



OFFICE OF VICE SPEAKER TELENA CRUZ NELSON

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, AIR TRANSPORTATION,
AND STATISTICS, RESEARCH, AND PLANNING

I MINA'TRENTAI SINGKO NA LIHESLATURAN GUAHAN | 35th GUAM

July 27, 2020

The Honorable Betsy DeVos
Secretary of Education
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

The Honorable Frank Brogan
Assistant Secretary of Elementary
and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary DeVos and Assistant Secretary Brogan,

Hafa Adai! Thank you both for your commitment to helping address the Guam Department of Education's (GDOE) high risk designation and the special conditions placed on our federal education dollars, including the requirement of a third-party fiduciary agent. I was pleased to have been in Washington DC late last year to meet with Assistant Secretary Frank Brogan during a visit by our GDOE team to the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE). As the Vice-Speaker of the Guam Legislature, but, more importantly, Chairperson of the Committee on Education, I agree that it is important that GDOE be held accountable for the use of federal funding, but I also know that GDOE has made great strides in addressing all of the issues raised by USDOE over 15 years ago. I hope you will agree to consider the decision to remove or reduce the special conditions and the role of the third-party fiduciary agent.

My office has worked closely with the Superintendent to address the opportunities and challenges that face the department. When I joined him and his team to visit with Mr. Brogan, I was pleased to hear your assessment that GDOE has made significant progress in meeting the USDOE's requirements. It was promised that we would get a validation visit this year and a fair review and decision from the department. Last week, USDOE's Risk Management Services division, led by Mark Robinson and Christine Jackson, completed its virtual monitoring visit, and we now look forward to USDOE's consideration and decision. I want to thank Mr. Robinson and Ms. Jackson for their commitment and support of our progress.

Let me assure you that we have sufficient checks and balances here on Guam to ensure that GDOE sustains its progress in meeting the requirements of USDOE. These include an active Education Committee within the Legislature, a strengthened Office of Public Accountability, the department's external auditors, and the expanded GDOE Internal Audit Office. These various entities each play an important part to proactively identify and address deficiencies within GDOE, and we will continue to play that role. I can commit that we will continue to hold GDOE accountable and supports its progress. GDOE has now

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reported its seventh consecutive clean audit with zero questioned costs and material weaknesses. This is due to the hard work of its employees, and it is time to acknowledge their dedication and commitment.

As you consider your decision, I want you to know that we are working with GDOE to ensure that schools are able to re-open safely this coming school year. The \$2.5 million fee that we pay each year to the third party fiduciary agent would be better invested in supporting our students and families as we try to achieve a “new normal.” It is my hope that your favorable decision will result in the return of these vital funds to the department. I would like to express my gratitude for your consideration and remain confident that with your leadership and assistance, GDOE will successfully complete removing its special conditions to a third-party fiduciary agent.

Thank you again for your leadership and guidance throughout this process. We look forward to hearing your decision, and we stand by ready to address any further concerns or suggestions you might have.

Sensengamente,



TELENA C. NELSON

Vice-Speaker and Chairperson, Committee on Education

35th Guam Legislature