DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

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JON J. P. FERNANDEZ
Superintendent of Education

May 06, 2019

35GL-19-0488
Speaker Tina Rose Muña Barnes

MAY 0 6 2019
Time 3:45 ( )AM (X)PM
Received By: Matt

2019 MAY -6 PM 4:10

Dr. Judith Won Pat-Borja
Chief Academic Officer
Guahan Academy Charter School
P.O. Box CS
Hagatna, Guam 96932

Dear Dr. Won Pat-Borja,

Thank you for your response to the information I provided regarding the non-availability of Building E on the Tiyan campus. In your response, you continued to relay the Guahan Academy Charter School's request for additional facility space. At this time, I am not able to provide you with a solution to your request.

First, I am unclear why GACS is unable to meet its facility needs without availing itself of another government facility. GACS already occupies two buildings at no cost to your school, while iLearn Academy Charter School (iLearn) and Science Is Fun Academy (SIFA) are both required to identify and fund their own facilities. I do not believe it is justified that GACS be able to receive preferential treatment vis-a-vis the other two charter schools and their students, which is why I am unclear why GDOE is being repeatedly questioned about the availability of more free space.

Second, the GACS FY 2017 financial audit stated that the school was reporting $3.7 million in debt, which is the reason your auditors reported alarm over GACS as a going concern. Before assisting GACS, I would like to request information relative to GACS addressing its own financial issues and providing assurance that it will be able to operate as a stable and ongoing enterprise, which should concern your students, teachers and staff. Forcing GDOE to forego its educational priorities to accommodate a charter school that has not provided any details regarding its plans to pay its debt and secure its own facilities (as other charter schools have been able to demonstrate) is not reflective of what I consider to be a partnership. You are simply asking GDOE to move out without any questions.

Third, I understand that GACS maintains candidacy for its elementary school campus but has had its candidacy for its secondary campus withdrawn. Despite the testimony of GACS, the failure to maintain candidacy for accreditation of your high school program is a major concern. GCC, UOG and most mainland universities and colleges do require applicants to graduate from accredited high school. Otherwise, your students will face

much more scrutiny and hurdles to obtain and maintain admission as a full-time student.

The existing campus at GACS is indeed overcrowded because of the effort to house elementary and secondary students in a facility that was earlier intended solely for the elementary school. Why not forgo your secondary program for now, so you can shore up and accredit your elementary campus? That would then alleviate the issues related to GACS' decision to house 740 students in a facility better equipped to handle 500 to 600 students. Again, insisting on running an unaccredited secondary school program while asking for more free facility space does not strike me as a great reason for pushing aside GDOE's educational plans.

You expressed interest, as an alternative, in the availability of Building C. Building C is not available. It will serve as the central credit recovery campus for GDOE for School Year 2019-2020. As you know, our credit recovery program has been accredited by WASC since its first year, and it has resulted in the graduation of over 100 students who otherwise might have ended up dropping out of school. I'm sure you will agree that this is a worthwhile use aimed at benefits for students, especially at-risk students on our island.

Senseramente,

JON J. P. FERNANDEZ

Cc: Governor
Lt. Governor
Chairman and Members, Guam Education Board
Speaker, 35th Guam Legislature
Senators, 35th Guam Legislature
Chairwoman and Members, GACS Board of Trustees
Director, Department of CHamoru Affairs
Chair, I Kumision I Fino CHamoru
Chair, iLearn Academy Charter School
Chair, Science is Fun Academy Charter School