

## INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL IN THE PHILIPPINES

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Inclusive education in senior high schools in the Philippines aims to integrate learners with diverse needs into mainstream classrooms, ensuring equitable access to quality education for all. Policies such as the K-12 Basic Education Program and Republic Act No. 11650, known as the Inclusive Education Act, emphasize the inclusion of learners with disabilities (LWDs) and other marginalized groups. These measures align with the country's commitment to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which advocates for inclusive, accessible, and quality education for all learners (Llego 2022).

Despite progressive policies, the implementation of inclusive education faces significant challenges. Schools often lack sufficient resources, such as assistive technologies, accessible infrastructure, and trained special education teachers. The absence of a dedicated budget for specialized programs, such as the Special Education (SPED) program, further limits the availability of individualized education plans (IEPs) for learners with special needs. These gaps underscore the urgent need for increased funding and institutional support (Lerasan 2024).

Teachers play a critical role in inclusive education, but many feel unprepared to address the diverse needs of students. While most educators express moderate awareness of special education concepts, exposure to learners with special needs often remains theoretical rather than practical. Training programs focusing on SPED modalities, adaptive teaching strategies, and emotional support for both teachers and learners are essential to bridge this gap (Quinones 2022).

Community and parental involvement are equally vital in fostering an inclusive education system. Awareness campaigns can help combat stigma and encourage families to enroll children with disabilities in mainstream schools. Collaboration between educators, families, and local governments can address logistical barriers, such as accessibility and affordability of educational resources.

The path toward truly inclusive education in Philippine senior high schools requires collective effort from all stakeholders. With continued advocacy, policy refinement, and resource allocation, the vision of equitable learning opportunities for all Filipino students, regardless of their abilities, can become a reality. This commitment not only benefits learners with special needs but also enriches the learning environment for all students by promoting diversity and mutual understanding.

Article by:

depedbataan.com  
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