

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 7055



Introduced by HONORABLE WES GATCHALIAN

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

On 08 March 2020, in relation to the pervasive threat of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (Covid-19) to public health and security, a State of Public Health emergency was declared throughout the country.¹ Subsequently, high-risk geographic areas of the country were placed under Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) due to the exponential rise of Covid-19 cases, while the rest were placed under General Community Quarantine (GCQ).² Hence, a total of 28,451,212 learners from the pre-primary to the tertiary level in the country were affected. Globally, more than 1.2 billion students and youth were affected by school and university closures.³

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), any measure to ease quarantine restrictions should be carried out gradually to prevent a resurgence of infections⁴ while a vaccine for Covid-19 is wanting. Most of the current classrooms in the country, given its substandard condition, would serve as a petri dish for new cases, should physical learning (or face-to-face learning) be allowed in the foreseeable future. At present, neither the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF) nor the Department of Health (DOH) have

¹ Proc. No. 922, (2020), declaring a state of public health emergency throughout the Philippines

² Proc. No. 929, (2020), declaring a state of national calamity throughout the Philippines due to the Corona Virus Disease 2019 (ECQ from 16 March 2020-12 April 2020, which was later on extended until 30 April 2020, as announced in the 6 April *Laging Handa* briefing); Exec. Order No. 112, (2020), declaration of ECQ and GCQ from 1 to 15 May 2020.

³ UNESCO, 2020. Education: From Disruption to Recovery, See <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse>. Last accessed on 10 June 2020.

⁴ WHO Virtual Press Conference (21 April 2020).

promulgated definite guidelines to ensure the health and safety of not only the students enrolling for Academic Year 2020-2021, but also the teachers, the non-teaching professionals, and the parents or guardians of such students, should physical learning be resumed.

While the scale and devastating effects of the Covid-19 is unprecedented in the Philippines, public emergencies that disrupt proper education through school closures are not. Given that the country is in the Pacific Ring of Fire, it is always prone to natural calamities (i.e. typhoons, volcanic eruptions, and earthquakes). For instance, the Taal Volcano eruption early this year and displaced locals residing within the fourteen (14) kilometer danger zone, where schools are also erected. Meanwhile, Davao Del Sur was struck with a 6.9 magnitude earthquake last December 2019, which left infrastructure damages and affected thousands of enrolled learners.⁵

It is evident that the need for distance learning has been present for the longest time. However, it has been ignored due to the relatively short length of the previous calamities and emergencies that struck the country. With the pandemic that continuously cripples every aspect of our society, we could no longer neglect this need. These closures not only adversely affect the learners' education – all of these, especially the pandemic, carried high social and economic costs for people across communities; with impact particularly severe for the most vulnerable and marginalized students and their families.⁶

This bill primarily seeks to establish policies for education and learning in the so-called “New Normal.” Furthermore, it mandates the preparation of a Safe Schools Reopening Plan (SSRP) in time for the reopening of all public and private basic education schools. 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 creation of a National Safe Schools Reopening Task Force (SSRTF) is sought. The SSRTF shall craft the SSRP and issue

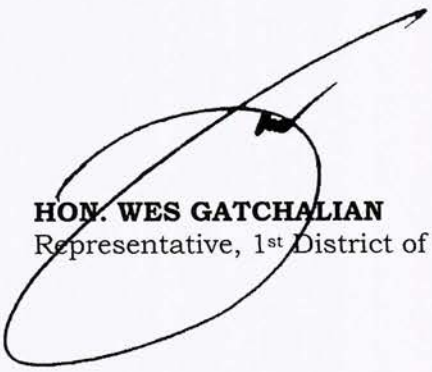
⁵ Merlina Hernando-Malipot, 18 December 2019. Manila Bulletin, DepEd continues to monitor quake-affected learners, schools in Mindanao. See <https://news.mb.com.ph/2019/12/18/depd-continues-to-monitor-quake-affected-learners-schools-in-mindanao>. Last accessed on 10 June 2020.

⁶ *Ibid* at note 3.

relevant, harmonized and streamlined policies for its efficient and effective implementation, *inter alia*.

The bill also prescribes the development of a hybrid learning system which utilizes both onsite and distance learning, instruction, and evaluation. The Department of Education 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.

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



HON. WES GATCHALIAN

Representative, 1st District of Valenzuela

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TASK FORCE, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES

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 the*
2 *New Normal Act*”.

3
4 **SEC. 2.** *Declaration of Principles.* – It is the policy of the State to promote the
5 right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and shall take appropriate steps
6 to make such education accessible to all. Toward this end, the State shall ensure
7 that even in times of public health emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic,
8 calamities, civil unrests and other emergencies or crises, the citizens’ right to
9 education is maintained and complemented with the protection and promotion of
10 their right to health, safety, and well-being and instilling health consciousness
11 among them. The State shall likewise adopt measures to mitigate the impact of
12 disruption in the learners’ education with the end view of ensuring continuity of
13 learning and providing quality education during prolonged school closures while
14 taking primordial consideration of their health, safety, and well-being.

15
16 **SEC. 3.** *Safe Schools Reopening Plan.* – Subject to the confirmation of the
17 appropriate Inter-Agency Task Force, the implementing agencies under this Act are
18 hereby mandated to prepare a Safe Schools Reopening Plan (SSRP) in preparation
19 for the reopening of all public and private basic education schools under the New
20 Normal in education and learning during or after a calamity, public health
21 emergency, civil unrest, and other emergency or crisis situations that resulted to a

1 massive disruption of classes. The SSRP shall contain well-defined timelines, specific
2 benchmarks, policies, and standards to resume classes or reopen schools based on
3 an assessment of the associated risks and benefits and the best interest of the
4 learners and the community. It shall necessarily include, but not limited to, the
5 following:

- 6 (a) Roles and responsibility of each agency;
- 7 (b) Budgetary requirements;
- 8 (c) Priority intervention and the corresponding systems which should be in place
9 and ready upon school reopening;
- 10 (d) For health-related emergency or calamity, to include the following as basic
11 intervention or requirements:
 - 12 i. Protocol on cleaning and disinfection of schools including equipment
13 and supplies in collaboration with health officials and the community;
 - 14 ii. Provision of public health supplies deemed appropriate by public
15 health officials;
 - 16 iii. Preventive public health programs on basic measures to be
17 undertaken;
 - 18 iv. Teacher support with accurate information, and training on conflict
19 management and disease prevention and management;
 - 20 v. Modified attendance policy for teachers and students who are at high
21 risk due to age or underlying medical conditions with the option to
22 deliver instruction remotely while students are in the school building,
23 with students under the supervision of qualified staff. At-risk students
24 shall have a similar option to learn remotely while their teachers and
25 peers are in school; and
 - 26 vi. Monitoring and reporting protocols for affected learners;
- 27 (e) Curriculum adjustment and/or development of flexible modules;
- 28 (f) Integration of Health Education in the daily lessons and activities to be
29 incorporated into the subjects. The content shall be made specific as to age,
30 gender, and ethnicity, as well as disability-responsive;
- 31 (g) System to ensure continuity of learning for learners to include inter-school
32 classes for displaced learners;
- 33 (h) Emergency response plan to safely respond should there be recurrence of an
34 emergency or suspicion of infection;
- 35 (i) Applicable and relevant protocols to be observed when schools reopen to
36 include policy on the conduct of school activities;

- (j) Mental health and psychosocial support services and life skills classes which are critical to keeping students in school, including psychological first aid especially for armed-conflict affected learners.
- (k) Provision of necessary support for learners with disabilities and other marginalized learners;
- (l) Provision of transportation or shuttle services, when necessary;
- (m) Conduct of post-conflict needs assessment;
- (n) Conduct of Mine Risk Education, when warranted, for armed conflict-affected schools;
- (o) Conduct of rapid assessment of damage to infrastructure, equipment, facilities, and materials;
- (p) Construction and repair of school buildings, classrooms, temporary learning rooms or spaces, and other facilities;
- (q) Information campaign guidelines on the provision of relevant information within the school community and the locality. Schools shall also utilize digital platforms to increase the reach of their information dissemination efforts; and
- (r) Other needed support and interventions.

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

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

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

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

For non-health related emergency, the Vice-Chair shall be appointed by the Chair from among the other members of the National SSRTF upon consultation with

1 such members and with due consideration of the nature of the current emergency or
2 crisis situation confronting the country or parts thereof.

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

5
6 **SEC. 5. Powers and Functions of the National SSRTF.** – The National SSRTF
7 shall have the following powers and functions:

- 8 (a) Craft the SSRP in accordance with the provisions of this Act, and to update,
9 revise or amend the same as the current circumstances may warrant;
10 (b) Identify emerging issues and concerns and provide the necessary measures
11 to address the same;
12 (c) Issue relevant, harmonized and streamlined policies for the efficient and
13 effective implementation of the SSRP;
14 (d) Provide the overall strategic management and guidelines for the
15 implementation of the SSRP;
16 (e) Develop collaborative mechanisms for greater coordination, cooperation, and
17 convergence between and among the implementing agencies;
18 (f) Tap the assistance, expertise and resources of other relevant government
19 agencies, as well as local government units (LGUs), the academe, parent-
20 teacher associations, non-government organizations, and other education
21 stakeholders in the crafting of the SRRP and its implementation; and
22 (g) Such other functions necessary for purposes of this Act.

23
24 **SEC. 6. The Regional Safe Schools Reopening Task Force.** – There is hereby
25 created a Regional SSRTF for the efficient and effective implementation of the SSRP
26 in the regions across the country. It shall be composed of the respective regional
27 heads of the members enumerated under Section 4 of this Act, with the DepEd as
28 Chair and the DOH as Vice-Chair.

29 The Regional SSRTF shall perform the following functions:

- 30 (a) Implement the SSRP in the regions across the country;
31 (b) Coordinate, collaborate, forge close partnerships, and establish linkages with
32 the LGUs, Local School Boards, Local Health Boards, other relevant agencies
33 and offices, and the private sector for the implementation of this Act;
34 (c) Create ad hoc committees or task forces at the provincial, city or municipal
35 levels for the effective and efficient implementation of the SSRP;

- 1 (d) Regularly review, monitor, and evaluate the implementation of the SSRP in
2 the regions;
- 3 (e) Prepare quarterly reports on the implementation of the SSRP in the regions
4 to be submitted to the National SSRTF; and
- 5 (f) Such other functions as may be required by the National SSRTF.

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

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

15

16 **SEC. 7. Continuity of Learning; The Hybrid Learning System.** – To ensure
17 continuity of learning, schools located in areas classified as high-risk shall modify
18 the conduct of onsite classes, adopt restructured class hours, and continuously
19 develop a hybrid learning system to deliver education in the New Normal. The hybrid
20 learning system utilizes both onsite and distance learning, instruction, and
21 evaluation. For this purpose, any or a combination of the following tools may be
22 adopted based on the results of the distance learning tools mapping under Sec. 9 of
23 this Act:

- 24 (a) Limited face-to-face onsite learning, subject to protocols;
- 25 (b) Blended learning;
- 26 (c) Homeschooling;
- 27 (d) Internet;
- 28 (e) Television (TV), including Cable Antenna Television (CATV);
- 29 (f) Radio;
- 30 (g) Printed modules, kits and other materials; and
- 31 (h) Other alternative delivery modes as recommended by the DepEd.

32 To further prepare the entire school community for hybrid learning and sustain
33 its utilization in times of calamities, emergencies or crisis situations, the DepEd shall
34 embark on materials development, teacher training, and evaluation processes under
35 the hybrid system, among others. The Alternative Learning System under RA No.
36 10533 or the “*Enhanced Basic Education Act*” shall continue to be implemented in

1 complementarity with the provisions of this Act.

2
3 **SEC. 8. *Distance Learning under the Hybrid Learning System.*** – To enable
4 homes and other remote locations to provide quality distance learning under the New
5 Normal, the DepEd shall employ all effective forms of distance learning tools, whether
6 digital or traditional, to ensure that no learners, especially the most vulnerable, are
7 left behind.

8 To enhance learning from home through the use of TV or CATV, the DepEd
9 shall forge partnerships with TV networks and CATV operators to utilize free airtime
10 for its virtual classes as warranted under their respective legislative franchises and
11 RA No. 8370 or the “*Children’s Television Act of 1997*”. It shall also tap radio stations
12 to allocate time for the free broadcast of educational programs.

13 The DICT shall implement measures to ensure the availability and accessibility
14 of reliable and secure Internet access suitable to the needs of learners and teachers
15 under the hybrid learning system. It shall accelerate the provision of free public wi-
16 fi as mandated under RA No. 10929 or the “*Free Internet Access in Public Places Act*”
17 to strengthen teaching and learning, especially where school closures remain in
18 effect.

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

22
23 **SEC. 9. *Distance Learning Tools Mapping.*** – The DepEd shall establish a
24 mapping system to regularly determine among its learners and teachers their access
25 to distance learning tools such as information and communications technology (ICT)
26 devices, connectivity, capability, and geographical location, among others. The
27 mapping system shall also consider the specific needs of learners with disabilities
28 and other marginalized learners. The mapping results shall determine the mode of
29 distance learning to be adopted, alignment of learning materials, and curriculum
30 adjustments.

31
32 **SEC. 10. *Digital Transformation under Education in the New Normal and Other***
33 ***Emergencies.*** – For the DepEd to develop and enhance its capability to continuously
34 deliver quality education in the New Normal, it shall enhance its ICT capacity and
35 digitally streamline and integrate its workflows and processes.

36 For this purpose, the DepEd shall:

- (a) immediately take measures to set-up electronic and online systems that will make the means of exchanging data and information between and among its offices, learners and parents secure, efficient and seamless;
- (b) streamline procedures by adopting automation and digitization of its services to promote zero-contact policy and to facilitate their efficient delivery;
- (c) build-up its technology capabilities, including the establishment of data centers, data repositories, basic messaging and electronic mail facilities, encryption systems, and cyber-security facilities;
- (d) invest heavily into developing organizational capability and staff competencies that are well-suited to support a department-wide digital transformation;
- (e) promote and support the onboarding and training of its personnel in using electronic services;
- (f) obtain and monitor networking tools to create channels of communication with the general public and secure real-time feedback on its delivery of basic education services; and
- (g) design service processes and procedures that will promote efficiency and sense of expediency, including but not limited to matters pertaining to enrolment, payments, documents submission, grades submission or parent-teacher meetings.

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

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

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

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

9
10 **SEC. 13. *Health Education Integration.*** – Health education, including disease
11 prevention and control, shall be integrated in the daily lessons and activities to be
12 built into the subjects covered under the hybrid learning system. The content shall
13 be made specific as to age, gender, and ethnicity, as well as disability-responsive.
14 Parent-teacher groups and other collaborative mechanisms to promote health
15 information sharing shall likewise be utilized.

16
17 **SEC. 14. *Mental Health and Psychosocial Support.*** – The mental health of the
18 learners and their psychosocial needs shall be addressed as part of the New Normal
19 in education. In the absence of guidance counselors, teachers should be provided
20 with basic training to identify age-related behavioral and cognitive changes and
21 provide appropriate measures to immediately deal with the situation. Schools shall
22 also develop and integrate age-specific counseling sessions within the required class
23 hours.

24
25 **SEC. 15. *Learner Protection.*** – In all cases of public health emergencies and
26 other emergencies or crises, the DSWD shall ensure the protection of all learners
27 from violence, neglect, and abuse. It shall likewise extend other social protection
28 services for the well-being of the learners.

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

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

34
35 **SEC. 16. *Responsive Services for Learners with Disabilities and Other***
36 *Marginalized Students.* – Schools shall ensure that learning materials, platforms,

1 information, facilities, and services are accessible and responsive to learners with
2 disabilities and other marginalized students. All relevant information and
3 communication shall be available in multiple accessible formats, especially for those
4 with auditory or visual impairments.

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

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

10
11 **SEC. 17. *Isolation Facility.*** – In case of health emergency caused by infectious
12 disease, every school, in coordination with the DOH, is mandated to establish and
13 equip at least one isolation room or facility in accordance with the guidelines and
14 protocols of the DOH. It shall serve as interim holding area prior to the referral of the
15 learners in need of diagnosis or medical attention to the nearest barangay, municipal
16 or city health centers, clinics and hospitals.

17
18 **SEC. 18. *Mapping of Health Centers, Clinics and Hospitals.*** – The Regional
19 SSRTF is hereby mandated to regularly conduct a mapping of existing barangay,
20 municipal or city health centers, clinics and hospitals that serve communities where
21 the schools are located to ensure their readiness in the event of health emergency or
22 calamity. The mapping shall include an assessment of their current operations and
23 manpower complement.

24
25 **SEC. 19. *Provision of Temporary Learning Rooms and Facilities.*** – In the event
26 that the calamity, public health emergency, civil unrest, and other emergency or
27 crisis situations result in classroom shortages due to limitations in class size, or to
28 damage or destruction of classrooms and school buildings that the safety of the
29 learners is compromised, the DepEd and the LGUs shall ensure that additional
30 learning rooms, temporary learning spaces, and other required facilities are
31 established by the LGU in the affected areas, including in resettlement sites, to
32 accommodate the displaced or affected learners upon the safe resumption of classes.
33 Suitable learning spaces and facilities owned by private persons may likewise be
34 utilized for the purpose.

35
36 **SEC 20. *Whole-of-Community Approach.*** – For the effective implementation of

1 this Act, a whole-of-community approach shall be adopted to facilitate collaborative
2 action in and by the school community and other stakeholders, public or private, to
3 foster the involvement of every sector, especially the parents, for an integrated
4 transition to the New Normal in education.

5
6 **SEC. 21. *The Role of the Family.*** – To promote and ensure the learner’s
7 educational development in unprecedented times of crisis such as the COVID-19
8 pandemic, calamities, other public health emergencies, civil unrest, and other
9 emergency or crisis situations, strong family engagement shall be encouraged to
10 mitigate the impact of class disruptions and enable a coordinated transition to
11 recovery.

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

- 14 (a) Supervise the learner’s educational activities;
- 15 (b) Engage in active collaboration with the school and the teachers for all
16 school-related activities of the learners;
- 17 (c) Ensure the availability and use of appropriate educational materials
18 provided by the school;
- 19 (d) Provide an effective and consistent structure or system at home for the
20 effective education of the learner, while implementing reasonable rules on the safe
21 and healthy use of TVs, radios, desktops, laptops, tablets, cellphones, and other ICT
22 equipment as tools for learning;
- 23 (e) Encourage reading in print and book formats to offset the amount of
24 online learning and ensure that a digital recess is imposed to promote other physical
25 activities with the learner;
- 26 (f) Provide guidance and inculcate in the learner honesty, integrity, self-
27 discipline, self-reliance, and industry to promote the learner’s effective response to
28 the New Normal in the education system; and
- 29 (g) Follow-up on the learner’s academic progress to determine how the learner
30 has performed while learning from home.

31 For the effective implementation of the distant modes of learning under this Act,
32 the school, through the Parent-Teacher Association or other active parent-teacher
33 groups, shall develop a system of constant open communication with the parents,
34 guardians or other family members to actively involve them in the daily activities of
35 the learner which shall also serve as a venue for the conduct of consultation or

clarification, and for the family members to be acquainted on their assigned roles in the learner's education.

SEC. 22. *Mandatory Review and Impact Assessment.* – The DepEd, in partnership with the other concerned government agencies, shall conduct a mandatory review of the implementation of this Act, and submit such report to Congress to measure its effectiveness and ensure its proper implementation. The mandatory review shall be conducted not later than six (6) months from the exercise of the powers and functions of the National SSRTF, and every six (6) months thereafter, until such time that the calamity, public health emergency, civil unrest, and other emergency or crisis situations has ceased to exist and normalcy has been achieved in the affected schools.

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

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

- (a) materials, including softwares, facilities, and services for the promotion and development of distance learning;
- (b) needed medical facilities, equipment and supplies; or
- (c) school infrastructure, equipment, and supplies, including but not limited to, construction and/or repair of school buildings or classrooms, provision of temporary learning spaces, and other facilities.

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 agencies.
4 Thereafter, the amount necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall
5 be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

6
7 **SEC. 26. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** – Within fifteen (15) days from
8 the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of Education, in consultation with the
9 implementing agencies provided herein, other concerned government agencies and
10 education stakeholders, shall promulgate the rules and regulations implementing
11 the provisions of this Act.

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

15
16 **SEC. 27. Joint Congressional Oversight Committee.** – There is hereby created a
17 Joint Oversight Committee to oversee, monitor and evaluate the implementation of
18 this Act. The Oversight Committee shall be composed of five (5) members each from
19 the Senate and from the House of Representatives, including the Chairs of the
20 Committees on Education, Arts and Culture, and Finance of both Houses. The
21 membership of the Committee for every House shall have at least two (2) opposition
22 or minority members.

23
24 **SEC. 28. Survival Clause.** – The containment or eradication of the COVID-19
25 disease, notwithstanding, the SSRTF shall continue to exercise its powers and
26 functions granted herein upon the declaration of a state of emergency or calamity
27 due to the occurrence and existence of other pandemics, endemics, outbreaks, and
28 other emergency or crisis situations resulting to a massive disruption of classes, as
29 the situation may warrant, and adopt such policies and measures as may be
30 necessary under the current state of affairs. Further, the relevant provisions of this
31 Act shall continue to be in full force and effect after the COVID-19 disease has been
32 contained or eradicated.

33
34 **SEC. 29. Separability Clause.** – If any part, section or provision of this Act is
35 declared invalid or unconstitutional, the other parts thereof not affected thereby shall
36 remain in full force and effect.

1

2 **SEC. 30. *Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, acts, presidential decrees, executive
3 orders, administrative orders, rules and regulations, or parts thereof, inconsistent
4 with, or contrary to the provisions of this Act are hereby modified, amended, or
5 repealed accordingly.

6

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

9

10 *Approved,*