

SENATOR RORY J. RESPICIO
MAJORITY LEADER

CHAIRPERSON
COMMITTEE ON RULES: FEDERAL, FOREIGN & MICRONESIAN AFFAIRS;
HUMAN & NATURAL RESOURCES, ELECTION REFORM, AND CAPITOL DISTRICT



I Mina'trentai Tres na Libeslaturan Guåban
THIRTY-THIRD GUAM LEGISLATURE

February 19, 2016

VIA E-MAIL:

jonfernandez@gdoe.net

Mr. Jon Fernandez

Superintendent

Guam Department of Education

500 Mariner Avenue

Barrigada, Guam 96913

Dear Superintendent Fernandez:

Hafa Adai! Thank you for meeting with me and for providing your letter of February 18, 2016 regarding recent adjustments to working hours for teachers in the public schools. This is a matter of great concern to not only the Guam Federation of Teachers (GFT), but also to the rank and file teachers. Although, as stated in your letter, middle school hours have not been changed, this is also likely to be an issue for elementary and high school teachers.

I appreciate your clarification that GDOE is implementing these changes to accommodate FESTPAC, using legal authority that has been on the books for more than a dozen years now. I was made to understand there may have been some confusion and that the changes might have been a consequence of Public Law 33-31. As you are aware, this statute, which I sponsored last year, protects Christmas and Easter breaks from changes in the school year calendar.

Our discussions and your follow-up letter were extremely useful in laying out not only your department's legal basis for instituting these changes to the work schedules, but also the reasoning behind this decision. More importantly though, I appreciate your recognition of the concerns of teachers about these changes and the proactive steps you have taken to try to address them. I strongly feel that the more GDOE remains engaged on this issue with the GFT and the department's workforce, the better the prospects for a fair and equitable resolution.

Ultimately, I believe the solution to this matter, and other scheduling concern is for your department and GFT to finish the ongoing collective bargaining negotiations and arrive at a new teacher's contract. This would provide a clear mechanism for resolving not only the current concerns about changes to the work schedule, as well as provide a legal mechanism to addressing similar concerns in the future.

I will be forwarding your letter to the GFT leadership, since they have a great interest in this matter. It is my hope that your continued efforts and effective leadership will bring about a mutually-acceptable agreement for all concerned. *Si Yu'os Ma'ase!*

Very truly yours,



Rory J. Respicio

Attachment: 2-18-2016 Letter from Mr. Jon Fernandez to Senator Rory J. Respicio