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2023-PIO-0037

September 15, 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

U.S. Department of Education Conducting High-Risk Validation Visit with GDOE from September 11 to September 15

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) Grants and Risk Management Division is on the island from September 11 to 15 to validate the Guam Department of Education (GDOE)'s progress in addressing its high-risk designation and to make a final determination on GDOE's probationary status and Specific Conditions.

In 2018, GDOE requested reconsideration of its high-risk designation and specific conditions from ED. ED issued its Amended Federal Fiscal Year 2018 Specific Conditions letter and a final Reconsideration Evaluation Plan (REP). The REP was designed to:

- 1) provide clear guidance to GDOE on actions that it must take and complete during the reconsideration process;
- 2) inform ED as it determines the extent to which specific conditions may be removed and the extent to which financial management responsibilities may be returned to GDOE; and
- 3) inform the ED as it determines whether GDOE has taken all necessary actions to be capable of performing the financial management responsibilities currently performed by the third-party fiduciary agent (TPFA), resulting in the removal of the requirement for the TPFA.

As a result of significant progress in addressing the requirements set forth in the REP, ED approved GDOE to commence a probationary period from April 2023 to September 2023 to demonstrate readiness to fully or partially transition fiscal management functions from the oversight of the TPFA back to GDOE. During the probationary period, the TPFA has taken on a hybrid advisory and oversight role.

At the conclusion of this visit, ED has committed to making a final determination whether or not the specific conditions of the TPFA will remain in place and will assess the need for amended or updated specific conditions based on the high-risk determination. Superintendent of Education, Dr. Kenneth Swanson shared the visit has been going smoothly throughout the week. ED met with the Governor, the Legislative Oversight Chair and Chair of Finance and Budget, the Public Auditor, GDOE officials, and stakeholders.

“GDOE has made tremendous progress in meeting the requirements set forth in the REP and complying with all federal regulations,” said Superintendent Swanson. “We look forward to the conclusion of ED’s validation visit and stand ready to take over the management and fiscal responsibilities over federal grants.”

The results of this visit and validation process will determine if there will be changes to GDOE’s Specific Conditions and high-risk designation.



Left to right: Steven Spillman (Bruman Law Group), Tiffany W. Kessler (Bruman Law Group), Christine Jackson (U.S. Department of Education Senior Risk Consultant), and DOE Superintendent Dr. K. Erik Swanson

For more information, you may send an email to Michelle A.T. Franquez at matfranquez@gdoe.net or to info@gdoe.net.

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