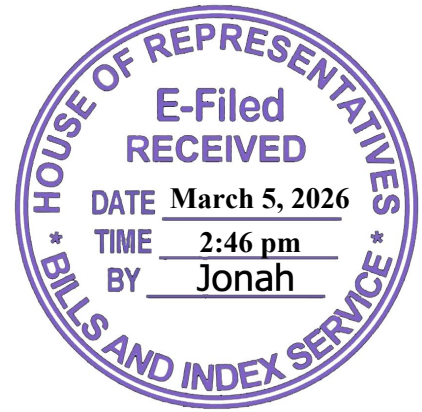


TWENTIETH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HOUSE BILL NO. 8310

Introduced by Rep. CARMELO G. LAZATIN, JR.

AN ACT

**STRENGTHENING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11650 BY
ESTABLISHING SPECIALIZED INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SERVICE UNITS WITHIN
OR OPERATIONALLY LINKED TO INCLUSIVE LEARNING RESOURCE CENTERS
IN CITIES AND MUNICIPALITIES FOR LEARNERS WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD OF
HEARING, BLIND OR WITH LOW VISION, AND/OR SPEECH-LANGUAGE
IMPAIRMENT, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The 1987 Philippine Constitution declares that the State shall protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all. It likewise mandates 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.

Consistent with this mandate, the State must pursue measures to improve educational programs that are inclusive, suited, and responsive to the needs of learners, particularly learners with disabilities.

In 2022, Republic Act No. 11650 otherwise known as “Instituting a Policy of Inclusion and Services for Learners with Disabilities in Support of Inclusive Education Act” was enacted to institutionalize inclusive education for learners with disabilities and mandates the establishment and maintenance of Inclusive Learning Resource Centers (ILRCs) nationwide, including in all cities and municipalities, subject to a multi-year roadmap and available resources.

Significantly, R.A No. 11650 provides that all existing Special Education (SPED) Centers shall be converted to and renamed as ILRCs. It likewise authorizes Local Government Units

(LGU) to establish satellite ILRCs in schools, with operations and maintenance integrated in the School Improvement Plan.

Notwithstanding these mandates, implementation gaps remain in ensuring that services are readily available to learners who are deaf or hard of hearing, blind or with low vision, and/or with speech-language impairment, particularly at the local level where specialized personnel, assistive technology, and accessible facilities may be limited.

A 2022 study by the United Nations Children's Fund cited that an estimated 1.6 million Filipino children have disabilities. This was further supported by the Department of Education data for School Year 2016-2017 showing 232, 975 learners with disabilities or learning exceptionalities being mainstreamed into regular classes.¹

Of these cases, a total of 19,535 were diagnosed with visual impairment (Kindergarten to Grade 12), 13,365 with hearing impairment, and 6,568 with speech or language disorder who attended regular classes during the same school year.

On top of these, 41,317 learners with difficulty seeing, 8,075 with difficulty hearing and 12,621 with difficulty in communicating (based on manifested difficulty) were also integrated to regular classes.

To address the gaps in the educational system, the Government shall endeavor to establish Specialized Inclusive Education Service Units within or operationally linked to ILRCs, focusing on learners who are deaf or hard of hearing, blind or with low vision, and/or with speech-language impairments. These Service Units shall supplement and strengthen the ILRCs system already available in schools.

Providing quality education to Filipino learners is already very challenging as it seems, but making quality education inclusive even for those with disabilities would definitely test our commitment to this goal. With this proposed legislation, it is our hope that we could hurdle another step towards promoting an inclusive system of education in the country.

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


CARMELO G. LAZATIN, JR.

¹ Special Education (SPED) Profile. Available at <https://cpbrd.congress.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/FF2023-17-Special-Education-Profile-in-the-Phil-1.pdf>



Republic of the Philippines

House of Representatives

Quezon City, Metro Manila

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IMPAIRMENT, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

*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 “Specialized Inclusive Education
2 Service Units Act”

3 Section 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared a policy of the State to protect and
4 promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and shall take appropriate steps
5 to make such education accessible to all.

6 Consistent with Republic Act No. 11650, the State shall strengthen the delivery of inclusive
7 education services for learners with disabilities by establishing Specialized Inclusive Service Units
8 within or operationally linked to the Inclusive Learning Resource Centers (ILRCs).

1 The State shall further ensure that teachers and personnel handling learners with disabilities
2 shall be equipped with appropriate training, assistive and instructional materials, and a safe and
3 accessible learning environment.

4 The establishment and operation of Service Units under this Act shall be implemented as
5 part of, and in coordination with, the ILRC system and shall not be construed to diminish, restrict,
6 or limit the rights and entitlements of all learners with disabilities under R.A No. 11650.

7 Section 3. *Definition of terms.* – For purposes of this Act, the following terms are defined:

8
9 (a) Learners with Disabilities – shall have the same meaning as defined under
10 R.A No. 11650.

11
12 *“Learners with Disabilities refers to learners in general early and basic education*
13 *system who require additional support and related services and adoptive pedagogic*
14 *method due to their long or short-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory*
15 *impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and*
16 *effective participation in society on an equal basis with others to develop them to their*
17 *maximum capability;*

18
19 (b) Specialized Inclusive Education Service Units (Service Units) – refer to specialized
20 units established within, co-located with, or operationally linked to ILRCs to provide
21 targeted support and related services for covered learners under this Act.

22
23 (c) Covered learners – shall refer to learners who are deaf or hard of hearing, blind or with
24 low vision, and/or with speech-language impairment, who are eligible to receive the
25 targeted services under this Act. This definition is solely for determining coverage
26 under this Act and is without prejudice to the rights, entitlements and protection of all
27 learners with disabilities under R.A No. 11650 and other applicable laws.

28
29 Section 4. *Establishment of Special Inclusive Education Service Units-* The Department
30 of Education (DepEd), in collaboration with LGUs shall establish Service Units in cities and
31 municipalities as part of, co-located with, or operationally linked to ILRCs established under R.A
32 No. 11650.

33
34 The Specialized Service Units shall assist the DepEd and the ILRCs in:

35
36 (a) Providing special and quality education support services including rehabilitation,
37 habilitation, assistive technology support and transition planning, for covered learners.
38 Provided, That such services shall be coordinated with the ILRC.

1 (b) Assisting covered learners enrolled in regular schools, or those who have left school
2 programs, in their transition to independent living, vocational training and competitive
3 employment, in coordination with Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and
4 Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), as appropriate; and
5

6 (c) Providing hubs and/or satellite facilities that are architecturally and programmatically
7 designed according to the needs of the covered learners, equipped with specialized
8 communication aids and technology, rehabilitation and training facilities, managed by
9 trained teachers and allied professionals, including appropriate support services for
10 their families, and aligned with accessibility standards and universal design concepts
11 under existing laws and applicable standards.
12

13 Section 5. *Partnership with Public and Private Agencies, Organizations and Institutions.*

14 – The DepEd shall be the lead agency in the implementation of the provisions of this Act.
15

16 The Secretary of Education is authorized to enter into partnership with legitimate public
17 and private entities for the establishment, operation, or support of Service Units within the ILRC
18 system in cities and municipalities.
19

20 The DepEd shall coordinate with relevant government agencies, including the Department
21 of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA),
22 Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Department of Health (DOH), TESDA and other
23 stakeholders to ensure that Service Units provide comprehensive support services and meet the
24 standards for safe and conducive learning facilities.
25

26 Section 6. *Staffing and Capacity- Building.* – Service Units shall be managed and staffed
27 by trained Special Education teachers and qualified personnel, which may include teaching aides,
28 paraprofessionals or learning support aides, education interpreters as may be available, speech-
29 language professionals, and other allied professionals, subject to DepEd qualification standards,
30 civil service laws and rules.
31

32 Personnel assigned to Service Units shall undergo relevant trainings prescribed by the
33 DepEd *and the ILRC system, regularly and at least annually*, to ensure competence in handling
34 and teaching covered learners.
35

36 Section 7. *Implementing Rules and Regulations-* The DepEd shall in coordination with
37 DSWD, NCDA, DOH, DOLE, TESDA and other stakeholders, promulgate the necessary rules
38 and regulations within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act.
39

1 Section 8. *Funding.* – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall
2 be charged against the funds of DepEd and such other implementing partner agencies. Thereafter,
3 such sums as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in
4 the annual General Appropriations Act under the DepEd and to such other appropriate
5 implementing agencies.

6
7 Section 9. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional
8 or invalid, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

9
10 Section 10. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations, or parts
11 thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified
12 accordingly.

13
14 Section 11. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
15 publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

16
17 Approved,