



OFFICE OF SENATOR
THOMAS A. MORRISON

Assistant Minority Leader
I Mina'trentai Kuáttro Na Liheslaturan Guâhan • 34th Guam Legislature

February 16, 2018

Superintendent Jon Fernandez
Guam Department of Education
Sent via: jonfernandez@gdoe.net

Subject: Closure and/or Consolidation of Schools

Håfa adai Superintendent Fernandez,

With preliminary discussions surrounding the potential closure and/or consolidation of schools moving forward, I respectfully request the Guam Department of Education (GDOE) to determine whether the closure of the former F.Q. Sanchez Elementary School resulted in costs savings or reprogramming of funds – and if ALL students from the campus were subsequently absorbed by Merizo Martyrs Memorial School.

The closure of F.Q. Sanchez Elementary School was recommended by Evergreen Solutions, LLC which performed a Management and Curriculum Audit of GDOE. According to the company's Final Report dated April 13, 2009, GDOE understood that in order to succeed in its mission, in the face of continuing economic constraints impacting operations and management, the school system will have to become more efficient and effective than ever before. In order to help GDOE realize this, Evergreen Solutions, LLC provided an extensive list of recommendations totaling a net savings of \$31,592,126 in School Year 2009-2010 and up to \$33,492,245 in School Year 2013-2014.

While I understand the closure and/or consolidation of schools, particularly those located in the south, are only options currently on the table, I'm mindful of the negative social and economic consequences these options may bring if these plans aren't carefully considered prior to implementation. I believe the closure of F.Q. Sanchez Elementary School may have been the only recommendation by Evergreen Solutions, LLC to be fully (and quickly) implemented. I also don't believe that additional options such as the transition to a charter school model, or transfer of administrative responsibilities to a qualified non-profit organization, were thoroughly evaluated. Despite claims by Evergreen Solutions, LLC that GDOE would save \$1.3 million by closing F.Q. Sanchez Elementary School, impacts to the broader community of Umatac and neighboring villages were also overlooked. Closing the campus resulted in a number of children being enrolled at schools in central and northern Guam – compelling families to either stay with relatives in other villages temporarily or relocate permanently. The closure also led to at least three (3) small mom and pop stores in the village closing their doors.

Superintendent Fernandez, the decisions you and other leaders of GDOE must make in the coming months are necessary in order to address an overall decrease in tax revenue collections brought about by tax reforms authorized recently by the U.S. federal government. However, I'm also confident that your leadership team will consider all options on the table before making any final decision resulting in the closure of our public schools. The closure of a campus, as in the case of F.Q. Sanchez Elementary School, doesn't just affect GDOE's finances; such a decision has the power to break the heart, soul, and history of a school family and community.

I look forward to hearing from you soon concerning this matter.

Sinseramente,

THOMAS (TOMMY) A. MORRISON
Senator

cc: Governor of Guam
Lt. Governor of Guam
Senators, *I Liheslaturan Guahan*
Mayor of Umatac
Members, Guam Education Board

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