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DOE audit reveals \$10,000 retreat by charter school's board

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By Isa Baza [CONNECT](#)

Over ten grand used for a luxury hotel stay for board members at the Guahan Academy Charter School was discovered by DOE. \$13,000 in questionable costs were identified through a Guam Department of Education internal audit review.

These expenditures included over \$10,000 for a board retreat seminar at the Dusit Thani Guam Resort in January, which included guest charges for 10 rooms, a banquet package for two days, lunch and Sunday brunch. "That invoice was questionable on its face, and also there was no authority to use these, so we also look at prudent financial management of government funds, and in this case again, it's questionable, the use of hotel accommodations for this retreat," explained DOE chief auditor Franklin Cooper-Nurse, adding that the luxury hotel stay wasn't the only issue identified.

"We had roughly over \$2,000 for a duplicate invoice to Smart Copy and then an accounting variance for personnel costs," he added. The discrepancies were identified through a standard review required by Guam law. "In order for charter schools to receive their funds, they have to go through this very deliberate process where we examine their expenditures," said Cooper-Nurse.

"At this point this expenditure is not validated, so no government funds have been used for this expense. We're open to communication with charter schools and they've been in constant communication with our office. If there is anything that they could provide that would show the authority and prudent financial management of these funds, then we would definitely consider it."

While the audit office attempts to work with schools to address deficiencies, he said the bottom line is financial control. "So what is the consequence of unsupported costs, trying to be reimbursed? What is the consequence of unauthorized expenditures? Really it goes into the fact that they won't be validated by this office and in turn the funds won't be release by DOA," he said.

While KUAM News reached out to Guahan Academy Charter School board leadership for comment, they have yet to respond.



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