

October 1, 2019



Honorable ROMAN T. ROMULO
Chairperson
Committee on Basic Education and Culture
House of Representatives
Quezon City

Dear Representative Romulo:

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) **strongly supports House Bills Nos. 54, 285, 1312, 1400 and 3311** which seek to institute inclusive education, **House Bill Nos. 758, 1915 and 2136** which seek to establish Special Education Centers in schools and **House Bill No. 614** which seeks to create a Bureau of Special Education in the Department of Education (DepEd). These bills will be beneficial for children and youth with special needs (CYSNs) to make quality education easily accessible to them.

To contribute to the bill's enhancement, we are recommending the following:

1. Consolidate all bills into one.
2. For **HBNs 614 and 758**: Replace the words *retarded/retardation* with *condition, disability or disabled* as these words carries negative impression for CYSNs.
3. For **HBN 54 and HBN 3311**: To clarify the differences between Individualized Education Plan and Individual Education Program and they be defined under the definition of terms.
4. Under the Section on **Objectives (HBNs 54, 285, 614, 758, 1312, 1400, 2136 and 3311)** – Include in the identification of CYSNs, through a Child Find System, those who are twenty-four (24) to thirty-five (35) years old with mental ages of seventeen (17) years old and below.
5. Under **Sec. 6 – Functions of the Center, letter (i) (HBN 54)**: To add another developmental assessment among the aids and services to be given to CYSNs.
6. Under **Sec. 7 (HBN 758) and Sec. 9 (HBN 614)**: Include registered social worker, medical aide and developmental paediatrician as personnel in the Centers.
7. Under **Sec. 9 (HBN 758) and Sec. 12 (HBN 614) – Authority of the Secretary of Education to Give Grants to or Enter into Cooperative Arrangements for the Creation of SPED Centers**: We recommend that the Secretary of DepEd be given authority to give grants or enter cooperative arrangements with

local government units (LGUs) since LGUs have direct mandate and capability to ensure building of Centers in their jurisdiction.

8. Under **Sec. 15 – Admission of Applicants (HBN 1915)**: Consider reviewing the inclusion of free books as extension of privileges for indigent special children. Currently, books in the public schools are free of cost for students.
9. General Comments:
 - A. The proposed consolidated bill should seek to mainstream the rights of CYSNs to better answer problems of inclusivity, discrimination and lack of opportunity of CYSNs.
 - B. We recommend the use of Inclusive Education for Children and Youth with Special Needs Act as the title of the consolidated bill. An inclusive education is more appropriate it will provide a feeling of acceptance to every child who has unique and special needs.
 - C. The definition and scope of CYSNs should incorporate special conditions such as physical, mental, developmental, behavioural/emotional and even sensory disability among others as all of these conditions deserve care and intervention.
 - D. Personnel assigned in the Centers should be knowledgeable and have adequate training in handling CYSNs. National government agencies (NGAs) led by DepEd and local government units (LGUs) should provide trainings, seminars and other trainings to equip SPED Center personnel with the necessary skills.
 - E. DepEd may study the inclusion of the basics of Filipino Sign Language in the grade school curriculum to allow students outside of SPED to understand and be sensitive to the condition of their hearing-impaired peers.
 - F. We recommend to include the “Non-Handicapping Environment for Persons with Disabilities” currently implemented by the National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA). The project aims to put together available resources in the community and improving people's attitudes to ensure inclusion of persons with disability in all levels of community activities especially for CYSNs education through this project. CYSNs shall be the focus of development but not to be understood that it is them that should meet the requirements of society but rather be changing societies to ensure the promotion, protection and fulfilling of their rights.
 - G. Lastly, we recommend that to ensure attaining 'inclusive education', there should be a provision in the consolidated bill on the regular program/activity of CYSNs together with 'regular' children. This will help CYSNs be exposed and develop their abilities to its full potential towards self-sufficiency and become effective partners in building our country. Furthermore, this will teach regular children to accept, embrace, treat, and help CYSNs as regular children who deserve love and acceptance by the people around them.

For the Committee's consideration.

Very truly yours,



ROLANDO JOSELITO D. BAUTISTA
Secretary

Date: _____