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Editorial

## Charter school needs to fully account for \$4.8M, and shouldn't get anything more

The Guam Daily Post 8 hrs ago

Every dollar spent should be accounted for; every dollar spent should be properly documented.

The Guahan Academy Charter School should follow the conditions for spending Guam taxpayer funds.

And it also should be transparent with what it does with Guam taxpayers' money.

Guam Public Law 33-185 states very clearly that the two charter schools on the island will get \$6,500 per student in funding support, based on a limited number of students, which also is set by law.

Guahan Academy is "not to exceed 740 students," while the iLearn Academy Charter School is capped at 500 government-funded students, the law states.

Somehow, Guahan Academy exceeded well beyond what the local government could pay for.

As of last month, according to its report to the government of Guam, it had an enrollment of 1,025 students – well beyond the limit set by the government for funding.

Guahan Academy has been beset with problems, such as its inability to get government clearances on time – to begin the school year for middle and high school – causing the school to delay opening until Sept. 18.

If Guahan Academy can't find non-government funding for the extra students it accepted, it may have to unenroll about as many as 285 students.

If forced to handle the situation this way, the students and their families would have to scramble to get accepted into another school. Ultimately the affected students will suffer.

Guahan Academy can't belatedly go back to the Legislature and ask for additional funding, in the name of students who may end up having to get unenrolled from the Tiyan charter school.

Giving Guahan Academy reprieve, by providing government funding for students above what the law authorized, wouldn't be fair to any of the public schools who have to deal with meager resources because some of the funds have to be diverted to charter schools.

Giving extra government funds to Guahan Academy wouldn't be fair to students of the public schools who get by with already scarce resources in the classrooms.

The Legislature, the Guam Department of Education and the Department of Administration also need to keep a closer watch on how Guahan Academy has been spending government funds.

As an example, Guahan Academy requested a \$160,177 initial allotment request for last month's expenses, more than half of which went to payroll and benefits.

And while Guahan Academy stated it spent \$160,177 that the government must pay for, the Guam Department of Education's internal audit could validate only \$148,867 of that spending.

At 740 students, Guahan Academy's enrollment is costing GovGuam \$4.8 million in one year.

Every dollar spent should be accounted for; every dollar spent should be properly documented.

This isn't private money – it's taxpayers' money that Guahan Academy is getting, and nothing short of full transparency and accountability is expected from its management and board.

