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Education officials discuss better tracking of non-appropriated funds

John O'Connor | The Guam Daily Post Jul 23, 2017 Updated Jul 23, 2017



MEETING: Sen. Joe San Agustin called for a roundtable meeting after learning \$8,000 in non-appropriated funds was unaccounted for at Agueda Johnston Middle School. Post file photo

The Guam Department of Education, Guam Education Board and the legislative committee overseeing public education came together yesterday for a roundtable discussion on GDOE's non-appropriated funds.

These funds come from activities such as fundraisers and donations.

Sen. Joe San Agustin, chairman of the Committee on Education, Finance & Taxation, called for a roundtable after he was told \$8,000 in non-appropriated funds was unaccounted for at Agueda Johnston Middle School.

Several protective and monitoring measures have been put in place for these funds, but the department continues to experience some challenges with timely reporting, according to the most recent audit by the Office of Public Accountability.

The board may be looking at updating policies to better monitor non-appropriated funds, said GDOE Superintendent Jon Fernandez.

Current board policy places the responsibility of monitoring non-appropriated funds on principals and allows schools to develop their own procedures. However, Fernandez said establishing a uniform system of tracking the funds would allow for better monitoring.

Lawmakers are also considering new legislation to hold employees accountable in the event non-appropriated funds are unaccounted for.

Thousands of dollars raised by the senior class at Simon Sanchez High School went missing in 2010. GDOE began to implement more safeguards for non-appropriated funds after the incident and following other cases that showed weaknesses in the accounting for such funds.

A GDOE investigation into the unaccounted funds at Agueda has been launched.

Fernandez deferred comments on that case as the investigation is still ongoing.

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Reporting on utilities, healthcare, education and other topics.