



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Education
REGION VII - CENTRAL VISAYAS
DIVISION OF CITY SCHOOLS - TAGBILARAN CITY

Office of the Schools Division
Superintendent

September 18, 2025

Division Memorandum
No. 678 s. 2025

**DISSEMINATION OF IMPLEMENTING RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE REPUBLIC
ACT NO. 12080, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE BASIC EDUCATION MENTAL HEALTH
AND WELL- BEING PROMOTION ACT**

To: Assistant Schools Division Superintendent
Chiefs, CID, SGOD
Public and Private Elementary and Secondary School Heads
All Others Concerned

1. For the information and guidance of all concerned, enclosed is a copy of the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) on the Basic Education Mental Health and Well-Being Promotion.
2. Pursuant to Section 32 of the said IRR, these Rules and Regulations shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication in the Official Gazette and/or in a newspaper of general circulation.
3. All school officials and personnel of both **public and private elementary and secondary schools** are directed to disseminate the contents of the IRR for proper information and guidance.
4. Immediate and wide dissemination of this Memorandum is desired.

WILFREDA D. BONGALOS PhD, CESO V
Schools Division Superintendent 

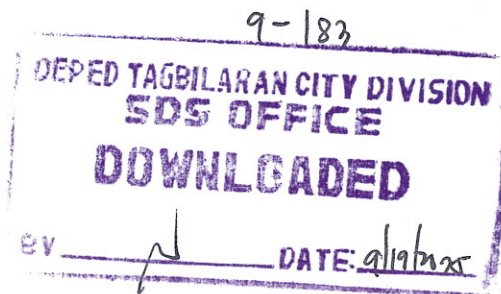
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H. Zamora St., Dampas, Tagbilaran City, Bohol
(038)427-1702; (038)427-2506
tagbilarancity.division@deped.gov.ph



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Education



DepEd MEMORANDUM
No. 077, s. 2025

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DISSEMINATION OF IMPLEMENTING RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 12080, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE BASIC EDUCATION MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING PROMOTION ACT

To: Undersecretaries
Assistant Secretaries
Minister, Basic, Higher, and Technical Education, BARMM
Bureau and Service Directors
Regional Directors
Schools Division Superintendents
Public and Private Elementary and Secondary School Heads
Attached Agencies
All Others Concerned

- For information and guidance of all concerned, enclosed is a copy of the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act (RA) No. 12080, otherwise known as the **Basic Education Mental Health and Well-Being Act**.
- In accordance with Section 32 of the IRR, these Rules and Regulations shall take effect 15 days after its publication in the Official Gazette or a newspaper of general circulation. The IRR was published in the Philippine Daily Inquirer (A7), Vol. 40 No. 28, on March 6, 2025. Consequently, it took effect on March 21, 2025.
- All regional offices, schools division offices, and public and private schools are hereby directed to implement the provisions of RA 12080, this IRR, and other relevant and subsequent issuances pursuant to the foregoing.
- For more information regarding this issuance, please contact the **Office of the Undersecretary for Operations**, 16th Floor, Department of Education Office, TechZone Building, Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City, or through email at ouops@deped.gov.ph or at telephone (02) 8633-5313.
- Immediate dissemination of this Memorandum is desired.

By Authority of the Secretary:



ATTY. FATIMA LIPP D. PANONTONGAN
Undersecretary and Chief of Staff

Encl.:

As stated

To be indicated in the Perpetual Index
Under the following subjects:

BASIC EDUCATION
FACILITIES
LEARNING AREA, GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING
LEGISLATIONS
POLICY
PUBLICATIONS
RULES AND REGULATIONS
SCHOOLS
TEACHING LOAD



IMPLEMENTING RULES AND REGULATIONS OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 12080 or the BASIC EDUCATION MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING PROMOTION ACT

**RULE I
GENERAL PROVISIONS**

SEC. 1. Title. These Rules and Regulations shall be referred to as the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act No. (RA) 12080, otherwise known as the “Basic Education Mental Health and Well-Being Promotion Act,” hereinafter referred to as the Act.

SEC. 2. Construction. This IRR shall be interpreted in light of the Declaration of Policy and Objectives found in RA 12080.

SEC. 3. Declaration of Policy and Objectives. The State recognizes the vital role of children and the youth in nation-building and shall foster and protect their holistic well-being. The State also affirms its policy to promote mental health and well-being in educational institutions.”

To this end, the State shall ensure that learners and personnel receive the necessary support that addresses both their academic performance and overall well-being to facilitate the fulfillment of their aspirations.

In pursuit of such policy, the State shall aim to achieve the following main objectives under the Act:

(a) Strengthen the implementation of the existing mental health and guidance and counseling program and other health and wellness activities, including sports-related programs, through the development of an effective and efficient school-based mental health program, to promote and ensure the mental health and well-being of all learners, as well as provide mental health awareness and literacy programs and appropriate mental health-related referrals to the teaching and non-teaching personnel, in all public and private basic education schools in the country.

(b) Establish and maintain a Care Center in every public basic education institution, and ensure their establishment and maintenance in private basic education institutions, to be operated by competent personnel, equipped with the necessary facilities, and supported with the required resources.

(c) Establish a Mental Health and Well-Being Office in every Schools Division Office (SDO), under the administration and supervision of the Department of Education (DepEd), to address the mental health and well-being of all learners and personnel of DepEd under the jurisdiction of the School Division Offices (SDO).

(d) Hire, deploy, and capacitate competent personnel whose duties and responsibilities shall be geared towards promoting and ensuring the mental health and well-being of all learners, and promote their professional growth and career progression by prescribing the creation of new plantilla positions

of Schools Division Counselors, School Counselors, and School Counselor Associates in DepEd.

SEC. 4. Definition of Terms. For purposes of this IRR, the following terms shall mean or be understood as follows:

(a) Basic education refers to and encompasses kindergarten, elementary, and secondary education as well as alternative learning systems for out-of-school learners and those with special needs.

(b) Care center refers to an office in basic education schools that is equipped with functional physical facilities, headed by a School Counselor, and provides school-based mental health services.

(c) Community Learning Center refers to a physical space to house learning resources and facilities of a learning program for out-of-school children in special cases and adults. It is a venue for face-to-face learning activities and other learning opportunities for community development and improvement of the people's quality of life.

(d) Counseling refers to a dynamic and professional face-to-face or online interaction between the registered/licensed counselor and the counselee/s, where the counselor employs various evidence-based methods, approaches, or techniques to enhance the counselees' intrapersonal and interpersonal development and competencies.

(e) Inclusive Learning Resource Center of Learners with Disabilities refers to a physical or virtual center that provides support and related services to teaching and learning, using appropriate, accessible, disability, linguistically-culturally-, and gender-sensitive instructional learning materials, tools, devices, gadgets, and equipment to facilitate and enhance learning, and assessment tools and instruments, to evaluate developmental domains and specific areas of concern to determine appropriate services and placement decisions, with support and related services from medical, health, and allied professionals for care, rehabilitation, and development of learners with disabilities.

(f) Learner refers to any individual enrolled in basic education seeking basic literacy skills and functional life skills or support services for the improvement of the quality of his/her life.

(g) Learners with Diverse Backgrounds refer to those who are vulnerable to or have experienced abuse, neglect, exploitation, cruelty, discrimination, or violence (armed conflict, domestic violence and other analogous conditions prejudicial to their development) by reason of their diverse physical, mental, social, economic, and cultural conditions.

(h) Mental health refers to a state of well-being in which the individual realizes one's own abilities and potentials, copes adequately with the normal stresses of life, displays resilience in the face of extreme life events, works productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a positive contribution to the community.

It shall likewise refer to a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community.

(i) Mental Health and Wellbeing Office (MHWO) refers to the office to be established at every SDO, headed by a Schools Division Counselor, which is primarily tasked to address the mental health and well-being of all learners and DepEd personnel under the jurisdiction of the SDO.

(j) Parent-Substitute as defined under RA 11908 or The Parent Effectiveness Service Program Act refers to a person other than the biological parent who has custody over a child and is primarily responsible for his/her care, and physical, moral and intellectual development, such as foster care parents, legal guardians and care providers: Provided, That surrogate parents and care providers shall secure a certification from the proper office of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) confirming him/her as a parent-substitute.

(k) Registered Guidance Counselor refers to an individual who possesses a license or a valid certificate of registration and a valid professional identification card as a guidance counselor issued by the Professional Regulatory Board of Guidance and Counseling and the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) and holds at least a Master's Degree in Guidance and Counseling, without prejudice to those registered under the grandfather clause of Republic Act No. 9258, or the "Guidance and Counseling Act of 2004", and is competent to perform guidance and counseling and career guidance, and implement mental health programs.

(l) Registered Psychologist refers to an individual who possesses a license and holds a valid certificate of registration and a valid professional identification card as a Professional Psychologist, issued by the Professional Regulatory Board of Psychology and the PRC, and, with at least a Master's Degree in Psychology.

(m) School refers to an educational institution, private or public, undertaking educational operation with a specific group of learners pursuing defined studies at defined levels, receiving instruction from teachers, usually located in a building or group of buildings in a particular physical or cyber site.

(o) School-Based Mental Health Program (SMHP) refers to the program of DepEd headed by the Bureau of Learner Support Services (BLSS) or its equivalent which serves to promote and ensure the mental health and well-being of learners and school personnel in compliance with its mandate stipulated under RA 11036 or the Mental Health Act.

(p) School-based Mental Health Services refers to psychosocial activities and programs along the whole range of the mental health support services including promotion, prevention, referral for treatment, and aftercare, to be provided in schools.

(q) Schools Division Counselor refers to the plantilla position/s in DepEd which shall be filled up by a Registered Guidance Counselor or a Registered Psychologist charged with heading the Mental Health and Well-Being Office in the SDO and ensuring the performance of its functions.

(r) School Counselor refers to the plantilla position/s in DepEd which shall be filled up by a Registered Guidance Counselor or a Registered Psychologist charged with heading the school Care Center and ensuring the performance of its functions.

(s) School Counselor Associate refers to the plantilla position in DepEd which shall be filled up by a graduate of (1) a Bachelor's Degree in Guidance and Counseling or Psychology; (2) any Bachelor's Degree with at least eighteen (18) units of courses in Guidance and Counseling or Psychology; or (3) any related Bachelor's Degree and who must have earned a minimum of eighteen (18) units of Behavioral Science courses that shall include two hundred (200) hours of supervised practicum or internship experience on guidance and counseling, preferably in a school or community setting.

RULE II

SCHOOL-BASED MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM; SCHOOL-BASED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

SEC. 5. School-Based Mental Health Program; School-Based Mental Health Services. The implementation of the existing mental health program of DepEd shall be strengthened through the development of a School-Based Mental Health Program (SMHP) to promote and ensure the mental health and well-being of all learners in all public and private basic education schools, including out-of-school children in special cases as defined under RA 11510, or the "Alternative Learning System Act", taking into consideration the provisions under RA 11650, or the "Instituting a Policy of Inclusion and Services for Learners with Disabilities in Support of Inclusive Education Act".

SMHP shall promote mental health awareness and manage the mental health concerns of all learners, including the prevention of suicide in schools and in times of emergencies, in accordance with RA 10821 or the "Children's Emergency Relief and Protection Act." The program shall likewise define the role of every stakeholder in the school community to appropriately respond to such mental health concerns through prevention, intervention, postvention, and recovery.

The promotion of mental health awareness shall include but not be limited to curricular efforts such as roll-out of mental health-related curriculum programs like the Homeroom Guidance Program, and curriculum integration.

SMHP shall be developed and continuously improved in consultation with the learners, their parents and parent-substitutes, local government units, Non-Government Organizations, and other relevant National Government Agencies, and designed to provide school-based mental health services including the following:

- (a) Screening, evaluation, assessment, and monitoring;
- (b) Mental health first aid;

- (c) Crisis response and referral system;
- (d) Mental health awareness and literacy;
- (e) Emotional, developmental, and preventive;
- (f) Other support services such as strengthening the learners' family bonds; and
- (g.) School-based mental health services shall also include guidance and counseling services for the personal, social, academic, and career development of learners, and other mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services such as profiling of at-risk learners and provision of psychological first aid during emergencies and disasters.

DepEd shall likewise implement complementary measures that promote healthy behaviors, habits, and activities among learners and eliminate the stigma on mental health counseling. Further, it shall provide mental health awareness programs and literacy and appropriate mental health-related referrals to the teaching and non-teaching personnel.

RULE III MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OFFICES

SEC. 6. Establishment of a Mental Health and Well-Being Office in Every Schools Division Office. There is hereby established, under the administration and supervision of DepEd, a Mental Health and Well-Being Office (MHWO) in every SDO, which is primarily tasked to address the mental health and well-being of all learners and personnel of DepEd under the jurisdiction of the SDO. It shall be headed by a Schools Division Counselor with Salary Grade 24 whose qualifications must include being a Registered Guidance Counselor or a Registered Psychologist.

Until such time that a qualified Schools Division Counselor is hired or an MHWO is fully established, the SDO may adopt alternative organizational arrangements, subject to the guidelines to be released by the DepEd Central Office, in consultation with the CSC, without prejudice to the progressive realization of promoting and ensuring mental health and well-being in basic education.

SEC. 7. Functions of the Mental Health and Well-Being Office. Guided by the national policies, standards, and frameworks set by the DepEd Central Office, the MHWO shall have the following functions:

- (a) Provide a general framework for the mental health and well-being programs of the schools under its jurisdiction. This framework shall encompass strategies and guidelines to promote the psychological welfare or the mental health and wellbeing of learners within the educational system.
- (b) Review, revise, and approve the mental health and well-being programs submitted by schools, particularly if the head of the Care Center is not a School Counselor, to ensure that the programs are aligned with established standards and best practices in the field of mental health.
- (c) Conduct periodic visits to the schools under its jurisdiction to assess the implementation of mental health and well-being programs, monitor and

evaluate their effectiveness, and determine the overall mental health status of the learners.

(d) Provide technical assistance to school personnel and counseling services to learners under its jurisdiction, particularly in cases where there is no School Counselor available. This includes offering support, guidance, and interventions to address the mental health needs of individual learners.

(e) Ensure that relevant training and capacity-building as well as supportive supervision and continuous care, is regularly conducted for or provided to School Counselors, School Counselor Associates, and other personnel of Care Centers, as provided in Section 18 of this IRR.

(f) Maintain comprehensive records of its activities, including program approvals, school visits, training and equipping of learners and personnel, and counseling sessions, as well as assume responsibility over the custody of assessment materials related to guidance services and other confidential records or documents pursuant to the RA 10173 or the Data Privacy Act of 2012.

(g) Collaborate with relevant stakeholders, including educators, parents and parent-substitutes, and mental health professionals, to foster a holistic approach to mental health within the educational system, involving joint initiatives, such as, but not limited to, sharing of resources, and coordination of efforts to promote the overall well-being of learners.

(h) Conduct periodic evaluations of its own effectiveness and submit reports on the impact of the implemented programs. Based on these evaluations, necessary adjustments and adaptations to the framework and activities shall be made to ensure the continuous enhancement of mental health support within the educational system.

(i) Provide professional guidance and expertise to the Human Resource Development (HRD) units in their respective SDOs on aspects concerning mental health, such as awareness and prevention campaigns, referral systems, capacity-building, integration of mental health in HRD; Provided that, the DepEd Bureau of Human Resource and Organizational Development (BHROD) shall be responsible for the overall well-being programs for DepEd personnel across all governance levels.

(j) Provide professional guidance and expertise to HRD units on the review of working conditions, such that the mental health needs of personnel are promoted and taken care of; and

(k) Perform other activities within the purview of guidance and counseling deemed necessary to enhance the mental health and well-being of learners, including the coordination of programs and oversight of school-based committees and offices related to learner rights and protection concerns.

**RULE IV
CARE CENTERS**

SEC. 8. Establishment of Care Centers in DepEd Schools. DepEd shall provide the minimum standards on the establishment and maintenance of Care Centers in public basic education schools.

The Care Center shall be equipped with functional physical facilities, including necessary tools, materials, and infrastructure for the provision of school-based mental health services, and is located within an adequate space where confidentiality is maintained and is accessible to all learners including out-of-school children in special cases as defined under RA 11510, and the teaching and non-teaching personnel.

SEC. 9. Conversion of Existing Guidance and Counseling Offices. All existing Guidance and Counseling Offices shall be converted and renamed to "Care Center", upon fulfilling the minimum standards to be set by the DepEd Central Office, without prejudice to the needs of the learners to guidance and counseling and career guidance, and the exercise of guidance and counseling profession as provided by RA 9258.

SEC. 10. Utilization of the Career Guidance and Counseling Program Centers. Secondary schools may utilize the Career Guidance and Counseling Program (CGCP) Centers as established under Section 5 of RA 11206, or the "Secondary School Career Guidance and Counseling Act", to accommodate the implementation and delivery of services under the SMHP.

SEC. 11. Organizational Structure of the Care Center. The Care Center shall be headed by a School Counselor who shall be under the direct supervision of the Schools Division Counselor of the Mental Health and Well-Being Office at the division level. The School Counselor shall be assisted by a School Counselor Associate and other necessary support personnel as may be determined by DepEd upon the recommendation of the Schools Division Counselor. The School Counselor Associate shall be subject to the conditions of professional practice under Sections 27 and 28 of RA 9258, or Sections 3b, 30 and 32 of RA 10029, or the "Philippine Psychology Act of 2009", as applicable. The same shall apply to any other school personnel responsible and performing support functions in the delivery of the school-based mental health programs and services allowed by Section 10 of the Act.

This section shall not be construed as limiting schools to having only one (1) school counselor and one (1) school counselor associate. DepEd, in coordination with the DBM and CSC, shall endeavor to ensure that schools have adequate school counselors and school counselor associates in line with evidence-based learners-to-mental health professional ratios.

In cases where there are more than one school counselors employed in a single care center, the school counselor with the highest rank and salary grade shall serve as the head of such care center: *Provided, that*, if there are more than one school counselor in a single care center with the same rank and salary grade the school head shall determine who will be the head of the care center.

In addition to implementing the program and delivering the services of the Care Center, the School Counselor and School Counselor Associate shall likewise assist the school administrator in the CGCP Centers, in accordance with Section 5 of RA 11206, and subject to the appropriate training.

SEC. 12. Functions of the Care Center. The Care Center in every public basic education school shall deliver school-based mental health services that are required in the fulfillment of the following functions:

(a) Develop a localized school-based mental health program to strengthen the implementation of the existing mental health program of DepEd based on the framework provided by the MHWO, guided by the national framework set by the DepEd Central Office, to promote and ensure the mental health and well-being of all learners, as well as provide mental health awareness and literacy programs and appropriate mental health-related referrals to teaching and non-teaching personnel. This shall be submitted to the Office at the SDO for review and approval particularly if there is no School Counselor in the Care Center.

(b) Render counseling when the Care Center has a School Counselor or facilitate referral to the Schools Division Counselor for counseling when it only has School Counselor Associates.

(c) Maintain a comprehensive record of counseling sessions through case notes that shall include learners' information, interventions conducted, referrals, and other recommendations that the Care Center deems relevant and essential to the improvement of the mental health and well-being of the learners.

(d) Conduct proper monitoring of all learners to identify their personal, social, academic, career, and mental health needs and concerns and to determine appropriate and timely response and intervention when necessary.

(e) In coordination with the Child Protection Committee, Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) Team, and other school-based committees or personnel concerned, equip the learners with skills and information for prevention, identification, and proper response and referral for their own and others' mental health needs, as applicable, and especially for learners identified as children-at-risk, children in conflict with the law, learners at risk of dropping out, learners involved in bullying, learner-victims of violence against women and their children, learners who are victims of natural calamities, armed conflicts, and other emergencies, learners with disabilities, and learner-victims of other related forms of child abuse and criminal acts, young mothers and fathers, and learners who have recently experienced traumatic experiences in their schools or communities, and other such learners with diverse backgrounds.

(f) Provide training and support to teachers and other personnel, in improving mental health awareness and literacy and preparedness, to enable them to identify early warning signs of mental health problems and the need for appropriate intervention.

- (g) Facilitate the efficient referral to appropriate agencies, institutions, organizations, or professionals for necessary intervention and aftercare support in addressing mental health concerns and needs of learners. The Care Center shall also monitor all learners who have gone through third-party intervention to ensure their continuous improvement.
- (h) Engage and provide support to parents, parent-substitutes, and other concerned stakeholders in improving the school behavior and ensuring the academic success of learners.
- (i) Establish linkages with the community through the promotion of mental health programs and activities geared towards the holistic well-being of learners.
- (j) Prepare and submit reports periodically to the Office at the SDO for review.
- (k) In coordination with the DRRM Team, ensure the provision of school-based mental health services to learners during emergencies.
- (l) Provide of the following services, subject to the availability of the appropriate licensed or trained professional:
- i. counseling and psychosocial support services and information on prevention of risky behaviors, including addiction, pursuant to Section 11.03 of the IRR of RA 10354 or the "Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Act of 2012";
 - ii. career and employment guidance and counseling pursuant to RA 11206 or the "Career Guidance and Counseling Act";
 - iii. counseling or referral services pursuant to Section 19 of RA 9344 or the "Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act of 2006," Section 3 of RA 10627 or the "Anti-Bullying Act of 2013," Section 27 of RA 11930 or the "Anti-Online Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of Children and Anti-Child Sexual Abuse or Exploitation Materials Act," and such other learner rights and protection concerns that may require counseling or referral services"; and
 - iv. other school-based mental services based on other laws or DepEd programs that entail the provision of such services.
- (m) provide referral services for school personnel in need of counseling and appropriate interventions: Provided that, the overall health and wellbeing of school personnel shall be the responsibility of the HRD units in their respective SDOs.
- (n) Perform such other functions and activities that may be assigned to it periodically by DepEd within the purview of guidance and counseling.

SEC. 13. Care Centers, Community Learning Centers (CLCs), and Inclusive Learning Resource Centers (ILRCs). Care centers may provide mental health services to learners under the Alternative Learning System within their immediate vicinity, in coordination with their respective CLCs.

Care centers may also provide assistance in ensuring personal, social, academic, career, and mental health of learners with disabilities in coordination with nearby ILRCs.

SEC. 14. Care Centers in other Basic Education Schools. DepEd shall ensure, through oversight, the establishment and maintenance of Care Centers in private basic education schools. Likewise, DepEd, in coordination with SUCs/LUCs and relevant (NGAs), shall provide guidelines in establishing and maintaining Care Centers in all other basic education institutions.

RULE V

HUMAN RESOURCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, PRE-SERVICE EDUCATION, AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS' TRAINING

SEC. 15. Creation of New Plantilla Positions. For purposes of this IRR, the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) shall, in consultation with DepEd, the Civil Service Commission (CSC), and relevant professional organizations, create the following new plantilla positions in DepEd and include the same in the revised compensation and position classification system, and index of occupational services, occupational groups, classes, and salary grades:

Plantilla Position Title	Salary Grade
School Counselor Associate I	11
School Counselor Associate II	12
School Counselor Associate III	13
School Counselor Associate IV	14
School Counselor Associate V	15
School Counselor I	16
School Counselor II	18
School Counselor III	20
School Counselor IV	22
Schools Division Counselor	24

The positions of Guidance Counselor, Guidance Coordinator, and Guidance Services Specialist shall be converted or reclassified, or both, to the pertinent newly created positions. DepEd, DBM, and CSC shall determine the eligibility and qualifications of the newly created positions in accordance with the Act.

SEC. 16. Hiring and Deployment of Personnel. DepEd, as the lead agency, and the DBM shall prioritize the hiring of Schools Division Counselors in all MHWOs pursuant to the progressive realization of promoting and ensuring mental health and well-being in basic education.

Until the plantilla positions for School Counselor and School Counselor Associates are filled up, DepEd may assign teachers or other DepEd personnel to deliver

personal, social, and school-based mental health services supervised by the School Counselor in the school, if available, or by the Schools Division Counselor: Provided, That they undergo sufficient capacity-building as determined by DepEd: Provided, further, That they shall receive honoraria for the delivery of such services, subject to the guidelines set by the DBM and the Commission on Audit: Provided, finally, That they shall be subject to the conditions of professional practice set forth under relevant laws and regulations.

SEC. 17. Professional and Career Development. DepEd shall, in coordination with the DBM, CSC, and PRC, prepare a uniform career and personnel development plan that shall include provisions on personal wellness, merit promotion, performance evaluation, in-service training, post-graduate scholarship grants, research grants, suggestions, and incentive award system.

The promotion of School Counselors and School Counselor Associates shall be based on merit, fitness, and competence through the reclassification of position titles.

DepEd shall, in collaboration with the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), National Educators Academy of the Philippines (NEAP) and other government agencies concerned, develop a scholarship program for teaching personnel and other school personnel interested in becoming either a:

- (a) School Counselor Associate, requiring the completion of either:
 - i. Bachelor's Degree in Guidance and Counseling or Psychology, any Bachelor's Degree with at least eighteen (18) units of courses in Guidance and Counseling or Psychology;
 - ii. any related Bachelor's Degree with at least eighteen (18) units of courses of Behavioral Science including two hundred (200) hours of supervised practicum or internship experience on guidance and counseling. Or

- (b) School Counselor, necessitating the attainment of a Master's Degree in Guidance and Counseling or Psychology, and successful passing of the licensure examinations within a reasonable period.

A scholarship program shall likewise be made available to School Counselor Associates to qualify as School Counselor.

The scholars shall be required to fulfill an obligation to return service in DepEd by serving as School Counselors or School Counselor Associates for such reasonable period as may be determined by DepEd.

SEC. 18. Pre-Service Education; Continuing Education. DepEd, in collaboration with CHED, shall coordinate with the Teacher Education Council (TEC), to ensure that teacher education institutions offering Bachelor of Elementary or Secondary Education or related degrees and programs, including teacher certification programs, shall include courses on mental health and behavioral science in the curriculum.

Further, DepEd shall carry out the appropriate regular training and skills upgrading and development for the personnel of the Care Center.

SEC 19. Other Stakeholders' Training. To promote the mental health awareness of the school community, DepEd, in collaboration with the Department of Health (DOH), other relevant government agencies, professional organizations, shall equip all teaching and non-teaching personnel in public and private basic education schools, as well as other stakeholders, with the basic knowledge, skills, positive values, and attitudes regarding mental health promotion, prevention, management, and after-care to detect learners who may need mental health support and refer them to the Care Center for appropriate intervention.

RULE VI
PROGRESSIVE REALIZATION OF PROMOTING AND ENSURING MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING IN BASIC EDUCATION

SEC. 20. Ensuring Continuity of the SMHP in Schools. The absence of a physical Care Center shall not prohibit the School from providing school-based mental health services under the SMHP.

SEC. 21. Creation of a Division under the Bureau of Learners Support Services. There is hereby created a Learner Wellness Division (LWD) under the Bureau of Learners Support Services (BLSS) to lead in the progressive realization of promoting and ensuring mental health and well-being in basic education. To this end, the LWD shall provide yearly targets such as, but not limited to, the following:

- (a) Establishment of Mental Health and Well-Being Offices;
- (b) Establishment of Care Centers;
- (c) Creation and filling up of the plantilla positions for the personnel of the Mental Health and Well-Being Offices and Care Centers;
- (d) Capacity-building and training programs for relevant personnel and other stakeholders concerned; and
- (e) Funding requirements with a determination of appropriate budgetary allocation and inclusion under the yearly national expenditure program of the government.

Provided, that, DepEd, through the LWD, together with other DepEd units concerned, shall coordinate with CHED, the TEC, the CSC, the PRC, professional organizations in guidance and counseling and psychology, and other government agencies concerned, to ensure the supply of qualified professionals through the recruitment and retention of students in the appropriate academic programs and ensure their seamless progression from higher education to employment, taking into consideration the demand for such professionals in the Care Centers.

Provided, further, that the creation of the LWD shall not prejudice any reorganization, rationalization, right-sizing or other such modifications to the organizational structure by DepEd or future laws and executive issuances.

RULE VII
PRIVILEGED COMMUNICATION

SEC. 22. Privileged Communication. To encourage open and honest communication between the learner and Schools Division Counselor, School Counselor, School Counselor Associate, or other school personnel concerned and

create a safe and trusting environment for the learners, all communications, in any form, in the context of mental health support services shall be considered privileged and confidential except when:

- (a) there is a clear and imminent risk of harm to the learner or others.
- (b) there is a legal obligation to disclose information in accordance with law, or as may be required through a court order.
- (c) the learner, parent, or legal guardian consents to share specific information with designated individuals.

RULE VIII BENEFITS

SEC. 23. Benefits. The Schools Division Counselors, School Counselors, and School Counselor Associates shall enjoy the rights and privileges as provided in Republic Act No. 7305, or the "Magna Carta of Public Health Workers", Republic Act No. 11036, and other pertinent laws, subject to guidelines jointly issued by the DBM, DepEd, and the DOH.

RULE IX FUNDING AND OTHER RESOURCES

SEC. 24. Programs and Projects Related to Mental Health. DepEd shall provide sufficient resources for the planning and effective implementation of mental health programs and projects of the division MHWOs and the Care Centers.

SEC. 25. Appropriations. The amount needed for the initial implementation of the Act shall be charged against those authorized in the current appropriations of DepEd. Thereafter, the amount necessary for the continued implementation of the Act shall be included in the budget as a separate line item in the annual General Appropriations Act.

RULE X TRANSITORY PROVISIONS

SEC. 26. Interim Organizational Arrangements. Consistent with Section 5 of this IRR, DepEd may adopt temporary organizational arrangements across all governance levels to begin the implementation of the SMHP as prescribed by the Act.

DepEd, in coordination with CSC and PRC, shall employ strategies to encourage Registered Guidance Counselors, Registered Psychologists, or any of the qualified Bachelor's degree holders to apply for the newly created plantilla positions under this Act, subject to existing rules and regulations.

RULE XI FINAL PROVISIONS

SEC. 27. Guidelines. DepEd shall issue separate guidelines relative to the implementation and operationalization of this IRR.

CSC, DBM, DepEd, PRC, and other relevant agencies or stakeholders, may jointly or separately issue other policies and guidelines, as may be necessary, to further implement this IRR.

SEC. 28. Amendments. Amendments to this IRR shall be jointly promulgated by the CSC Chairperson, the DBM Secretary, the DepEd Secretary, and the PRC Chairperson.

SEC. 29. Annual Report. Three (3) years after the effectivity of the Act, DepEd shall commence the submission of annual reports on the status of its implementation to the Committee on Basic Education of the Senate and the Committee on Basic Education and Culture of the House of Representatives.

SEC. 30. Separability Clause. If any part or provision of this IRR is declared invalid or unconstitutional, other parts not affected thereby shall continue to be valid and subsisting.

SEC. 31. Repealing Clause. All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, presidential proclamations, rules and regulations, or parts thereof contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of the Act and/or its IRR are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

SEC. 32. Effectivity. This IRR shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or a newspaper of general circulation.

This IRR shall be registered with the Office of the National Administrative Register at the University of the Philippines Law Center, UP Diliman, Quezon City.

Done this 4th day of March 2025 at Pasig City, Philippines.



SONNY M. ANGARA
Secretary
Department of Education



AMENAH S. PANGANDAMAN
Secretary
Department of Budget and
Management



ATTY. MARILYN B. BARUA-YAP
Chairperson
Civil Service Commission



CHARITO A. ZAMORA
Chairperson
Professional Regulation Commission