

# "Evaluating the Readiness to Facilitate SPED Homeschooling: Insights and Challenges from Davao City"

Ivy May M. Akiangan

*Student, University of Southeastern Philippines*

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines the readiness to facilitate Special Education (SPED) homeschooling in Davao City, focusing on the insights and challenges faced by educators and administrators. Despite the longstanding existence of homeschooling programs, a significant gap remains in understanding how well Davao City is prepared to implement effective homeschooling for SPED children. The study employed a qualitative approach using face-to-face focus group discussions and interviews with eight SPED teachers, three coordinators, and two principals to explore their experiences and perspectives. The findings reveal a fragmented governance structure, characterized by unclear roles and responsibilities among stakeholders, inadequate resources, and inconsistent implementation of policies. SPED teachers reported high levels of burnout due to financial constraints, insufficient institutional support, and the sudden transition to remote learning during the pandemic, which exposed significant technological and training deficiencies. The interviews highlighted a lack of coordination between DepEd policies and local implementation, with many schools struggling to support both traditional and homeschooled SPED students effectively. Challenges identified include bureaucratic hurdles, inadequate training for SPED handling, and the absence of dedicated SPED centers and essential tools. The study also uncovered systemic issues, such as inconsistent resource allocation and the lack of a cohesive homeschooling framework, contributing to delays and inefficiencies in policy execution. The results underscore the urgent need for a comprehensive governance framework to address these challenges. The introduction of Republic Act No. 11650 offers potential for transformative change, providing a basis for improving inclusivity and support in SPED education. The study concludes that addressing these issues through enhanced

coordination, resource allocation, and policy implementation is crucial for developing an effective SPED homeschooling system in Davao City.

## I. INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Study

Homeschooling is an educational methodology that replicates the traditional school-at-home approach, empowering parents to emulate the instructional processes employed in formal educational institutions. This model provides a home-based educational framework, offering children the opportunity to learn within the familiar confines of their own homes. It serves as an alternative avenue for education, enabling students to meet academic requirements while fostering the development of independent living skills. Under the guidance of their parents and families, children engage in a personalized learning environment, with minimal oversight from government educational administration. This approach provides a unique and flexible educational setting, emphasizing individualized learning experiences tailored to the needs and preferences of each student.

In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) releases the Revised Policy Guidelines on Homeschooling Program in alignment with its constitutional mandate to provide a comprehensive and relevant education system. This initiative is guided by the constitutional principle supporting the inherent right and responsibility of parents in nurturing the youth for civic efficiency and moral character development. While the policy does not explicitly highlight independent homeschooling learners, the Homeschooling Program established by DepEd functions as one of the Alternative Delivery Modes (ADMs). This option is available for any public or private school to adopt, addressing the needs of learners unable to attend regular school due to

medical conditions, family situations, or challenging circumstances requiring more parental support. It also caters to learners whose parents choose independent homeschooling, a practice recognized by our constitution, emphasizing parental autonomy in ensuring their children's education. This approach promotes inclusive and equitable quality education, with parents assuming full responsibility for their children's learning. The policy embraces diverse learning environments and acknowledges the effectiveness of both traditional schooling and independent homeschooling settings.

The new homeschooling policy in the Philippines extends valuable benefits to families by granting them greater flexibility in shaping their children's education. Parents now have the autonomy to make informed decisions regarding the learning path of their children, addressing specific issues that may affect access to education, such as health conditions or family situations. Moreover, this policy invites parents to actively contribute to curriculum development, ensuring it is learner-centered, inclusive, developmentally responsive, and relevant. The curriculum encourages pedagogical approaches such as constructivism, inquiry-based learning, reflection, collaboration, and integration, aligning with the principles outlined in the Enhanced Basic Education Act of the Philippines. This paradigm shift empowers parents to play a more active role in their children's educational journey, fostering a tailored and engaging learning experience that meets the unique needs and preferences of each learner.

According to the World Health Organization and World Bank (2011), more than a billion people, roughly 15% of the world's population, have some form of disability. In the Philippines, 15 million out of 100 million Filipino children, youth, and adults have disabilities. Of this group, 3.3 million are in schools. However, learners with disabilities face barriers that hinder their full access to and participation in the K to 12 Basic Education. The Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities emphasizes that persons with disabilities are integral to Philippine society and have the same rights as others. It obliges the State to adopt policies that emphasize their right to adequate access to quality education and opportunities for skills development. The State, including DepEd, is duty-bound to promote auxiliary services that facilitate the learning process for learners with disabilities, considering their special requirements in education policies and programs. Thus, DepEd formulates policy that provides direction for learners with disabilities

across different levels of governance in the Department. It aligns with the Inclusive Education Policy Framework for Basic Education that aims to cover all children and youth with disabilities in basic education, ensuring inclusiveness in the educational program.

The K to 12 curriculum is thoughtfully crafted to provide education that is developmentally appropriate, learner-centered, and tailored to the unique interests, strengths, and needs of all students, including those with disabilities. A notable feature of this curriculum is the option for home-based education, supplemented by traditional classroom settings, guided by a Special Education (SPED) teacher. This approach is in harmony with DepEd policies that prioritize inclusivity through contextualization and adaptations. DepEd-mandated Special Education Programs are integral to supporting learners with disabilities (LWDs) and come in various delivery modalities. The Home-Based approach stands out as a model that facilitates LWDs' education in the familiar and supportive environment of their homes. In this setting, a dedicated SPED teacher collaborates with family members or trained volunteers, ensuring a personalized and effective learning experience for LWDs. This inclusive strategy not only provides accessible and adaptable education but also alleviates the stress and pressure on children with special needs, particularly those whose medical conditions may make traditional classroom settings less conducive to their well-being. It empowers parents to actively participate in their child's education, fostering a supportive and conducive learning environment.

Homeschooling SPED children before transitioning them to mainstream educational settings is a crucial strategy that recognizes and addresses the unique requirements of these learners. The personalized and flexible learning environment provided by homeschooling allows parents, occupational therapists, speech and physical therapists, and behavioral psychologists to tailor instruction to the specific needs, abilities, and learning styles of SPED children. This individualized approach ensures that educational content and their well-being are holistically addressed, maximizing understanding and engagement when they transition to mainstream education. The home-based delivery mode outlined in the DepEd order allows for a holistic approach, enabling SPED teachers and parents to collaboratively address the complex needs of SPED children. It provides an avenue for overcoming the challenges of disabilities, helping these children function effectively in society and pursue their

education with the aspiration of becoming professionals in their chosen fields.

Homeschooling also offers specialized instruction, targeted interventions, and therapies that may not be readily available in traditional classrooms. It empowers SPED children to learn at their own pace, reducing stress and anxiety associated with mainstream educational settings. Moreover, homeschooling fosters a supportive atmosphere, enabling SPED children to build confidence, address social and emotional needs, and incorporate essential life skills into their education. By providing this holistic and gradual approach, homeschooling serves as a valuable transitional phase, preparing SPED children academically, socially, and emotionally for a successful integration into mainstream education. This phased approach recognizes the diverse learning needs of SPED children and empowers them with a strong foundation for their educational journey. This two-way delivery approach not only benefits the students and their families but also aids the government in managing the congestion of school institutions while developing effective strategies to support this crucial sector for national development and youth empowerment for the next generation.

The introduction of the DepEd order promoting inclusive homeschooling for Special Education (SPED) children is a pivotal development, raising critical inquiries about the readiness of the government, SPED teachers, and various stakeholders involved. Essential questions emerge: How prepared is our government for these policies, and do we have an adequate number of qualified SPED teachers to meet the demands of SPED students? The absence of comprehensive statistics detailing the number of SPED children in the Philippines presents a challenge for strategic planning. Moreover, questions linger about the awareness and readiness of Local Government Units (LGUs), particularly in cities like Davao. Are there ordinances in place supporting DepEd's SPED order, and do LGUs possess a comprehensive understanding of the policy, extending to grassroots levels like barangays?

Furthermore, the enactment of Republic Act No. 11650, which aims to institute inclusive education for learners with disabilities, has yet to see its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) formalized. This lack of IRR presents additional challenges in ensuring that the policy's objectives are effectively translated into practice. Without clear guidelines, the implementation of RA 11650 remains ambiguous, potentially hindering the progress toward inclusive education.

Academic research, while shedding light on certain aspects of SPED education, notably lacks comprehensive studies on SPED children and the home-based modalities prescribed by the DepEd order. There's a crucial gap in understanding the holistic collaboration needed among SPED teachers and across various sectors, including mental health professionals and hospital institutions offering specialized therapies.

As the study is based in Davao City, a central theme revolves around the city's readiness for these inclusive policies. Are the LGU and parents aware of the intricacies of the DepEd order, and if so, how prepared are they to actively engage in these initiatives? These are the pressing questions that this study aims to delve into, offering a comprehensive analysis that extends beyond local boundaries. The excitement lies in uncovering valuable insights that not only impact Davao City but also contribute significantly to the national approach in shaping the most effective education modality for the SPED sector over the next 50 years. It is an exploration into the heart of inclusive education, with the potential to shape policies and practices that can positively transform the educational landscape for SPED children across the nation.

## **Methods**

### **Statement of the Problem**

Despite the longstanding presence of homeschooling programs, a significant research gap exists regarding Special Education (SPED) children in Davao City. This study aims to address this gap by investigating the readiness and resources available for facilitating effective homeschooling for SPED children in the city. The introduction of Republic Act No. 11650, which seeks to institutionalize inclusive education for learners with disabilities, adds complexity, especially given the lack of formal Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) for this Act. This research seeks to bridge the gap by examining the current state of homeschooling practices, policies, and collaborative efforts in Davao City, considering the evolving legislative landscape and the challenges faced by various stakeholders.

### **Research Design**

This study utilizes a qualitative research design to gain an in-depth understanding of the readiness and resources for SPED homeschooling in Davao City. The primary data collection methods include focus group discussions and face-to-face interviews with key stakeholders involved in SPED education.

## Data Collection Methods

### 1. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

- **Participants:** Eight SPED teachers from various schools in Davao City participated in the focus group discussions. The selection of participants was based on their direct involvement in SPED homeschooling and their ability to provide valuable insights into the challenges and resources available.
- **Procedure:** The FGDs were conducted face-to-face, providing a setting for teachers to engage in open dialogue about their experiences with SPED homeschooling. A semi-structured discussion guide was used to facilitate the conversation, focusing on topics such as the availability of resources, support from government and Local Government Units (LGUs), and the effectiveness of current homeschooling practices. The discussions were audio-recorded with participants' consent and later transcribed for analysis.
- **Analysis:** Thematic analysis was employed to identify common themes and patterns in the data. This analysis aimed to reveal insights into the teachers' experiences, perceptions of readiness, and the challenges faced in SPED homeschooling.

### 2. Face-to-Face Interviews

- **Participants:** Face-to-face interviews were conducted with three SPED coordinators and two school principals in Davao City. These participants were selected based on their roles and responsibilities in managing and implementing SPED programs.
- **Procedure:** The interviews were conducted in person, allowing for a detailed exploration of participants' perspectives on the implementation of SPED policies, coordination among stakeholders, and the impact of legislative changes on SPED homeschooling. A semi-structured interview guide was used to ensure that key topics were covered while allowing for in-depth responses. Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed for thematic content.
- **Analysis:** Thematic analysis was used to analyze the interview data, involving coding, identifying recurring themes, and interpreting the implications for SPED homeschooling practices and policies.

## Data Analysis

The qualitative data from the FGDs and face-to-face interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. This approach involved coding the data into categories, identifying patterns, and

synthesizing the findings to draw conclusions about the readiness and resources for SPED homeschooling in Davao City. The analysis aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the current state of SPED homeschooling, the effectiveness of existing support systems, and the impact of legislative changes on stakeholders.

## Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical standards by obtaining informed consent from all participants and ensuring the confidentiality of their responses. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without facing any negative consequences. All data were securely stored and used solely for research purposes.

By employing face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions with SPED teachers, coordinators, and principals, this research offers a detailed and empathetic exploration of the challenges and opportunities in SPED homeschooling in Davao City. The findings aim to inform policy and practice, addressing identified gaps and supporting the development of more effective and inclusive educational practices for SPED children.

## Review of Related Literature

### Overview of Homeschooling for Special Needs Children in the Global Context and Philippine National Practices and Trends

Globally, over 300 million children are homeschooled, with 90% expressing satisfaction with their experience and 80% indicating they would choose homeschooling for their own children. Academic performance of homeschoolers is notable, with 78% of studies showing they outperform peers in traditional schools. Interestingly, homeschoolers are less likely to major in STEM fields, and 74% of homeschooling parents cite dissatisfaction with traditional schools as a reason for their choice. Homeschoolers are also more engaged in community service, with 71% participating in such activities compared to the general population. The United Kingdom leads Europe in homeschooling numbers.

Homeschooling is legal in many countries, including the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Germany, Austria, Italy, Norway, France, Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, India, Ireland, Portugal, Finland, Russia, Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Chile, Costa Rica, Panama, Honduras, the Philippines, and Thailand. However, it is either illegal or restricted in some countries, such as



Germany, Sweden, Norway (for children under 12), Austria (for children over 15), Greece, France, Finland, Belgium, Italy, Portugal, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Malta, and Spain (unlegislated).

Homeschooling has grown steadily over the past two decades, with significant surges during the pandemic. From 1999 to 2016, the percentage of homeschooled children in the U.S. nearly doubled from 1.7% to 3.3%. By 2012, homeschooled students outnumbered those in Roman Catholic schools. Additionally, 98% of homeschooling parents had graduated high school, surpassing the national average. Around 25% of homeschooling parents have taken courses to aid in home instruction. The majority of homeschool students live in cities and suburbs, with 62% residing there.

In the Philippines, children must enroll in school between ages 6 and 12. Approximately 12,000 families have chosen homeschooling. The legal framework for homeschooling is supported by the Constitution, particularly Article XIV, Section 1(2), which allows for private education by religious groups, mission boards, and families. DepEd Memo No. 216 s. 1997 outlines accreditation for homeschooled students transitioning to conventional schools. Several DepEd divisions implement Home Study Programs to provide accessible secondary education, such as the Quezon City Home Study Program. This program supports diverse groups, including working students and those with health challenges, with specific criteria for admission and active engagement from local government officials.

Research on homeschooling for special needs children shows that these families often have a longer history of conventional schooling. The decision to homeschool is typically driven by the perception that traditional schools do not meet their child's needs and a desire for greater parental involvement. Challenges include the need for comprehensive support systems and effective home-school partnerships. In the Philippines, specific research on homeschooling for special needs children is limited, but the practice is influenced by similar factors as in other countries.

Morse and Bell's (2018) study on homeschooling special needs children highlights that parents choose homeschooling due to unmet needs in traditional schools and a desire for increased parental involvement. They found high satisfaction levels among homeschool parents and emphasize the importance of parental involvement for student success, aligning with social learning

theory. The study underscores the need for partnerships between parents and educational institutions to support diverse forms of parental involvement.

Brantlinger (1991) emphasizes the necessity for comprehensive support systems and effective home-school partnerships for special needs children. Legislative mandates, such as the Education of the Handicapped Amendments, PL99-457, provide financial support for comprehensive services for families of children with disabilities. These insights highlight the need for flexibility, voluntariness, and clear communication in support systems, contributing to the understanding of home-school partnerships and the considerations for preparing educational professionals to interact with families and support programming for special needs children.

## **II- An overview of the timeline and the current state of Special Education in the Philippines and in Davao City supporting special education.**

UNICEF in partnership with the Council for the Welfare of Children - Subcommittee on Children with Disabilities conducted a study and found out that in 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly disrupted the provision of both mainstream and disability-specific services for children with disabilities in the Philippines. To comprehensively understand the impact, the Subcommittee on Children with Disabilities (SC-CWD) conducted an online survey in April 2020 during the peak of quarantine restrictions. The survey engaged 39,534 respondents nationwide, with 6,561 representing children with disabilities, primarily through their parents, and 566 responses directly from the children. The findings revealed major concerns, including the inability to access essential services such as education, child development, habilitation, rehabilitation, and general health, affecting 52%, 51%, 49%, and 43%, respectively. Additionally, 14% of respondents reported a decline in mental health, with 12% facing challenges accessing mental health and psychosocial support services (MHPSS). Financial constraints (46%) and lack of transportation (43%) were identified as top barriers to accessing essential commodities and services. Disturbingly, there was an uptick in domestic violence and child abuse, impacting 1.4% of children, with a higher incidence among males (59%) than females (41%), including reported cases of sexual abuse (13%). The study also highlighted disparities in the implementation and reach of government support, with 80% receiving relief packages but only 19% benefiting from financial assistance. This

discrepancy hindered the effectiveness of health workers in communicating with persons with disabilities. Notably, 69% of respondents expressed the need for more information on specific protective measures for people with disabilities. (Situation of Children with Disabilities in the Context of COVID-19, n.d.)

In response to these challenges, the study proposed key recommendations to uphold the rights of children with disabilities, categorized across the rights to survival, development, protection, and participation. Recommendations included improving household targeting for financial aid, incorporating telehealth in service provision, developing disability-targeted communication materials, empowering caregivers in home-based interventions, and enhancing early identification and referral systems. To safeguard the right to development, the report advocated for support and empowerment of parents and caregivers, ensuring safe and accessible distance learning platforms, providing assistive devices, and implementing inclusive education programs. Recommendations under the right to protection emphasized heightened advocacy against violence, adapting case management protocols to the "new normal," and making parenting programs available. Lastly, under the right to participation, the study suggested capacitating children and their families for active participation and creating networks across different sectors that advocate for disability inclusion. The report concluded by urging duty bearers to adopt a twin-track approach, combining mainstream and disability-targeted interventions, and emphasized the need for a comprehensive directory of resources and services across sectors, facilitating support for families during regular times and emergencies. It proposes to support home-based interventions and capacity building for parents involves developing training programs and resources to empower parents in providing effective care and education at home. The recommendation to provide support to online education emphasizes creating inclusive resources and ensuring technology access for children with disabilities. Ensuring access to essential services, including transportation, involves improving infrastructure and implementing policies to make services easily reachable. These recommendations collectively seek to create a supportive environment for children with disabilities, recognizing their diverse needs and safeguarding their rights during the challenging circumstances of the pandemic. (Situation of Children with Disabilities in the Context of COVID-19, n.d.)

The "Instituting a Policy of Inclusion and Services for Learners with Disabilities in Support of Inclusive Education Act" declares the Philippine government's commitment to safeguarding the education rights of all citizens, particularly learners with disabilities. It emphasizes the promotion of inclusive education through a whole-of-community approach, encouraging collaboration among various stakeholders. The law aims to ensure that learners with disabilities have access to quality education, health services, and social protection, recognizing their integral role in national development. The Act outlines specific objectives, including the establishment of Inclusive Learning Resource Centers, the development of Individualized Education Plans, and the empowerment of teachers, parents, and caregivers. Overall, the law strives to create an inclusive educational environment that respects diversity, promotes the well-being of learners with disabilities, and actively involves them in the educational process. (Republic Act No. 11650, n.d.)

Section 22 of the "Instituting a Policy of Inclusion and Services for Learners with Disabilities in Support of Inclusive Education Act" underscores the importance of formal training, orientations, and counseling programs for parents, family members, guardians, and care providers of learners with disabilities. The Department of Education (DepEd) is tasked with developing and implementing these programs in coordination with Local Government Units (LGUs), the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Council, and the private sector. These initiatives aim to equip parents and caregivers with a comprehensive understanding of inclusive education, including the rights, privileges, benefits, and diverse needs of learners with disabilities. Moreover, the programs emphasize the essential roles of parents, guardians, and family members as partners in the education of learners with disabilities, empowering them to contribute effectively to the development of their potential. As part of this educational empowerment, parents, guardians, and family members are to be informed about procedural safeguards and processes to address disputes and complaints, ensuring the protection of the educational rights of learners with disabilities. The Act emphasizes the active participation of parents and guardians in all aspects and stages of the education of learners with disabilities, reinforcing the commitment to inclusive education and the holistic development of

individuals with diverse needs. (Republic Act No. 11650, n.d.)

Section 22 provides significant benefits for homeschooling parents of children with special education needs (SPED). These programs serve as a valuable resource, offering essential insights into inclusive education, the rights, privileges, benefits, and diverse needs of learners with disabilities. The training and counseling programs outlined in Section 22 are hoping to equip homeschooling parents with a comprehensive understanding of effective teaching strategies, specialized educational resources, and the latest advancements in SPED. This empowers homeschooling parents to tailor their educational approaches to meet the unique needs of their SPED children, fostering a more inclusive and supportive learning environment. Moreover, the section emphasizes the essential roles of parents, guardians, and family members as partners in the education of learners with disabilities. For homeschooling parents, this recognition underscores the importance of their involvement in the holistic development of their SPED children. The training programs can provide homeschooling parents with the knowledge and skills necessary to maximize their role as educational partners, promoting the overall well-being and academic success of their SPED children.

Despite setbacks caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, construction has commenced for the Davao City Special Needs Intervention Center for Children, with an expected operational date in January 2023. Councilor Antionette Principe-Castrodes, the chairperson of the committee on ethics and good government, confirmed the progress in a radio interview on March 3, 2022. Initially set to be operational in 2021, the P70-million facility was delayed due to the pandemic. The center, situated near People's Park, aims to provide medical attention and treatment to children with special needs. It will offer free intervention and special education, including early intervention, transition programs, and allied medical services such as occupational, physical, and speech therapy. The infrastructure is expected to be completed in January 2023, featuring facilities like a physical therapy room, aqua therapy swimming pool, sensory gym for occupational therapy, speech therapy and audio rooms, special education rooms, and an urban garden on the fourth floor. The initiative was established through an ordinance passed by the 19th City Council in February 2020, dedicated to providing free intervention and special education for children with special needs in Davao City. The ordinance was fully enacted by Davao

City Mayor Sara Duterte-Carpio in April of the same year. (Llemit, 2022)

The enactment of the "Comprehensive Children and Family Support System in Davao City," also referred to as the "Davao City Children's Welfare Code," signifies a commitment to prioritizing the rights of children, encompassing survival, protection, participation, and development. This commitment extends to supporting families, parents, child care and development workers, NGOs, and communities in nurturing children from infancy to adolescence. The ordinance emphasizes the precedence of programs aimed at the well-being and development of children, even in times of economic challenges, underscoring the city's dedication to the comprehensive welfare of its children. In Section 23, the ordinance outlines a proactive approach to the well-being of differently-abled children through periodic comprehensive surveys, ensuring child-focused and specific data. This survey aims to facilitate systematic coordination of health, nutrition, and education services for children with special needs. Section 24 underscores the priority placed on training programs for educators and health professionals handling differently-abled children, highlighting the city's investment in developing expertise for enhanced care. Section 25 introduces a barangay-level program for the revival of indigenous games, aligning with the cultural diversity in Davao City. The local government commits to allocating space for recreation and providing age and gender-appropriate recreational facilities. Similarly, Section 26 focuses on socio-cultural development by investing in local children's literature and relevant materials. In Section 27, the ordinance introduces Parenting Orientation Courses as a prerequisite for marriage license applicants, integrating it with existing Family Planning Seminars or Reproductive Health Courses. This course, mandated for both marriage license and birth certificate applicants, emphasizes the importance of parenting education in the context of the ordinance. The implementing guidelines for these provisions will be formulated in coordination with relevant city offices and NGO programs. This holistic approach underscores Davao City's commitment to nurturing and safeguarding the well-being of its children.

The "Comprehensive Children and Family Support System in Davao City," encapsulated in the "Davao City Children's Welfare Code," serves as a pivotal enabler for facilitating homeschooling for special needs children within the city. Anchored in a profound commitment to prioritize the rights of all children, including those with special needs, the

ordinance lays the groundwork for an inclusive educational environment. Emphasizing training programs for educators handling differently-abled children, the legislation ensures that homeschooling efforts are supported by well-equipped professionals. Additionally, the ordinance advocates for early intervention programs and allied medical services, providing crucial support for parents engaged in homeschooling by making necessary interventions readily available. The allocation of recreational and cultural facilities, investment in local children's literature, and the introduction of parenting orientation courses further contribute to creating a holistic support system for homeschooling. By fostering inclusive policies, specialized interventions, and comprehensive support structures, the ordinance empowers parents to engage in effective homeschooling practices tailored to the unique needs of special needs children in Davao City.

In a recent announcement, Senator Sherwin Gatchalian assured funding support for learners with disabilities in the 2023 national budget, despite the Department of Education's earlier acknowledgment of a lack of funding for special education programs in the proposed budget. The senator, who chairs the Senate Committee on Basic Education, outlined various proposals in the bicameral conference committee report on the budget. One proposal is to allocate P64 million to convert Special Education centers to Inclusive Learning Resource Centers for Learners with Disabilities, aiming to ensure each region can transform at least one SPED center into a model ILRC with a total budget of P160 million. Another proposal includes allocating P100 million for instructional materials for learners with disabilities, covering both formal education and the Alternative Learning System. The move reflects a commitment to inclusive education, ensuring that learners with disabilities are not left behind in the country's educational recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The law mandates the establishment of Inclusive Learning Resource Centers in every city and municipality, with a focus on delivering essential support services to learners with disabilities. Despite a gap in recent census data, the initiative addresses the needs of the 126,598 learners with disabilities enrolled in DepEd schools for the 2021-2022 school year, emphasizing the importance of inclusive education programs and services. (Senator Vows Funding Support for Learners with Disabilities in 2023 Budget, n.d.)

In the recent article of the Philippine Inquirer, it highlights the predicament faced by the Special Education (SPED) program in the

Philippines, particularly the absence of budgetary allocation for SPED in the 2023 National Expenditure Program (NEP). Save the Children Philippines (SCP) emphasized the pre-existing challenges faced by millions of Filipino children with disabilities in accessing quality and inclusive education, further exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis. Republic Act (RA) No. 11650, signed into law on March 11, 2022, aimed to promote inclusive education by mandating equitable access to quality education for learners with disabilities in both public and private schools. However, concerns have arisen due to the non-inclusion of the SPED program in the 2023 NEP, potentially rendering the law ineffective. Jonathan Geronimo, secretary-general of the Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT) Private Schools, contends that the law becomes meaningless if the Department of Education (DepEd) lacks the budget to implement it. The SPED program's exclusion from the NEP raises questions about the practicality and effectiveness of RA 11650 without essential resources to support its implementation. Despite the DepEd's proposed P532-million budget for the SPED program in 2023, the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) did not consider it in the NEP. Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian, chairman of the Senate committee on basic education, acknowledges the challenges faced by learners with disabilities during the COVID-19 crisis and promises to ensure that they receive the necessary resources. The article underscores the recurring circumstance of the SPED program being excluded from the budget despite the DepEd's advocacy efforts. The absence of budgetary support for SPED raises concerns about the fulfillment of inclusive education goals, as suitable facilities, comprehensive programs, and required equipment may not be provided without adequate funding. Parents, educators, and advocates stress the importance of SPED programs in schools, emphasizing accessibility, awareness, acceptance, and the need for different approaches in teaching children with special needs. The article also highlights the financial burden on parents of special children due to expensive therapies, interventions, and diagnostics. Despite the need to reach learners with disabilities, the article points out that out of the 13,408 schools with SPED programs in the Philippines, only 648 are designated SPED centers. This shortage, combined with a deficit in SPED teachers, results in a high student-teacher ratio, potentially compromising the quality of education for learners with disabilities. (Dela Peña, 2022)

Another newspaper article said that the House Basic Education Committee, chaired by



Roman Romulo, expressed dissatisfaction with the Department of Education (DepEd) on May 16 for not yet complying with a law passed over a year ago that mandates the creation of special learning centers. Republic Act No. 11650 requires the DepEd, headed by Vice President Sara Duterte, to establish an Inclusive Learning Resource Center of Learners with Disabilities (ILRC) in every town and city in the Philippines. However, after 14 months, the DepEd has not finalized the guidelines needed to implement the law. The committee raised concerns about the delay and emphasized the importance of timely action to address the needs of learners with disabilities. (House Panel Scolds DepEd: Where Are Centers for Learners with Disabilities?, 2023)

In Davao City, a range of Special Education (SPED) schools cater to the diverse needs of learners with disabilities. Public institutions like Rizal Special Education Learning Center, Inc., Davao City Special School, Daniel M. Perez Central Elementary School - SPED Center, Tugbok Central Elementary School, and Buhangin Central Elementary School are committed to providing inclusive education. On the private front, establishments such as The NewFields STEM School Of Davao, Ricafi, The World Human Bridge Phil-Davao Inc., Do Dream Children Center, Neighborhood Therapy Center, Independent Living Learning Centre (ILLC) Davao, Spec Educational Intervention, The Lamb of God Special Education Academy, The Lamb of God Special Education (SPED) Academy, Leap of Faith Learning Center, Apo Learning Village, Inc., The Learning Child School of Davao, Inc., B.A.S.I.C. Learning Center, Inc., ARK Learning Center, Values School, and Doña Pilar Learning Center FOUNDATION, INC., contribute to the holistic development of learners. This diverse landscape underscores the city's commitment to inclusive education, ensuring that children with special needs have access to quality learning environments.

Moreover, the City Government of Davao, through Executive Order (EO) No.73, Series of 2022, has reorganized and reconstituted the Local Council for the Protection of Children (LCPC) and the LCPC Inter-Agency Monitoring Task Force (LCPC IMTF) of Davao City. EO 73, signed by Mayor Sebastian "Baste" Duterte on December 6, 2022, cites Section 32 of the Davao City Children's Welfare Code, Series of 1994, which defines the role of the LCPC. The EO emphasizes the LCPC's responsibility for planning and spearheading child-related programs at the local level, making each locality child-friendly. The reorganization is

aligned with Republic Act (RA) No. 9344, the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act of 2006, and DILG Memorandum Circulars providing guidelines for the organization and strengthening of the LCPC. EO 73 mandates the LCPC to formulate gender-fair, culturally relevant plans, and policies for children, prepare the Annual Work and Financial Plan (AWFP), establish linkages with agencies for planning, and advocate for child-friendly facilities. The LCPC is tasked with recommending local legislation, assisting children in need of special protection, conducting capability-building programs, and documenting barangay best practices for children. The reconstituted LCPC includes various representatives from government offices, NGOs, and community stakeholders. (administrator, 2022)

Thus, the current state of Special Education (SPED) in the Philippines, particularly in Davao City, reflects a landscape shaped by both challenges and promising initiatives. The global COVID-19 pandemic has significantly disrupted mainstream and disability-specific services for children with disabilities, impacting their access to essential services, education, child development, and health. Financial constraints, lack of transportation, and a rise in domestic violence further compound these challenges. In response, recommendations have been proposed to uphold the rights of children with disabilities, spanning survival, development, protection, and participation. Key suggestions include improving household targeting for financial aid, incorporating telehealth, developing targeted communication materials, empowering caregivers, and enhancing early identification and referral systems. The emphasis on inclusive education, support for learners with disabilities in the 2023 national budget, and the passage of the "Instituting a Policy of Inclusion and Services for Learners with Disabilities in Support of Inclusive Education Act" underscores a commitment to addressing the needs of children with disabilities. However, challenges persist, as seen in the exclusion of SPED from the 2023 National Expenditure Program (NEP), raising questions about the practicality and effectiveness of existing legislation without adequate resources. Delays in implementing laws, such as the creation of Inclusive Learning Resource Centers, also hinder progress.

In Davao City, ongoing efforts to reorganize and reconstitute the Local Council for the Protection of Children (LCPC) demonstrate a commitment to child-related programs, aligning with national laws and guidelines. Various SPED schools, both public and private, contribute to the

city's inclusive education landscape, emphasizing diverse learning environments for children with special needs. While the enactment of the "Comprehensive Children and Family Support System in Davao City" and the "Davao City Children's Welfare Code" signals a commitment to prioritizing children's rights, including those with special needs, the efficacy of these policies will depend on effective implementation and sustained support. In essence, the journey toward comprehensive and inclusive Special Education involves addressing budgetary gaps, timely implementation of laws, continuous advocacy, and fostering collaborative efforts among stakeholders. The diverse educational landscape in Davao City, coupled with reinvigorated council structures, provides a foundation for progress. As the city endeavors to create a supportive environment for children with special needs, it remains crucial to stay vigilant, responsive and committed to the overarching goal of inclusive education and holistic child development.

### **III- Readiness, Preparedness, and Willingness of the Department of Education in Facilitating Homeschooling for Special Needs Children in the Philippines**

The Department of Education in the Philippines faces various challenges in facilitating homeschooling for special needs children. Parents, who have taken on the role of facilitators, struggle with time management, lack of knowledge, and discipline enforcement (Magonalig, 2023). Teachers, particularly in the implementation of the Kindergarten curriculum, encounter challenges such as language difficulties and the need for teacher training (Jaca, 2021). The implementation of homeschooling in meeting the learning needs of special needs children is based on individualized approaches (Faisal, 2020). However, there is a need for increased family involvement and support in the special education program (Presente, 2021). These findings highlight the need for the Department of Education to address these challenges and provide adequate support for parents, teachers, and families in facilitating homeschooling for special needs children.

DepEd Order No. 001, series of 2022, represents a transformative shift in the educational landscape for Special Education (SPED) children and their families in the Philippines. This policy, crafted with awareness of the diverse challenges faced by SPED children, places parents at the forefront as primary decision-makers, empowering them to actively shape the educational journey of their children with unique needs. Under the

guidance and evaluation of SPED teachers, therapists, and government institutions, parents are entrusted with the responsibility to address the specific challenges faced by their SPED children, fostering a personalized education tailored to individual circumstances. At the heart of this policy is a commitment to personalization, allowing parents to craft subjects, learning materials, and educational approaches that align with the needs of their SPED children. The curriculum is designed to revolve around child interests, accommodating backgrounds, abilities, and learning paces. This intentional inclusivity aims to provide equal educational opportunities for all, with a particular emphasis on recognizing the distinctive learning capabilities of SPED students. (Department of Education, 2022)

The post-pandemic relevance embedded in the policy reflects responsiveness to real-world experiences and the dynamic needs of SPED learners. The curriculum is crafted to engage students by connecting with their lived realities, fostering an educational experience that is not only relevant but also enriching. The teaching methodology, grounded in the constructivist philosophy, places a strong emphasis on hands-on experiences and active engagement for SPED learners. This pedagogical approach encourages SPED students to construct their understanding through inquiry, driven by their questions and curiosity. By doing so, this teaching method not only fosters critical thinking skills but also ensures a profound comprehension of the subject matter. Reflection plays a learning process, acting as a foundation that prompts both SPED students and their parents to reflect on their educational journey. This reflective practice deepens the understanding of academic concepts and nurtures a culture of continuous improvement. It extends beyond academics to encompass social, behavioral, interpersonal, emotional regulation, and communication skills — all crucial aspects of a SPED student's daily life. This approach aligns with the home-based setup, addressing the evolving needs of SPED learners, SPED teachers, and government institutions supporting this dynamic and intricate sector in the community. The collaborative synergy within this transformative educational policy fosters teamwork, communication, and the development of social skills among SPED students, parents, and potential collaborators such as occupational, speech, physical therapists, and behavioral psychologists. The integration of subjects and curriculum underscores the interconnected nature of knowledge, fostering a holistic understanding that

transcends traditional compartmentalization. (Department of Education, 2022)

The abrupt transition in education from traditional classrooms to homeschooling presented numerous challenges for both learners and their parents, encompassing instructional, financial, and technical difficulties. It is imperative for schools to implement training programs for parents, focusing on effective home learning strategies, managing a child's learning behavior, and providing technical support for online education. Equipping parents with knowledge about remote learning systems, platforms, essential tools, key pedagogical concepts, and effective communication options among teachers, students, and parents is crucial for the success of future remote learning endeavors [23]. Concurrently, the adoption of online learning has exacerbated the digital divide in developing countries, especially in rural areas with inadequate internet connectivity. The prevalence of this divide among students creates a significant disparity, with those facing inaccessibility to online classes experiencing more profound learning disruptions compared to their technologically privileged counterparts [40]. Another critical aspect of the digital divide is the students' Information and Communications Technology (ICT) skills, representing the second level of this divide, strongly correlated with the socioeconomic status of the family [41]. In response, policymakers should contemplate providing additional financial assistance to families with students, particularly those affected by parental job loss during the pandemic. Schools must also offer ICT support to parents and students unfamiliar with online platforms. The timing of providing such technical and financial assistance should be carefully considered, as early support maximally benefits parents and students when they need it the most [42]. Furthermore, schools should diversify learning modalities to cater to the unique needs and locations of the learners. One of the study findings of the Parents' lived experiences on distance learning indicates that parents encounter several challenges in the context of distance learning, encompassing issues with the virtual setting, delivery of instruction, dissatisfaction with learning outcomes, struggles with technology use and availability, personal concerns related to health, stress, and the learning style of their children, as well as financial difficulties arising from the responsibility of working for the family during the lockdown. These findings underscore the necessity of formulating comprehensive and inclusive education policies that take into account the perspectives and challenges faced by parents of

learners during the pandemic and beyond. Governments are encouraged to provide additional financial support to families with students, especially those severely affected by the pandemic's consequences. Schools play a crucial role in this effort by offering training programs for both parents and learners to acquaint them with new instructional modalities, ensuring the attainment of desired learning outcomes. Additionally, schools should diversify learning modalities to accommodate the diverse needs and learning styles of students, ultimately aiming for a more inclusive educational experience for all learners. (Agaton & Cueto, 2021)

The study on the issues and challenges in special education, specifically for learners with special needs, reveals critical deficiencies in the current educational system. Most notably, teachers responsible for instructing children with learning disabilities lack essential training in special needs education, leading to feelings of inadequacy in effectively teaching these students. It also illuminates the suboptimal learning environments in classrooms dedicated to children with learning disabilities, citing insufficient budget allocations, a lack of curriculum guides, and instructional materials, and deficient school facilities. Moreover, the placement of learners with special needs in inclusive classrooms without adequate support, along with a dearth of necessary support and services for accessing curriculum facilities, further compounds the challenges faced by students with disabilities. The Department of Education should enhance the implementation of Special Education (SPED) with continuous professional development opportunities, organized by collaborative efforts between the Department of Education Training and Development and regional in-service officers. It should prioritize inclusion strategies for SPED learners, covering practical skills in instruction, collaboration, alternative evaluation methods, classroom management, conflict resolution, and curriculum adaptation. Additionally, addressing the shortage of human and material resources is paramount, necessitating increased provision of adequate resources, equipment, and teaching materials tailored to the diverse learning needs of SPED students. Recognizing the lack of training among teachers handling SPED classes, the recruitment of trained teachers, and the implementation of in-service training programs are recommended. A meticulous approach to student placement, strict adherence to policies, and encouragement of strong stakeholder support through active organizations led by school heads are essential. (Allam & Martin, 2021)

The examination of high school teachers' online teaching readiness in special education has identified areas where improvements can enhance their competencies for effective online instruction. There is a necessity for high school teachers in special education to embrace diverse modalities in online teaching. To address this, the recommendations propose the utilization of varied online platforms such as Google Meet, Zoom meetings, and video recording. These platforms are seen as tools that can contribute to enhancing teachers' mastery of online teaching, allowing them to cater to the unique needs of high school students in special education more effectively. Moreover, the recommendation extends to future research, suggesting a broader exploration of variables beyond the current four components assessed in online teaching readiness. The objective is to develop a comprehensive seminar toolkit specifically tailored to the online teaching readiness of high school teachers in special education. Recognizing the pivotal role of online teaching readiness in the 21st-century learning environment, this research contributes to the ongoing efforts to adapt special education systems to the changing curriculum, reflecting the adaptability of our educational system in the face of evolving pedagogical demands. (Sibayan, 2021)

In the study *Inclusive Education in the Philippines: Through the Eyes of Teachers, Administrators, and Parents of Children with Special Needs*, the discourse on inclusive education (IE) reveals that its essence extends beyond the physical integration of children with special needs (CSN) into general education schools. Advocates emphasize that meaningful inclusion requires substantial adjustments to facilitate genuine participation in learning activities. IE has garnered substantial support from schoolteachers, administrators, and parents in Quezon City, despite some expressed apprehension about the implementation of inclusive principles. Participants consistently view IE as an imperative opportunity for all children, irrespective of physical or mental conditions. However, the study recognizes that while IE is being practiced, achieving a high-quality implementation remains a challenge highlighting concerns about the lack of knowledge and training among teachers engaged in inclusive schools. Participants express worry about insufficient resources and practices that fall short of the comprehensive Special Education Process in the United States. The participants acknowledge their limited understanding of IE, calling attention to the deficiency in training among general education teachers. This lack of clarity poses a

potential threat to attitudes towards CSN, as attitudinal blocks such as misconceptions and stereotypes may arise. There is a notable gap in understanding how the active participation of CSN in the general education setting aligns with the concept of diversity. The uncertainty about the distinctive features of IE, including its procedures and required resources. It requires and necessitates extra effort, special training, and additional materials for teachers, elements perceived as lacking. It underscores the crucial problem of insufficient teacher training in IE, emphasizing the need for comprehensive training beginning at the pre-service level. There is an apparent lack of confidence in the effectiveness of their practices. It also doubts the impact and success of their knowledge and involvement in IE, potentially leading to real barriers in the form of negative attitudes and views toward inclusion. The uncertainties and limitations in understanding and implementing IE emphasize the need for comprehensive training, resource allocation, and a clearer framework for inclusive practices to ensure the successful integration and education of children with special needs. (Muega, 2016)

## **II. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Overlapping of Roles and Responsibilities**

The study reveals that SPED homeschooling in Davao City faces significant obstacles due to overlapping roles and unclear responsibilities among stakeholders, which impede effective policy implementation and resource allocation. Teachers and administrators express frustration with the lack of clear guidelines and coordination, reflecting the broader issue of fragmented governance noted in the results. The inconsistent support and funding exacerbate the difficulties faced by SPED educators, who are often left to manage with minimal resources and support, mirroring the study's findings on the challenges of readiness and resource availability.

Moreover, the study underscores the burden placed on SPED teachers, who struggle with inadequate financial backing and insufficient training, especially highlighted during the transition to remote learning amid the COVID-19 pandemic. This resonates with the result that teachers face high levels of burnout and frustration due to the lack of institutional support and clear policy implementation. The findings about technological inadequacies and the need for better training align with the identified gaps in readiness and resource allocation for SPED homeschooling.

The study's recommendations for improving the governance framework, enhancing



stakeholder coordination, and ensuring effective resource allocation are crucial for addressing the systemic issues identified. The results emphasize the urgent need for a cohesive and supportive governance structure that aligns with the study's call for transformative reforms to facilitate more effective SPED homeschooling. By addressing the challenges related to overlapping responsibilities and inadequate support, the study supports the need for implementing policies like Republic Act No. 11650, which aims to create a more inclusive and well-structured environment for SPED education.

### **Fragmented Governance Structure**

The study highlights that the governance of SPED homeschooling in Davao City suffers from a lack of clarity and coordination among various entities, including governmental agencies, educational institutions, and community organizations. Respondents pointed out that the absence of well-defined roles and responsibilities leads to ineffective implementation of policies and inadequate support for both traditional and homeschooled SPED students. This aligns with the broader issue of fragmented governance observed in the field of SPED, where centralized control and structural rigidity hinder local innovation and efficient policy execution.

Furthermore, the study underscores the impact of this fragmented governance on SPED teachers, who are burdened with managing both traditional and homeschooled students without sufficient resources or support. The lack of a cohesive governance framework results in confusion, inefficiencies, and delays in policy implementation, exacerbating the challenges faced by educators. These issues reflect broader concerns about inadequate managerial talent and centralized control, which prevent effective local-level reforms and support.

The results also reveal the difficulties associated with resource allocation, such as the lack of dedicated SPED centers and essential tools like Learner Reference Numbers (LRNs). This scarcity of resources impedes effective educational planning and support for SPED students. The study highlights the need for improved transparency, better coordination among stakeholders, and a more structured approach to resource allocation, as suggested by existing research on governance in special education.

Additionally, the findings point to the inadequacies in funding and support, which are critical for implementing effective SPED programs. The recurrent issue of inconsistent funding, as seen in the exclusion of SPED funding from the

National Expenditure Program (NEP), reflects broader governance and prioritization challenges within the political system. This fragmentation and lack of a dedicated funding mechanism contribute to the instability and inefficiency in SPED service delivery.

### **Teacher's Burden**

Financial constraints significantly burden SPED teachers, who frequently cover classroom expenses out of pocket due to insufficient institutional and governmental support. This financial strain, coupled with inadequate support mechanisms, contributes to high levels of burnout among educators, despite their commitment to their roles. The transition to remote learning during the pandemic has further exacerbated these challenges, revealing significant technological inadequacies and gaps in training among SPED teachers, which impedes their ability to deliver effective education to students with special needs (Sadia, 2020).

The findings align with those of Balading et al. (2023), who document that SPED teachers faced considerable difficulties adapting to online teaching amidst a lack of technological resources and knowledge. The Philippine context is particularly challenging, given the existing support infrastructure for SPED is notably deficient. Despite these adversities, SPED teachers' dedication remains evident, underscoring an urgent need for enhanced governance and support systems within special education.

The analysis further reveals that SPED teachers encounter challenges related to burnout, inadequate salaries, and the responsibility of financing classroom needs (Balading et al., 2023). The transition to blended learning has introduced additional obstacles, including unreliable internet connectivity and parents' limited instructional expertise (Mendoza, 2023). Teachers have attempted to address these issues by adapting learning activities and establishing support networks, yet the effectiveness of these measures remains compromised by systemic deficiencies (Allam & Martin, 2021; Mendoza, 2023). The testimonies provided by respondents reflect these struggles: "DepEd policies do not effectively translate to the ground due to inconsistent resource allocation and inadequate support mechanisms, hindering the cohesive delivery of SPED programs" (Coordinator 2).

Operational challenges are also evident, as illustrated by the experiences of the Inclusive Learning Resource Center (ILRC) at SPED Bangkal, which, despite being supported by Republic Act No. 11650, faces difficulties due to

its operational independence from DepEd's SPED programs and administrative complexities similar to those encountered by the Alternative Learning System (ALS). Bureaucratic obstacles and funding issues further complicate the coordination of therapy services, and many households lack the conducive environment for effective homeschooling, such as reliable internet access and active parental involvement (Teacher 4).

The study reveals that DepEd policies often falter at the local level due to inconsistent implementation and support. Schools are grappling with a shortage of SPED teachers, insufficient teaching materials, and inadequate professional support services. This lack of resources and coordination contributes to the fragmented governance structure, characterized by poorly defined roles and responsibilities among various stakeholders. This fragmentation impedes effective policy implementation and service delivery for SPED students, as evidenced by the lack of SPED centers and essential tools like Learner Reference Numbers (LRNs), which create significant barriers to quality education (Principal 2).

### **III. SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

Key findings indicate that SPED teachers face overwhelming responsibilities, insufficient salaries, and lack of essential resources, leading to burnout and frustration. The fragmented governance structure is marked by unclear roles, inadequate infrastructure, and ineffective policy implementation. This inadequacy is further compounded by the absence of dedicated SPED centers and well-defined homeschooling programs, which exacerbate the difficulties faced by both educators and students.

Teachers' accounts expose a system in crisis, struggling with bureaucratic obstacles and policies that fail to address their practical needs. The disconnection between national policies and local implementations highlights a significant gap in SPED education governance. The introduction of Republic Act No. 11650 presents an opportunity to address these systemic issues by promoting inclusive education and establishing a cohesive governance framework.

To address these challenges, the study recommends establishing a national framework tailored specifically for SPED homeschooling to ensure consistent implementation and enforcement across educational settings. Enhancing stakeholder coordination among government agencies, educational institutions, and community

organizations is crucial for improving collaboration and policy implementation. Increasing resource allocation is essential to provide the necessary materials, equipment, and trained personnel, as well as investing in infrastructure and technological support to enhance SPED homeschooling effectiveness. Continuous professional development for SPED teachers should be provided to equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge, while addressing salary concerns and reducing bureaucratic barriers to alleviate teacher burnout.

Strengthening parental involvement is also important; this can be achieved by enhancing digital literacy and providing resources to help SPED families support blended learning, alongside developing targeted interventions to create supportive home learning environments. Establishing dedicated SPED centers in all schools will ensure specialized resources and support for SPED students. A comprehensive review of existing SPED policies is needed to eliminate redundancies and ensure alignment with the practical needs of SPED learners and educators. Flexible blended learning strategies should be implemented to cater to diverse needs. Finally, fostering collaboration among universities, teacher education institutions, and various stakeholders, ensuring consistent funding, and exploring alternative funding sources will further enhance the SPED homeschooling system.

In conclusion, the study highlights significant systemic challenges that affect SPED homeschooling in Davao City, including fragmented governance, ineffective policies, and resource deficiencies. The emotional toll on teachers and inadequate support mechanisms underscore the need for a cohesive and supportive framework. By implementing clear role definitions, dedicated resources, and comprehensive policies, and fostering enhanced collaboration, the quality of SPED homeschooling can be improved. Republic Act No. 11650 has the potential to drive transformative change by creating a more inclusive and supportive educational environment. Collective efforts from policymakers, educators, and communities are crucial to developing a well-resourced and effective SPED homeschooling system that ensures every SPED student receives the necessary support and understanding to thrive.

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