

LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: HEARING SCREAM OF VOICES FROM WITHIN

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The Philippines is making advances towards inclusive education, but there is more work to be done. Anchoring on the policy, based on the March 11, 2022, REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11650,] entitled “An Act Instituting A Policy Of Inclusion And Services For Learners With Disabilities In Support Of Inclusive Education, Establishing Inclusive Learning Resource Centers Of Learners With Disabilities In All School Districts, Municipalities And Cities, Providing For Standards, Appropriating Funds Therefor, And For Other Purposes.”

The country’s former President Rodrigo Roa Duterte, signed into law Republic Act No. 11650, dated March 11, 2022, refers to Instituting a Policy of Inclusion and Services for Learners with Disabilities in Support of the Inclusive Education Act. This aims to identify the rights of people with disabilities, plan strategies for expanding access to education and other services and find areas where supplementary support is necessary. Through the said policy, it communicates the processes of guaranteeing that learners with disabilities are identified, located, and evaluated to facilitate their inclusion in the general basic education school system. With the aim of delivering ways for schools to observe implementation of the Child Find Process; and fostering collaborative advocacy for children with disability and developmental delays among sponsors in the communities. Thus, echoing a bigger challenge to perform by educators in the DepEd needing assistance to make this dream possible. Moreover, children / learners who are diagnosed with disabilities or observed to have developmental delays requiring special education and related services should be enrolled in educational programs and services under the K to 12 Basic Education Program. With the objectives that the policy covers raising

awareness, locating, screening, and subsequent endorsement of learners diagnosed with disabilities or those with developmental delays for enrollment in public schools.

This means a bigger and in-depth challenge is being given to DepEd, its school heads and teachers to face such fast and bigger responsibility and accountability without a series of preparatory measures for those who will implement the policy on the grass roots. Hence, all schools must be appropriately equipped to accommodate students with disabilities. This involves having an access ramp for students who use wheelchairs, Braille textbooks for students who are blind or have low vision, and sign language translators for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. In addition, all schools should have teachers who are perfectly trained to teach students with disabilities. The preparation should cover everything from modifications and adjustments to behavior management.

For schools to be further inclusive is by educating teachers to work with students with disabilities. Teachers ought to identify the different types of disabilities, appreciate what they can do, and realize how best to help them learn. Inclusive education also entails certainty that there are sufficient means for students with disabilities, such as special equipment or materials they need to learn. The truth is that the national government needs to provide DepEd with financial service as funding for inclusive education programs and ensure that all schools conform with the law. Thus, inclusive education is one of the most ambitious, but bold and bravest actions, though involving critical steps to create a more just and equitable society. Through the provision for all students with an even chance to learn, grow, and be themselves, the government is putting them up for imminent triumph. Filipinos must keep on working collectively to break down obstacles between small voices of people with disabilities wishing to be understood, act normally, without any discrimination, participate actively with different groups of people and ensure that everyone feels welcomed and will be valued in our educational institutions and society.

Since the country is moving towards inclusive education, a long way ahead to take note and be mindful that it is now timely important that every member of the community should have, access to quality, equity to have better opportunity for bright future to all students. With the right tools and resources, educators can help all students reach their full potential and will be able to implement well the long wanted "Inclusive Education" and be able to reach out to these young kids said to be Learners' with Disabilities (LWDs) as they scream with their voices from within, wanting to be heard and be productive members and part of the family and society they belong.

References:

https://lawphil.net/statutes/repacts/ra2022/ra_11650_2022.html -

[REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11650, March 11, 2022]; Wednesday, November 09, 2022