

# AG opinion on charter schools funding, enrollment sought

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(Photo: Haidee Eugenio/PDN)

The council overseeing charter schools voted on Tuesday to seek the attorney general's opinion on whether Guahan Academy Charter School or any other school violates the law when it enrolled students in excess of the per-student funding set by a budget statute, and whether the government could be obligated to also pay for those additional students.

Guahan Academy enrolled some 1,000 students for school year 2017-2018, but the budget law only provides funding for up to 740 students at \$6,500 per student.

The shortfall of some \$1.7 million is a concern for members of the reconstituted Guam Academy Charter Schools Council because it could jeopardize services for students if the charter school is unable to fund them outside of the Guam budget law.



Amanda Blas, chairwoman of the Guam Academy Charter Schools Council, speaks during a council meeting on Sept. 26, 2017. (Photo: Haidee Eugenio/PDN)

"What services will be sacrificed?" Council chairwoman Amanda Blas said.

While Guahan Academy assured the council that no student services will be sacrificed because they will look for other sources of funding such as grants, the council raised other concerns whether Guahan Academy is complying with applicable laws including the budget law.

"That's how we ended up arriving at that motion, to go forward requesting the attorney general opinion," Blas said.

iLearn Academy Charter School, meanwhile, enrolled 500 students, which is the maximum number that the budget law could fund for \$6,500 each.

But the school said its enrollment could have grown a few hundreds more if the budget law could fund every student enrolled.

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The Council also received suggestions mostly from iLearn Academy board chairman Francis Santos, to support the separation of budgets of each charter schools from the budget of the Guam Department of Education, which oversees 41 public elementary, middle and high schools.

"All I'm asking is we need to be separated from GDOE, that's first and foremost. Accomplishing that would be a major feat. But quite frankly, I don't think there will be opposition from what I know, from GDOE side. It's a process," Santos said at the council meeting.

The council has also set October public hearings on the applications of two new prospective charter schools: CareerTech High Academy Charter School, and Science is Fun and Awesome Learning Academy.

Reporter Haidee Eugenio covers Guam's Catholic church issues, education, business and more. Follow her on Twitter [@haidee\\_eugenio](https://twitter.com/haidee_eugenio) ([https://twitter.com/haidee\\_eugenio](https://twitter.com/haidee_eugenio)). Follow Pacific Daily News on Facebook/GuamPDN (<http://www.facebook.com/guampdn/>) and Instagram [@gu](http://instagram.com/GuamPDN) (<http://instagram.com/GuamPDN>)ampdn (<http://instagram.com/GuamPDN>).

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