019, a 6.9 magnitude earthquake that struck Davao del Sur left infrastructure damages and affected 54,743 enrolled learners.<sup>4</sup>

Apart from earthquakes, typhoons are normal occurrences in the country. On November 8, 2013, typhoon Yolanda, the deadliest typhoon in the country's history made a landfall in Leyte wherein over 6,000 people lost their lives, displacing over 600,000,<sup>5</sup> and affected a total of 1.4 million school-aged children were affected.<sup>6</sup>

The country has not been spared not only from natural calamities but from man-made calamities as well. Previous to this current public health calamity, Proclamation No. 216 was issued on May 23, 2017 which declared a state of Martial Law and suspended the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus in the whole of Mindanao. This was due to the armed conflict between the government and the radical Maute group and the Abu Sayyaf group with support from foreign jihadist. This armed confrontation between government forces and pro-ISIS militants in Marawi has forcibly displaced 98% of the total population of the city, as well as residents from nearby municipalities, who were compelled to leave due to severe food shortage

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.statista.com/topics/5845/natural-disasters-in-the-philippines-at-a-glance/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.phivolcs.dost.gov.ph/index.php/volcano-hazard/volcanoes-of-the-philippines>

<sup>4</sup> <https://news.mb.com.ph/2019/12/18/depd-continues-to-monitor-quake-affected-learners-schools-in-mindanao/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://give2asia.org/looking-back-typhoon-yolanda/>

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/Cluster%20-%203%20month%20up-date\\_February2014.pdf](https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/Cluster%20-%203%20month%20up-date_February2014.pdf)

and/or constriction of local economies.<sup>7</sup> Educational facilities were likewise not spared during the siege as several educational institution infrastructures were destroyed by the rebels. Of the 69 public schools under the Marawi City Schools Division's authority, 22 schools with 569 classrooms were seriously damaged and remain inaccessible within the most affected areas. The damage and displacement have disrupted the learning of more than 86,000 children and displaced 22,174 students and 1,411 teachers from Marawi City.<sup>8</sup>

With all of these calamities, school closures were always the reasonable consequence to save the lives of the students. These closures not only adversely affected the learners' education. All of these, especially the COVID-19 pandemic, carried high social and economic costs for people across communities with impact particularly severe for the most vulnerable and marginalized boys and girls and their families.<sup>9</sup>

While the government is continuously taking actions and crafting policies towards effective response to minimize and mitigate the impact of these natural or man-made calamities and boost economic and social recovery of the affected populace, the Philippine Education System deserves focus and equal importance as well.

The current "COVID-19 outbreak is a major education crisis"<sup>10</sup> and accordingly, the government should learn from this pandemic and take remedial measures to ensure that what it had invested to the education of its learners will not be put to waste, make them stay in school, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized learners. "Re-establishing education after an emergency can play an important role in helping children overcome

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/ph/marawi-crisis>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/linked-documents/52313-001-sd-01.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse/consequences>

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

psycho-social impact. Post-disaster education can also teach children critical skills.”<sup>11</sup>

This legislation proposes to establish policies for education and learning in the so-called New Normal. It was formulated to mitigate the impact of disruption in the learners’ education, ensure continuity of learning, and provide quality education despite the prolonged school closures while taking primordial consideration of the health and safety of the whole school community.

For the basic education sector to adapt to the New Normal in education, this bill mandates the preparation of a Safe Schools Reopening Plan (SSRP) in time for the reopening of all public and private basic education schools caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and during or after the occurrence of future calamity, public health emergency, civil unrest, and other emergency or crisis situation that resulted to a massive disruption of classes. The SSRP shall contain well-defined timelines, specific benchmarks, policies, and standards to reopen schools – taking into consideration the best interest of the whole school community and consistent with the country’s health and safety response. For this purpose, the bill proposes to create a National Safe Schools Reopening Task Force (SSRTF) which shall craft the SSRP and issue relevant, harmonized and streamlined policies for its efficient and effective implementation. It shall also provide the overall strategic management of the plan and develop collaboration and convergence mechanisms between and among the implementing agencies. It is also proposed that a Regional SSRTF be created for the efficient and effective implementation of the SSRP in the regions across the country.

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<sup>11</sup> Arcadio, Arnaldo, *see* [https://www.unicef.org/emergencies/philippines\\_51928.html](https://www.unicef.org/emergencies/philippines_51928.html)

To deliver education in the New Normal and ensure continuity of learning, the bill prescribes the development of a hybrid learning system which utilizes both onsite and distance learning, instruction, and evaluation. The Department of Education (DepEd) shall employ all effective forms of distance learning tools, whether digital or traditional, to ensure that no learners, especially the most vulnerable, are left behind. It shall forge partnerships with TV networks and CATV operators to utilize free airtime for its virtual classes as warranted under their respective legislative franchises and RA No. 8370 or the "Children's Television Act of 1997". It shall also tap radio stations to allocate time for the free broadcast of educational programs.

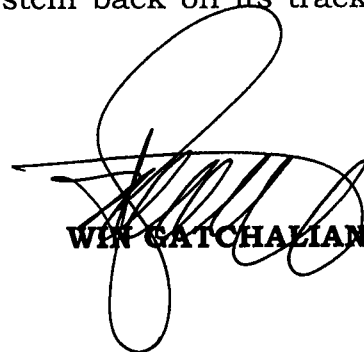
The following other policies and standards are mandated under this proposal for an effective and efficient transition to the New Normal in education:

- (1) the establishment of a mapping system to determine the mode of distance learning to be adopted, alignment of learning materials, and curriculum adjustments;
- (2) the development and enhancement of the DepEd's capacity to develop, adopt, and implement digital transformation in its organizational processes;
- (3) the provision of additional learning rooms and hiring and training of additional teachers;
- (4) ensuring the provision of responsive services for learners with disabilities and other marginalized students, as well as the continuous delivery of critical services that may take place in schools such as health screenings, feeding programs, or therapies for learners with special needs; and
- (5) for health-related emergencies, equipping schools with isolation rooms and mapping of existing barangay, municipal or city health centers, clinics and hospitals that serve communities where the schools are located; the provision of health information campaigns,

integration of health education in the daily lessons and activities, and giving due attention to the mental health of and psychosocial support for the learners; and allowing the utilization of a portion of the Special Education Fund to provide a “Safe Schools” related infrastructure such as hand washing facilities, disinfecting products, and medical health supplies deemed appropriate by public health officials such as thermometers, face masks, and face shields.

Finally, the bill adopts a whole-of-community approach to facilitate collaborative action and foster the involvement of every sector, especially the parents, for an integrated transition to the New Normal in education. It encourages strong family engagement to mitigate the impact of class disruptions and enable a coordinated transition to recovery.

We are living in unprecedented times – under a New Normal that demands that we act with dispatch. The swift passage of this bill is thus earnestly sought in order for this august body to immediately respond to educational crisis and put the education system back on its tracks in due time, and leave no one behind.



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

1           Section 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “*Education in*  
2 *the New Normal Act*”.

3

4           Sec. 2. *Declaration of Principles.* – It is the policy of the State to  
5 promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and shall  
6 take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all. Toward  
7 this end, the State shall ensure that even in times of public health  
8 emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, calamities, civil unrests and  
9 other emergencies or crises, the citizens’ right to education is maintained  
10 and complemented with the protection and promotion of their right to  
11 health, safety, and well-being and instilling health consciousness among

1 them. The State shall likewise adopt measures to mitigate the impact of  
2 disruption in the learners' education with the end view of ensuring  
3 continuity of learning and providing quality education during prolonged  
4 school closures while taking primordial consideration of their health, safety,  
5 and well-being.

6  
7       Sec. 3. *Safe Schools Reopening Plan.* – Subject to the confirmation of  
8 the appropriate Inter-Agency Task Force, the implementing agencies under  
9 this Act are hereby mandated to prepare a Safe Schools Reopening Plan  
10 (SSRP) in preparation for the reopening of all public and private basic  
11 education schools under the New Normal in education and learning during  
12 or after a calamity, public health emergency, civil unrest, and other  
13 emergency or crisis situations that resulted to a massive disruption of  
14 classes. The SSRP shall contain well-defined timelines, specific benchmarks,  
15 policies, and standards to resume classes or reopen schools based on an  
16 assessment of the associated risks and benefits and the best interest of the  
17 learners and the community. It shall necessarily include, but not limited to,  
18 the following:

- 19       (a) Roles and responsibility of each agency;
- 20       (b) Budgetary requirements;
- 21       (c) Priority intervention and the corresponding systems which should be  
22           in place and ready upon school reopening;
- 23       (d) For health-related emergency or calamity, to include the following as  
24           basic intervention or requirements:
  - 25           i. Protocol on cleaning and disinfection of schools including  
26           equipment and supplies in collaboration with health officials  
27           and the community;
  - 28           ii. Provision of public health supplies deemed appropriate by  
29           public health officials;
  - 30           iii. Preventive public health programs on basic measures to be  
31           undertaken;



- 1           iv. Teacher support with accurate information, and training on  
2           conflict management and disease prevention and management;
- 3           v. Modified attendance policy for teachers and students who are  
4           at high risk due to age or underlying medical conditions with  
5           the option to deliver instruction remotely while students are in  
6           the school building, with students under the supervision of  
7           qualified staff. At-risk students shall have a similar option to  
8           learn remotely while their teachers and peers are in school; and
- 9           vi. Monitoring and reporting protocols for affected learners;
- 10       (e) Curriculum adjustment and/or development of flexible modules;
- 11       (f) Integration of Health Education in the daily lessons and activities to  
12       be incorporated into the subjects. The content shall be made specific  
13       as to age, gender, and ethnicity, as well as disability-responsive;
- 14       (g) System to ensure continuity of learning for learners to include inter-  
15       school classes for displaced learners;
- 16       (h) Emergency response plan to safely respond should there be  
17       recurrence of an emergency or suspicion of infection;
- 18       (i) Applicable and relevant protocols to be observed when schools reopen  
19       to include policy on the conduct of school activities;
- 20       (j) Mental health and psychosocial support services and life skills  
21       classes which are critical to keeping students in school, including  
22       psychological first aid especially for armed-conflict affected learners.
- 23       (k) Provision of necessary support for learners with disabilities and other  
24       marginalized learners;
- 25       (l) Provision of transportation or shuttle services, when necessary;
- 26       (m) Conduct of post-conflict needs assessment;
- 27       (n) Conduct of Mine Risk Education, when warranted, for armed conflict-  
28       affected schools;
- 29       (o) Conduct of rapid assessment of damage to infrastructure, equipment,  
30       facilities, and materials;

- 1 (p) Construction and repair of school buildings, classrooms, temporary  
2 learning rooms or spaces, and other facilities;
- 3 (q) Information campaign guidelines on the provision of relevant  
4 information within the school community and the locality. Schools  
5 shall also utilize digital platforms to increase the reach of their  
6 information dissemination efforts; and
- 7 (r) Other needed support and interventions.

8 The SSRP should be ready for implementation and effectively and  
9 timely communicated to all affected localities prior to the reopening of  
10 schools.

11 For purposes of this Act, the term school shall include temporary  
12 learning facilities or spaces outside the school premises, alternative learning  
13 centers, and all other facilities established for learning pursuant to this Act.

14

15 *Sec. 4. The National Safe Schools Reopening Task Force; Implementing*  
16 *Agencies.* – There is hereby created a National Safe Schools Reopening Task  
17 Force (SSRTF) composed of the heads of the following:

- 18 (a) Department of Education (DepEd) as Chair;
- 19 (b) Department of Health (DOH) as Vice-Chair;
- 20 (c) Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) as member;
- 21 (d) Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT)  
22 as member;
- 23 (e) Department of Science and Technology (DOST) as member;
- 24 (f) Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) as member;
- 25 and
- 26 (g) Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (ULAP) as member.

27 For non-health related emergency, the Vice-Chair shall be appointed by  
28 the Chair from among the other members of the National SSRTF upon  
29 consultation with such members and with due consideration of the nature  
30 of the current emergency or crisis situation confronting the country or parts  
31 thereof.

1 The members of the National SSRTF may appoint their respective official  
2 alternates with the rank of an Undersecretary.

3  
4 Sec. 5. *Powers and Functions of the National SSRTF.* – The National  
5 SSRTF shall have the following powers and functions:

6 (a) Craft the SSRP in accordance with the provisions of this Act, and to  
7 update, revise or amend the same as the current circumstances may  
8 warrant;

9 (b) Identify emerging issues and concerns and provide the necessary  
10 measures to address the same;

11 (c) Issue relevant, harmonized and streamlined policies for the efficient  
12 and effective implementation of the SSRP;

13 (d) Provide the overall strategic management and guidelines for the  
14 implementation of the SSRP;

15 (e) Develop collaborative mechanisms for greater coordination,  
16 cooperation, and convergence between and among the implementing  
17 agencies;

18 (f) Tap the assistance, expertise and resources of other relevant  
19 government agencies, as well as local government units (LGUs), the  
20 academe, parent-teacher associations, non-government  
21 organizations, and other education stakeholders in the crafting of the  
22 SSRP and its implementation; and

23 (g) Such other functions necessary for purposes of this Act.

24  
25 Sec. 6. *The Regional Safe Schools Reopening Task Force.* – There is  
26 hereby created a Regional SSRTF for the efficient and effective  
27 implementation of the SSRP in the regions across the country. It shall be  
28 composed of the respective regional heads of the members enumerated  
29 under Section 4 of this Act, with the DepEd as Chair and the DOH as Vice-  
30 Chair.

31 The Regional SSRTF shall perform the following functions:

- 1 (a) Implement the SSRP in the regions across the country;
- 2 (b) Coordinate, collaborate, forge close partnerships, and establish  
3 linkages with the LGUs, Local School Boards, Local Health Boards,  
4 other relevant agencies and offices, and the private sector for the  
5 implementation of this Act;
- 6 (c) Create ad hoc committees or task forces at the provincial, city or  
7 municipal levels for the effective and efficient implementation of the  
8 SSRP;
- 9 (d) Regularly review, monitor, and evaluate the implementation of the  
10 SSRP in the regions;
- 11 (e) Prepare quarterly reports on the implementation of the SSRP in the  
12 regions to be submitted to the National SSRTF; and
- 13 (f) Such other functions as may be required by the National SSRTF.

14 For non-health related emergency, the Vice-Chair shall be appointed  
15 by the Chair from among the other members of the Regional SSRTF upon  
16 consultation with such members and with due consideration of the nature  
17 of the current emergency or crisis situation confronting the country or parts  
18 thereof.

19 All administrative expenses incurred by the National and Regional  
20 SSRTFs and the other ad hoc committees or task forces created pursuant to  
21 this section, such as transportation, meals, per diems, supplies, and like  
22 expenses, shall be charged against the funds of their respective offices,  
23 subject to the usual accounting and auditing rules and regulations.

24

25 *Sec. 7. Continuity of Learning; The Hybrid Learning System.* – To ensure  
26 continuity of learning, schools located in areas classified as high-risk shall  
27 modify the conduct of onsite classes, adopt restructured class hours, and  
28 continuously develop a hybrid learning system to deliver education in the  
29 New Normal. The hybrid learning system utilizes both onsite and distance  
30 learning, instruction, and evaluation. For this purpose, any or a

1 combination of the following tools may be adopted based on the results of  
2 the distance learning tools mapping under Sec. 9 of this Act:

3 (a) Limited face-to-face onsite learning, subject to protocols;

4 (b) Blended learning;

5 (c) Homeschooling;

6 (d) Internet;

7 (e) Television (TV), including Cable Antenna Television (CATV);

8 (f) Radio;

9 (g) Printed modules, kits and other materials; and

10 (h) Other alternative delivery modes as recommended by the DepEd.

11 To further prepare the entire school community for hybrid learning and  
12 sustain its utilization in times of calamities, emergencies or crisis situations,  
13 the DepEd shall embark on materials development, teacher training, and  
14 evaluation processes under the hybrid system, among others. The  
15 Alternative Learning System under RA No. 10533 or the "*Enhanced Basic*  
16 *Education Act*" shall continue to be implemented in complementarity with  
17 the provisions of this Act.

18  
19 *Sec. 8. Distance Learning under the Hybrid Learning System.* – To enable  
20 homes and other remote locations to provide quality distance learning under  
21 the New Normal, the DepEd shall employ all effective forms of distance  
22 learning tools, whether digital or traditional, to ensure that no learners,  
23 especially the most vulnerable, are left behind.

24 To enhance learning from home through the use of TV or CATV, the  
25 DepEd shall forge partnerships with TV networks and CATV operators to  
26 utilize free airtime for its virtual classes as warranted under their respective  
27 legislative franchises and RA No. 8370 or the "*Children's Television Act of*  
28 *1997*". It shall also tap radio stations to allocate time for the free broadcast  
29 of educational programs.

30 The DICT shall implement measures to ensure the availability and  
31 accessibility of reliable and secure Internet access suitable to the needs of

1 learners and teachers under the hybrid learning system. It shall accelerate  
2 the provision of free public wi-fi as mandated under RA No. 10929 or the  
3 “*Free Internet Access in Public Places Act*” to strengthen teaching and  
4 learning, especially where school closures remain in effect.

5 The expertise, systems, and facilities of higher education institutions  
6 offering distance or open learning shall likewise be tapped and adopted  
7 whenever necessary for the development and conduct of distance learning.

8  
9 *Sec. 9. Distance Learning Tools Mapping.* – The DepEd shall establish a  
10 mapping system to regularly determine among its learners and teachers  
11 their access to distance learning tools such as information and  
12 communications technology (ICT) devices, connectivity, capability, and  
13 geographical location, among others. The mapping system shall also  
14 consider the specific needs of learners with disabilities and other  
15 marginalized learners. The mapping results shall determine the mode of  
16 distance learning to be adopted, alignment of learning materials, and  
17 curriculum adjustments.

18  
19 *Sec. 10. Digital Transformation under Education in the New Normal and*  
20 *Other Emergencies.* – For the DepEd to develop and enhance its capability to  
21 continuously deliver quality education in the New Normal, it shall enhance  
22 its ICT capacity and digitally streamline and integrate its workflows and  
23 processes.

24 For this purpose, the DepEd shall:

- 25 (a) immediately take measures to set-up electronic and online systems  
26 that will make the means of exchanging data and information  
27 between and among its offices, learners and parents secure,  
28 efficient and seamless;
- 29 (b) streamline procedures by adopting automation and digitization of  
30 its services to promote zero-contact policy and to facilitate their  
31 efficient delivery;

- 1 (c) build-up its technology capabilities, including the establishment of  
2 data centers, data repositories, basic messaging and electronic  
3 mail facilities, encryption systems, and cyber-security facilities;
- 4 (d) invest heavily into developing organizational capability and staff  
5 competencies that are well-suited to support a department-wide  
6 digital transformation;
- 7 (e) promote and support the onboarding and training of its personnel  
8 in using electronic services;
- 9 (f) obtain and monitor networking tools to create channels of  
10 communication with the general public and secure real-time  
11 feedback on its delivery of basic education services; and
- 12 (g) design service processes and procedures that will promote  
13 efficiency and sense of expediency, including but not limited to  
14 matters pertaining to enrolment, payments, documents  
15 submission, grades submission or parent-teacher meetings.

16 The DepEd shall collaborate with the DICT and the DOST, as well as  
17 stakeholders in the private sector, to develop, adopt, and implement digital  
18 transformation in its organizational processes.

19

20 *Sec. 11. Hiring and Training of Teachers.* – The hiring of additional  
21 teachers to upgrade the organizational capacity of the DepEd to deliver  
22 continuous and quality education under a hybrid learning system is  
23 encouraged. The DepEd shall develop and conduct training programs,  
24 workshops or webinar sessions to equip teachers with the necessary  
25 knowledge and skills and enhance their virtual teaching capacity and  
26 competence under the New Normal. These trainings may be integrated in  
27 both formal pre-service and in-service teacher trainings.

28 The DepEd shall tap the resources of other relevant government  
29 agencies, the academe, the industry, and other private sector stakeholders  
30 in the training design and delivery. It may also accredit training providers or  
31 content developers for this purpose.

1           Sec. 12. *Information Campaign.* – Following the health guidelines of the  
2 DOH and of the World Health Organization (WHO), the schools shall provide  
3 relevant information through visual cues, signages, and materials in  
4 strategic locations within the schools. Such relevant information includes  
5 the health protocols on physical distancing, wearing of face mask, regular  
6 handwashing and sanitizing, medical and health information on prevention  
7 and control efforts in the school, updates on local cases, and government  
8 initiatives and response. Schools shall also utilize digital platforms to  
9 increase the reach of their information dissemination efforts.

10  
11           Sec. 13. *Health Education Integration.* – Health education, including  
12 disease prevention and control, shall be integrated in the daily lessons and  
13 activities to be built into the subjects covered under the hybrid learning  
14 system. The content shall be made specific as to age, gender, and ethnicity,  
15 as well as disability-responsive. Parent-teacher groups and other  
16 collaborative mechanisms to promote health information sharing shall  
17 likewise be utilized.

18  
19           Sec. 14. *Mental Health and Psychosocial Support.* – The mental health of  
20 the learners and their psychosocial needs shall be addressed as part of the  
21 New Normal in education. In the absence of guidance counselors, teachers  
22 should be provided with basic training to identify age-related behavioral and  
23 cognitive changes and provide appropriate measures to immediately deal  
24 with the situation. Schools shall also develop and integrate age-specific  
25 counseling sessions within the required class hours.

26  
27           Sec. 15. *Learner Protection.* – In all cases of public health emergencies  
28 and other emergencies or crises, the DSWD shall ensure the protection of all  
29 learners from violence, neglect, and abuse. It shall likewise extend other  
30 social protection services for the well-being of the learners.



1 For this purpose and that of the immediately preceding section,  
2 helplines and other learner-friendly reporting systems or mechanisms shall  
3 be established to enable learners in distress to reach out for help.

4 The DSWD shall submit to the National SSRTF the measures to be  
5 implemented pursuant to this Section for their inclusion in the SSRP.  
6

7 *Sec. 16. Responsive Services for Learners with Disabilities and Other*  
8 *Marginalized Students.* – Schools shall ensure that learning materials,  
9 platforms, information, facilities, and services are accessible and responsive  
10 to learners with disabilities and other marginalized students. All relevant  
11 information and communication shall be available in multiple accessible  
12 formats, especially for those with auditory or visual impairments.

13 Accessible and quality distance learning for other vulnerable and  
14 marginalized students shall also be made available.

15 The DepEd shall work with other relevant agencies to ensure continuity  
16 of critical services that may take place in schools such as health screenings,  
17 feeding programs, or therapies for learners with special needs.  
18

19 *Sec. 17. Isolation Facility.* – In case of health emergency caused by  
20 infectious disease, every school, in coordination with the DOH, is mandated  
21 to establish and equip at least one isolation room or facility in accordance  
22 with the guidelines and protocols of the DOH. It shall serve as interim  
23 holding area prior to the referral of the learners in need of diagnosis or  
24 medical attention to the nearest barangay, municipal or city health centers,  
25 clinics and hospitals.  
26

27 *Sec. 18. Mapping of Health Centers, Clinics and Hospitals.* – The  
28 Regional SSRTF is hereby mandated to regularly conduct a mapping of  
29 existing barangay, municipal or city health centers, clinics and hospitals  
30 that serve communities where the schools are located to ensure their  
31 readiness in the event of health emergency or calamity. The mapping shall

1 include an assessment of their current operations and manpower  
2 complement.

3

4       Sec. 19. *Provision of Temporary Learning Rooms and Facilities.* – In the  
5 event that the calamity, public health emergency, civil unrest, and other  
6 emergency or crisis situations result in classroom shortages due to  
7 limitations in class size, or to damage or destruction of classrooms and  
8 school buildings that the safety of the learners is compromised, the DepEd  
9 and the LGUs shall ensure that additional learning rooms, temporary  
10 learning spaces, and other required facilities are established by the LGU in  
11 the affected areas, including in resettlement sites, to accommodate the  
12 displaced or affected learners upon the safe resumption of classes. Suitable  
13 learning spaces and facilities owned by private persons may likewise be  
14 utilized for the purpose.

15

16       Sec 20. *Whole-of-Community Approach.* – For the effective  
17 implementation of this Act, a whole-of-community approach shall be  
18 adopted to facilitate collaborative action in and by the school community  
19 and other stakeholders, public or private, to foster the involvement of every  
20 sector, especially the parents, for an integrated transition to the New Normal  
21 in education.

22

23       Sec. 21. *The Role of the Family.* – To promote and ensure the learner's  
24 educational development in unprecedented times of crisis such as the  
25 COVID-19 pandemic, calamities, other public health emergencies, civil  
26 unrest, and other emergency or crisis situations, strong family engagement  
27 shall be encouraged to mitigate the impact of class disruptions and enable a  
28 coordinated transition to recovery.

29       For this purpose, parents, guardians, and other family members, in  
30 active collaboration with the teachers, shall have the following roles and  
31 responsibilities:

- 1 (a) Supervise the learner's educational activities;
- 2 (b) Engage in active collaboration with the school and the teachers for  
3 all school-related activities of the learners;
- 4 (c) Ensure the availability and use of appropriate educational  
5 materials provided by the school;
- 6 (d) Provide an effective and consistent structure or system at home for  
7 the effective education of the learner, while implementing reasonable rules  
8 on the safe and healthy use of TVs, radios, desktops, laptops, tablets,  
9 cellphones, and other ICT equipment as tools for learning;
- 10 (e) Encourage reading in print and book formats to offset the amount  
11 of online learning and ensure that a digital recess is imposed to promote  
12 other physical activities with the learner;
- 13 (f) Provide guidance and inculcate in the learner honesty, integrity,  
14 self-discipline, self-reliance, and industry to promote the learner's effective  
15 response to the New Normal in the education system; and
- 16 (g) Follow-up on the learner's academic progress to determine how the  
17 learner has performed while learning from home.

18 For the effective implementation of the distant modes of learning under  
19 this Act, the school, through the Parent-Teacher Association or other active  
20 parent-teacher groups, shall develop a system of constant open  
21 communication with the parents, guardians or other family members to  
22 actively involve them in the daily activities of the learner which shall also  
23 serve as a venue for the conduct of consultation or clarification, and for the  
24 family members to be acquainted on their assigned roles in the learner's  
25 education.

26

27 *Sec. 22. Mandatory Review and Impact Assessment.* – The DepEd, in  
28 partnership with the other concerned government agencies, shall conduct a  
29 mandatory review of the implementation of this Act, and submit such report  
30 to Congress to measure its effectiveness and ensure its proper

1 implementation. The mandatory review shall be conducted not later than six  
2 (6) months from the exercise of the powers and functions of the National  
3 SSRTF, and every six (6) months thereafter, until such time that the  
4 calamity, public health emergency, civil unrest, and other emergency or  
5 crisis situations has ceased to exist and normalcy has been achieved in the  
6 affected schools.

7

8       Sec. 23. *Utilization of the Special Education Fund.* – The provisions of  
9 Section 272 of RA No. 7160 or the “*Local Government Code of 1991*”  
10 notwithstanding, the Local School Board may utilize a portion of the Special  
11 Education Fund for the implementation of the provisions of this Act, such as  
12 the provision of hand washing facilities, soap, alcohol, sanitizers, and other  
13 disinfecting solutions, as well as medical health supplies deemed  
14 appropriate by public health officials such as thermometers, face masks,  
15 and face shields.

16

17       Sec. 24. *Tax Incentives.* – Any donation, contribution, or grant, in cash  
18 or services, whether local or foreign, made by individuals and organizations,  
19 including private entities which shall provide the following shall be exempt  
20 from the donor's tax and the cost of which shall be considered as an  
21 allowable deduction from the gross income of the donor in accordance with  
22 the provisions of the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997, as amended:

23       (a) materials, including softwares, facilities, and services for the  
24       promotion and development of distance learning;

25       (b) needed medical facilities, equipment and supplies; or

26       (c) school infrastructure, equipment, and supplies, including but not  
27       limited to, construction and/or repair of school buildings or  
28       classrooms, provision of temporary learning spaces, and other  
29       facilities.

30

1       Sec. 25. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the immediate  
2 implementation of this Act shall be charged against those authorized in the  
3 respective current appropriations of the DepEd and the other implementing  
4 agencies.       Thereafter, the amount necessary for the continued  
5 implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General  
6 Appropriations Act.

7  
8       Sec. 26. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within fifteen (15) days  
9 from the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of Education, in consultation  
10 with the implementing agencies provided herein, other concerned  
11 government agencies and education stakeholders, shall promulgate the  
12 rules and regulations implementing the provisions of this Act.

13       The Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) issued pursuant to this  
14 section shall take effect immediately upon its publication in the Official  
15 Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

16  
17       Sec. 27. *Joint Congressional Oversight Committee.* – There is hereby  
18 created a Joint Oversight Committee to oversee, monitor and evaluate the  
19 implementation of this Act. The Oversight Committee shall be composed of  
20 five (5) members each from the Senate and from the House of  
21 Representatives, including the Chairs of the Committees on Education, Arts  
22 and Culture, and Finance of both Houses. The membership of the  
23 Committee for every House shall have at least two (2) opposition or minority  
24 members.

25  
26       Sec. 28. *Survival Clause.* – The containment or eradication of the  
27 COVID-19 disease, notwithstanding, the SSRTF shall continue to exercise  
28 its powers and functions granted herein upon the declaration of a state of  
29 emergency or calamity due to the occurrence and existence of other  
30 pandemics, endemics, outbreaks, and other emergency or crisis situations  
31 resulting to a massive disruption of classes, as the situation may warrant,

1 and adopt such policies and measures as may be necessary under the  
2 current state of affairs. Further, the relevant provisions of this Act shall  
3 continue to be in full force and effect after the COVID-19 disease has been  
4 contained or eradicated.

5

6       Sec. 29. *Separability Clause.* – If any part, section or provision of this  
7 Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the other parts thereof not  
8 affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

9

10       Sec. 30. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, acts, presidential decrees,  
11 executive orders, administrative orders, rules and regulations, or parts  
12 thereof, inconsistent with, or contrary to the provisions of this Act are  
13 hereby modified, amended, or repealed accordingly.

14

15       Sec. 31. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect immediately upon its  
16 publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,