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Education Board responds to accusations

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Is the Guam Academy Charter School being undermined so others can acquire its funding, students and facilities? The Guam Education Board vice chair Mark Mendiola responds to the accusations.

"We have 41 other schools that we have to basically contend to keep up and to get another set of assets - we're not trying to shut anyone down, we just want to make sure that the letter of the law is followed," he said.

That's what Guam Education Board vice chair Mark Mendiola said in response to claims by Guahan Academy Charter School board liaison Marilyn Manibusan that a recent risk assessment by DOE's internal audit office highlighting concerns over financial management at the school was simply an attempt to undermine the school, threaten its charter, and acquire its facilities, students, and funding.

"We have no issues with the charter school concept I think it's just the liability that the government has to - we gotta make sure these questions are asked and answered," he said.

Mendiola said because charter funding is included in the Guam Department of Education budget, the department's internal audit office reviews and validates funding before it is released. The risk assessment from earlier this month found numerous deficiencies, including half a million dollars that failed to be validated, including a \$10,000 luxury retreat for board members at the Dusit Thani Hotel & Spa. Meanwhile Manibusan also questioned the public nature of DOE's probe into the school's finances.

"If they have a problem with administration, with policies, with procedures, don't you think, the most decent thing is come next door. Can we talk? No. Assassinate. Assassinate the character," she said.

However Mendiola pointed out that while there are two charter schools in existence, one has been operating smoothly and without any concerns. "They are getting the resources that are being allotted to them, but when there's some questionable issues then of course we have to raise those issues and of course that's what we're doing, we're raising those issues, and we want to assist them as best we can," he said.

We should add a legislative roundtable with the charter school council is set for October 30th, while the next regular charter council meeting is next Thursday.



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