



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

H. No. 6574

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**AN ACT**

**STRENGTHENING THE PROMOTION AND DELIVERY OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN BASIC EDUCATION THROUGH THE HIRING AND DEPLOYMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS, 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 "Basic Education Mental  
2 Health and Well-Being Promotion Act".  
3  
4 **SEC. 2. Purposes.** – The purposes of this Act are as follows:

- 1 a) Enable the Department of Education (DepEd) to recruit, train, and hire  
2 additional mental health professionals, sustain their well-being, competencies,  
3 professional growth, and career development in the DepEd;  
4
- 5 b) Adequately address the mental, emotional, and developmental needs of  
6 learners as well as the teaching and non-teaching personnel through the mental  
7 health professionals;  
8
- 9 c) Promote the emotional, psychological, and mental health well-being of learners  
10 and teachers so as to enhance their classroom and learning preparedness,  
11 including those learners identified as children in conflict with law, students at  
12 risk of dropping out, learner-victims of Violence Against Women and Children,  
13 and learners-victims of other related forms of child abuse and criminal acts;  
14
- 15 d) Support teachers and other education personnel in improving classroom  
16 management through the conduct of behavioral and other guidance related  
17 interventions to improve the learners' well-being, emotional and psycho-social  
18 development, daily disposition and career decision making. Likewise, train the  
19 teachers and other education personnel in developing awareness and skills to  
20 enable them to identify early warning signs of mental health problems and the  
21 need for mental health interventions;  
22
- 23 e) Establish linkages with the community through the promotion of mental health  
24 programs and activities geared for the development of learners;  
25
- 26 f) Support parents, guardians, and concerned stakeholders in improving the  
27 school behavior and ensuring the academic success of their children;  
28
- 29 g) Remove the emotional, behavioral, and psycho-social barriers to learning so as  
30 to enhance the classroom atmosphere in order to achieve a child-friendly,  
31 inclusive, safe, and positive learning environment; and  
32
- 33 h) Provide after care support in the treatment of mental health concerns of clients.  
34

35 **SEC. 3. Definition of Terms.** – As used in this Act:

- 36
- 37 a) *Counseling* – refers to a dynamic face to face or online interaction between the  
38 counselor and the counselee, where the counselor employs various methods,  
39 approaches or techniques to enhance the counselee's intrapersonal and  
40 interpersonal development and competencies;  
41
- 42 b) *Guidance associate* – refers to a plantilla-position in the DepEd which shall be  
43 filled-in by a graduate of a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology, or any related  
44 courses and who must have earned a minimum of twelve (12) units of  
45 Behavioral Science subjects and two hundred (200) hours of supervised  
46 practicum or internship experience on guidance and counselling, preferably in  
47 a school or community setting;

- 1 c) *Guidance counselor* – refers to an individual who possesses a license or  
2 certification granted by the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) and  
3 holds a minimum master’s degree in Guidance and Counseling, Guidance, or  
4 Counseling without prejudice to those registered under the grandfather clause  
5 of R.A. 9258, otherwise known as the “Guidance and Counseling Act of 2004,”  
6 and is competent to perform guidance and counselling, career guidance and  
7 implement mental health programs;  
8
- 9 d) *Guidance services specialist* – refers to the specific position of Guidance  
10 Counselor in the DepEd plantilla who is charged with the duty to care for the  
11 mental health and well-being of learners and school employees;  
12
- 13 e) *Guidance teacher* – refers to a regular teacher who is given additional  
14 assignments related to guidance and counselling services aside from a teaching  
15 load, to augment the lack of Guidance Counselors. They shall be selected by  
16 the school heads based on their leadership skills, and competence in handling  
17 guidance related concerns. Preferably, a Guidance Teacher has a background  
18 in psychology, values education, or has earned academic units in guidance and  
19 counseling;  
20
- 21 f) *Mental health* – refers to a state of well-being in which the individual realizes  
22 one’s own abilities and potentials, copes adequately with the normal stresses  
23 of life, displays resilience in the face of extreme life events, works productively  
24 and fruitfully, and is able to make a positive contribution to the community;  
25
- 26 g) *Mental health professional* – refers to a medical doctor, nurse, guidance  
27 counselor, psychologist, or any other appropriately trained and qualified person  
28 with specific skills relevant to the provision of mental health services;  
29
- 30 h) *Mental health program* – refers to the system of services designed to maintain  
31 the state of well-being of an individual in order for the individual to realize its  
32 own abilities and potential, cope adequately with the normal stresses of life,  
33 display resilience in the face of extreme life events, work productively and  
34 fruitfully, and be able to make a positive contribution to the community;  
35
- 36 i) *Mental health services* – refer to the psychosocial, psychiatric or neurologic  
37 activities and programs along the whole range of mental health support services  
38 including promotion, prevention, treatment and aftercare, which are provided  
39 by mental health facilities and mental health professionals;  
40
- 41 j) *Psychologist* – refers to a natural person who has undergone professional  
42 training in and possesses clinical skills in psychotherapeutic intervention and  
43 assessment for mental health problems, has been granted a license to practice  
44 the profession of Psychology and is registered with the PRC, and holds a  
45 master’s degree in Psychology, without prejudice to those granted licenses  
46 under the grandfather clause of R.A. 10029, otherwise known as the “Philippine  
47 Psychology Act of 2009”;



- 1 k) *Psychometrician* – refers to a natural person who has obtained professional  
2 training in psychological assessment, possesses a license to practice the  
3 profession of psychometry and registered with the PRC, holds a bachelor's  
4 degree in Psychology, without prejudice to those granted licenses under the  
5 grandfather clause of R.A. 10029, otherwise known as the "Philippine  
6 Psychology Act of 2009"; and  
7
- 8 l) *Psychosocial problem* – refers to a condition indicated by the existence of  
9 dysfunctions in a person's behavior, thoughts, and feelings that have been  
10 brought about by sudden, extreme, prolonged or cumulative stressors in the  
11 physical or social environment.  
12

13 **SEC. 4. *Establishment of a School Level Mental Health and Well-being Office in Every***  
14 ***Schools Division.*** – There is hereby established, under the administration and  
15 supervision of the DepEd, a Mental Health and Well-being Office in every school's  
16 division level which is primarily tasked to address the mental, emotional, and  
17 developmental needs of learners and personnel of the DepEd.  
18

19 A sufficient number of Guidance Counselors and Guidance Services Specialist positions  
20 shall be created within the school's division offices and in schools in order to cater to  
21 the needs of learners and personnel, according to minimum standards to be  
22 determined by the DepEd and the Department of Health (DOH), in coordination with  
23 the Civil Service Commission (CSC) and the Department of Budget and Management  
24 (DBM).  
25

26 The school's division level Mental Health and Well-being Office shall be headed by  
27 qualified Mental Health Professional with a position of Guidance Services Specialist V  
28 (Salary Grade 24).  
29

30 **SEC. 5. *Hiring and Deployment of Mental Health Professionals.*** – Subject to the  
31 guidelines set by the CSC and the DBM, the DepEd shall provide for the hiring and  
32 deployment of Mental Health Professionals such that each public elementary,  
33 secondary, vocational institution, and offices in the different governance levels of the  
34 DepEd shall have mental health professionals or mental health service providers within  
35 five (5) years from the effectivity of this Act.  
36

37 Until such time that there are adequate Mental Health Professionals, the DepEd may  
38 deploy guidance teachers and other similarly qualified employees to provide school-  
39 based mental health services: *Provided*, That they undergo sufficient capacity building  
40 as determined by the DepEd and supervised by qualified Mental Health Professionals  
41 within the school or the schools division office in their provision of mental health  
42 services: *Provided, further*, That they receive honoraria as just compensation for  
43 providing such services, subject to the guidelines set by the DBM and the Commission  
44 on Audit.  
45

46 Notwithstanding the provisions of Republic Act No. 9258, public education institutions  
47 may hire, as may be necessary, graduates with relevant background in psychology or  
48 similar fields, who may not yet qualify as Mental Health Professionals, to provide  
49 school-based mental health services: *Provided*, That they undergo sufficient capacity

1 building training as determined by the DepEd and shall be supervised by qualified  
2 Mental Health Professionals within the schools division level in their provision of mental  
3 health services: *Provided, further,* That they meet the relevant qualifications and are  
4 licensed as Mental Health Professionals within three (3) years from the date when  
5 they were hired.

6  
7 The DepEd shall establish mechanisms to maximize existing mental health services  
8 offered by other government agencies such as agencies attached to the DOH and the  
9 Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

10  
11 **SEC. 6. Professional and Career Development of Mental Health Professionals.** – The  
12 DepEd shall, in coordination with the DBM, CSC, DOH and PRC:

- 13  
14 a) Prepare a uniform career and personnel development plan that shall include  
15 provisions on personal wellness, merit promotion, performance evaluation, in-  
16 service training, post graduate scholarship grants, research grants, suggestions  
17 and incentive award system;  
18  
19 b) Match the salary grades of Mental Health Professionals related items with  
20 respect to the provisions of R.A. 6758, otherwise known as the "Compensation  
21 and Position Classification Act of 1989", as amended;  
22  
23 c) Align the qualifications and standards for Mental Health Professionals with R.A.  
24 10968, otherwise known as the "Philippine Qualifications Framework Act";  
25  
26 d) Revisit the DepEd's organizational structure in order to provide competent and  
27 professional personnel who shall provide supervision and technical assistance  
28 to Guidance Counselors at the school levels;  
29  
30 e) Review, revise, and develop the duties and responsibilities of mental health  
31 professionals in accordance with the laws enacted to regulate their respective  
32 professions;  
33  
34 f) Prepare a performance evaluation plan that considers the improvement of  
35 individual counselor efficiency and organizational effectiveness: *Provided,* That  
36 each counselor shall be informed regularly by their immediate supervisor of the  
37 results of the evaluation of their performance;  
38  
39 g) Provide for the institutionalization of the Basic Education Mental Health Manual;  
40 and  
41  
42 h) Provide periodic training and skills upgrading and development courses to  
43 Mental Health Professionals.

44  
45 **SEC. 7. Salary Scale.** – The career and salary scales of Mental Health Professionals in  
46 schools shall provide for a gradual progression from a minimum to a maximum salary  
47 by means of regular increments, to be given regularly based on merit and  
48 competencies as similarly given to Master Teachers.

1 The entry level of Mental Health Professionals shall not be lower than Salary Grade  
2 16. Guidance Associates and Psychometricians shall have as entry level Salary  
3 Grade 11.

4  
5 **SEC. 8. *Benefits.*** – The Mental Health Professionals shall enjoy the rights and  
6 privileges as provided for in the Magna Carta of Public Health Workers, Mental Health  
7 Act, and other pertinent laws.

8  
9 **SEC. 9. *Programs and Projects Related to Mental Health.*** – The DepEd shall provide  
10 for sufficient resources for mental health programs and projects designed to maintain  
11 and address the mental health and well-being of learners and personnel.

12  
13 **SEC. 10. *Appropriations.*** – The amount necessary for the implementation of this Act  
14 shall be included in the DepEd budget in the annual General Appropriations Act.

15  
16 **SEC. 11. *Joint Congressional Oversight Committee.*** – There is hereby created a Joint  
17 Congressional Oversight Committee (JCOC) on the Basic Education Mental Health  
18 Program to monitor and oversee the implementation of the provisions of this Act. The  
19 JCOC shall be composed of five (5) members each from the Senate and from the  
20 House of Representatives, respectively, including a member of the minority from each  
21 chamber, to be chaired jointly by the chairpersons of the Committees on Basic  
22 Education of both the Senate and the House of Representatives. The four (4) other  
23 members from each chamber, one of whom should come from the minority members,  
24 shall be designated, respectively, by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of  
25 the House of Representatives.

26  
27 **SEC. 12. *Sunset Review.*** – Within five (5) years from the effectivity of this Act, or as  
28 the need arises, the JCOC shall conduct a systematic evaluation of the performance  
29 and accomplishments of agencies that implemented this Act, including its impact on  
30 the education sector and economic development, for purposes of determining  
31 remedial legislation.

32  
33 **SEC. 13. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** – Within ninety (90) days from the  
34 approval of this Act, the Secretary of Education shall, in consultation with the DBM,  
35 CSC, DOH, DSWD, PRC and other concerned stakeholders, formulate and issue rules  
36 and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

37  
38 **SEC. 14. *Separability Clause.*** – If any part or provision of this Act is held invalid or  
39 unconstitutional, other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in force and effect.

40  
41 **SEC. 15. *Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, orders, and rules and regulations contrary to,  
42 or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or amended  
43 accordingly.

44  
45 **SEC. 16. *Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication  
46 in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,