

PRESS RELEASE

DepEd urges Congress to pass Special Education Act

The Department of Education is urging the House of Representatives to finally ratify the Special Education Act of 2010 after the Senate passed its version early this week.

“The passage of this bill will be the 14th Congress’ parting gift and lasting legacy to the Filipino people since this will finally give due attention to the education of 5.49 million children with special needs (CSN) and people with disability (PWD) in our country,” said Education Secretary Mona D. Valisno.

She said that only 2 percent of Filipino children with special needs are able to get support from the government unlike in other countries where they get 100 % state support.

“We thank the Senate for including this bill in it’s priority legislative agenda and it is our utmost hope that the House of Representatives will concur with the Senate before they adjourn this friday,” added Valisno.

Senators Miriam Defensor Santiago and Miguel Zibiri authored and sponsored the Senate measure, SB 2020, while Reps. Pingoy and and Monica Louise Prieto authored and sponsored the House version, HB 6740. Both houses have already passed their respective versions but the House has to concur with the Senate version for the bill to become law.

She said that the passage of the law will pave the way for the creation of a new Bureau of Special Education along with existing bureaus of elementary, secondary, and alternative learning. The law will also mandate the creation of at least one (1) SPED center in each city and province of the country.

Asec. Jonathan Malaya, Assistant Secretary for Legislative Liaison, said that the new Bureau will be tasked to formulate an appropriate curriculum and developmentally-suited programs to achieve functional literacy for all children with special needs.

He said that under the bill, the DepEd will prepare a scheme for financial and medical assistance, including nutritional programs, to poor but deserving children with special needs. It will also draw up incentives to encourage private sector participation in the education and rehabilitation of children with special needs.

He said that the bill will be a quantum leap for the special education sector because a large majority of this sector have not yet been provided with appropriate educational services.

Based on latest DepEd estimates, there are 5.49 million CSNs in the Philippines or 13 percent of the total children population. Of this number, an estimated 4.2 million were PWDs (persons with disabilities) while 1.27 million were gifted children.

Children with special needs (CSN) are those who are autistic, gifted or talented, mentally retarded, visually impaired, hearing impaired, orthopedically or physically handicapped, learning disabled, speech defective, children with behavior problems, and those children that encounter health problems under the formal educational system.

A child is considered to have a need to train in a SPED center if he differs from the average child based on mental characteristics, sensory abilities, neuromuscular or physical characteristics, social abilities, multiple handicaps, or has a developmental lag.

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