



# DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

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**K. ERIK SWANSON, Ph.D.**  
Superintendent of Education

February 18, 2025

Honorable Benjamin J.F. Cruz  
Office of Public Accountability  
Suite 401 DNA Building  
238 Archbishop Flores Street  
Hagatna, Guam 96910

*Håfa Adai* Public Auditor Benjamin J.F. Cruz,

Per Title 1 Guam Code Annotated Chapter 19 §1922(a), please find the Guam Department of Education's Citizen Centric Report for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2023 attached for your reference. The report will also be published on the GDOE website at <https://www.gdoe.net/District/Portal/citizen-centric-report>

Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at 300-1536 or [keswanson@gdoe.net](mailto:keswanson@gdoe.net).

Best Regards,

K. Erik Swanson, Ph.D.  
Superintendent of Education

CC: Honorable Frank Blas Jr., Speaker 38<sup>th</sup> Guam Legislature

Attachment:  
GDOE FY2023 Citizen Centric Report

# Guam Department of Education

## Citizen-Centric Report

FISCAL YEAR 2023



### WHO WE ARE

The Guam Department of Education (GDOE, Department) is a semi-autonomous agency within the Government of Guam (GovGuam) and is primarily funded through the GovGuam General Fund. The GDOE is a single unified school district that serves just under 25,000 students (from Kindergarten to Grade 12). There are 26 elementary schools, 8 middle schools, 6 high schools, and 1 alternative school for a total of 41 schools. Additionally, the Department administers Head Start, Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K), and GATE (Gifted and Talented Education) at select elementary schools.

The GDOE is governed by policies established by the Guam Education Board (GEB, Board) composed of elected and appointed board members. The Board appoints the Superintendent of Education who is the Chief Executive Officer of the Department.

All 41 schools are accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and use standards-based or criterion-referenced testing to assess student progress.

### OUR MISSION

**Our educational community:**  
**Prepares all students for life** by ensuring that all students, regardless of gender, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, language proficiency, special need, religion or beliefs, receive high quality education that will prepare them for post-secondary education, the workforce, and civic engagement.

**Promotes excellence** by adopting and implementing high standards and expectations for all students and employees with everyone performing at their best at all times. This philosophy is grounded in the belief that all students can learn at high levels and all employees can provide the highest quality of service.

**Provides support** by ensuring that our Department has a framework to identify and address the academic, social, and emotional needs of our diverse student population through a support system that is comprehensive and timely with an unwavering focus and relentless commitment to the success of each and every student.

#### VISION

To educate all students to be responsible, respectful, and ready for life

#### GUAM EDUCATION BOARD

**Chairwoman:** Dr. Mary A.Y Okada  
**Vice Chair:** Maria A. Gutierrez  
**Members:** Peter Alecxis D. Ada  
Felicitas B. Angel  
Christine W. Baleto  
Lourdes M. Benavente  
Karlyn RCG Borja  
Dr. Ron L. McNinch  
Angel R. Sablan

#### Ex-Officio

**GFT Rep.:** Timothy Fedenko  
**Mayor Rep.:** Melissa B. Savares  
IBOGS Student Representatives

#### GDOE LEADERSHIP

**K. Erik Swanson, Ph.D.**  
Superintendent of Education

**Franklin J.T. Cooper-Nurse**  
Acting Deputy Superintendent of Finance and Administrative Services

**Joseph L.M. Sanchez**  
Deputy Superintendent of Curriculum and Instructional Improvement

**Erika S. Cruz**  
Acting Deputy Superintendent of Educational Support & Community Learning

About Performance Finances Outlook

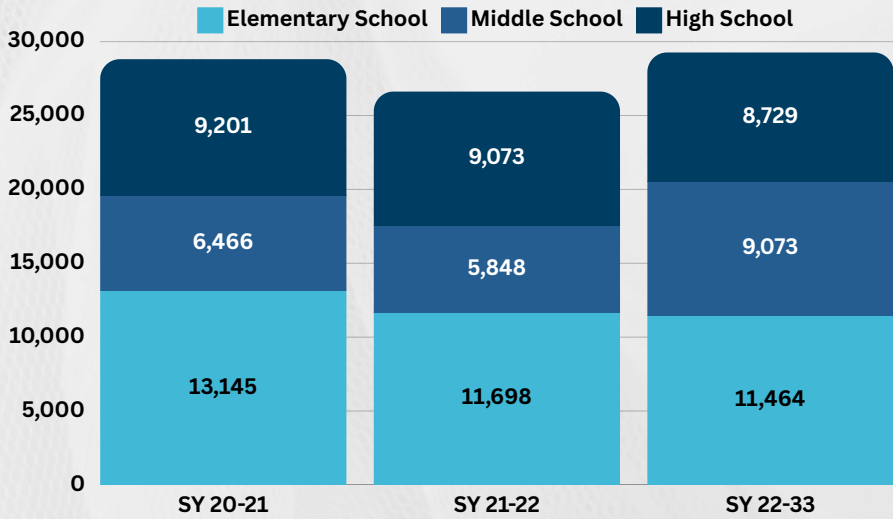




# Performance



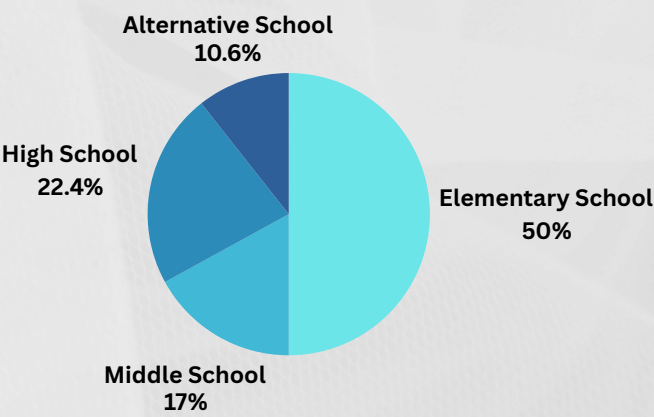
## STUDENT ENROLLMENT



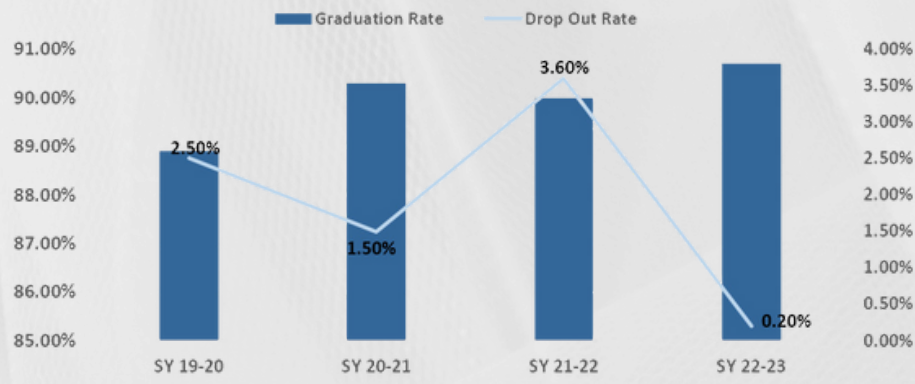
Student enrollment for School Year (SY) 22-23 totaled 25,648, a decrease of 971 students or 4% from the previous school year. Since SY20-21, just two school years ago, GDOE has experienced a reduction in student enrollment of 3,164 students or 11%.



## STUDENT POPULATION



## GRADUATION & DROP-OUT RATES



High school graduation rates increased in SY 22-23 to 90.7%, while high school drop out rates decreased to 0.2% in SY 22-23 from 3.6% in SY 21-22.



# Finances

GDOE Fiscal Year 2023 Revenues	
Appropriations	\$ 264,114,018
Federal Grants & Contributions	\$ 112,018,039
Student Activity (Non-Appropriated Funds)	\$ 1,594,074
Fees & Other Program Receipts	\$ 102,286
Cafeteria Sales	\$ 1,349
Total FY 2023 Revenues	\$ 377,829,766

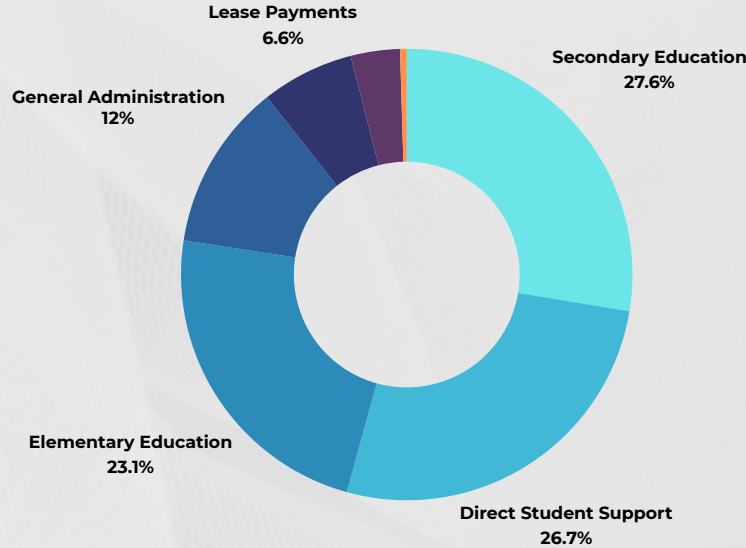
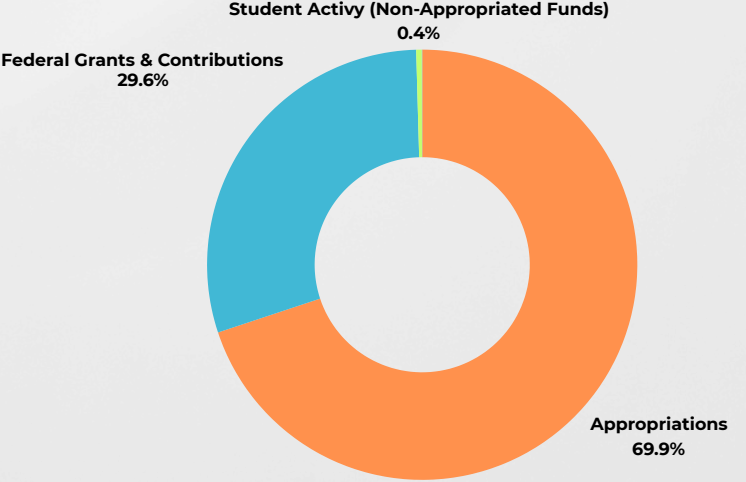
GDOE Fiscal Year 2023 Expenditures	
Secondary Education	\$ 103,983,055
Direct Student Support	\$ 100,488,176
Elementary Education	\$ 87,147,677
General Administration	\$ 45,077,861
Lease Payments	\$ 24,905,234
Retiree Healthcare Benefits	\$ 13,275,495
Contributions to GovGuam Component Units	\$ 1,799,958
Total FY 2023 Expenditures	\$ 376,677,456

## FY 2023 Local Budget

In FY 2023, despite receiving appropriations less than requested for baseline operations, GDOE realized an increase of \$35.6 million (M) in local appropriations compared to the previous FY. As a result, GDOE ended FY 2023 in an operational surplus of \$1.1 M.

GDOE Fiscal Year 2023 Federal Awards	
U.S. Department of Education	\$ 55,986,971
U.S. Department of Agriculture	\$ 15,709,756
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services	\$ 4,104,041
U.S. Department of Interior	\$ 2,670,965
Total FY 2023 Federal Awards	\$ 78,471,733

In FY 2023 GDOE received unmodified audit opinions on its financial statements and compliance for Department of Interior and Head Start Cluster major federal program requirements; and a qualified opinion on all other major federal programs from its independent auditors, Ernst & Young LLP.



## Expiring Grants

In FY 2021, the GDOE received nearly \$400M in federal COVID-19 relief funding: \$110.6 M in a second round of Education Stabilization Fund (ESF II) to ensure the continued safety of students and staff and aid in the transition to face-to-face instruction; and \$286.9 M in American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds to return students safely to in-person instruction and address lost instructional time that resulted from pandemic restrictions.

GDOE successfully obligated ESF II funds by the award's expiration on September 30, 2023, but was unable to fully liquidate the funds by the allowable deadline of January 28, 2024. As such, GDOE requested and was approved for a liquidation extension until March 28, 2025. ARP funds also expired on September 30, 2024 with GDOE receiving a liquidation extension deadline of March 28, 2026.

As of January 2025, GDOE leveraged these funds for allowable uses to include \$55.9 M in utility costs, \$8.7 M for school custodial services, and \$38.9 M to address school facilities maintenance and safety.





# Outlook



## GDOE Management

In FY 2023, the GDOE experienced increased turnover of its management team. In July 2023, the Department transitioned into new leadership under Superintendent Dr. K. Erik Swanson after ten years of leadership under former Superintendent Jon Fernandez. Then, in October 2023, the GDOE filled its Deputy Superintendent of Finance and Administrative Services (DFAS) position, which had been vacant since 2021. The position was vacated just six months later in April of 2024 and a new DFAS appointed in July 2024.

The Department's other leadership positions such as the Comptroller and Deputy Superintendent of Educational Support and Community Learning (ESCL) have seen the same instability. The Comptroller position was vacated in October of 2023, filled in January 2024 and vacated once again in April 2024. As of January 2025, this position remains vacant. The Deputy Superintendent of ESCL was filled in October 2023, was vacated in March 2024 and is currently filled through detailed appointment. GDOE is actively recruiting for these critical positions.

## School Sanitation

On April 1, 2023, Public Law (PL) 37-4 lapsed into law requiring GDOE public school facilities to come into full compliance with Department of Public Health and Social Services' sanitation rules and regulations by the start of SY 23-24. Shortly after PL 37-4 was enacted, Guam was struck by Typhoon Mawar. Storm damages and facilities staff shortages posed additional challenges in the Department's efforts to get schools open timely and in compliance with the law.

The Governor of Guam signed subsequent bills into law to assist the GDOE with the timely opening of schools, including legislation extending the deadline for full compliance to SY 24-25.

## Typhoon Mawar

In May 2023, Typhoon Mawar devastated the island vastly effecting the already dire state of many of the island's public school facilities. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) estimated damage to public assets at \$407 M. Storm damages to school facilities compounded with sanitation inspection mandates delayed the start of SY 23-24.

To address typhoon recovery GDOE established a team headed by the Federal Programs Administrator to seek FEMA funding assistance.

As of September 2024, GDOE has received \$2.4 M in FEMA payments.

## School Decommissioning

PL 37-125 appropriated GDOE \$47 M less than what was requested for FY 2025. In order to address the budgetary shortfall and the declining student population, GDOE is looking towards the maximization of its facilities through the decommissioning of several public schools.

GDOE's school maximization efforts aim to address issues such as evolving educational requirements, effective management of school enrollments and budgetary constraints. The Department has conducted a series of Community Engagement Sessions to update stakeholders and obtain input regarding proposed options for school maximization and the possible realignment of attendance areas.

As of January 2025, the Superintendent of Education, Dr. Erik Swanson, has presented his recommendations for school decommissioning and consolidation to the GEB to include the proposed closure of Chief Brodie and LBJ Elementary Schools and the consolidation of Marcial A. Sablan and Harry S. Truman Elementary Schools.

The GEB has yet to vote on school maximization efforts, but has called for more engagement with parents, teachers and other stakeholders and stressed that decisions about the Department's future will not be made without stakeholder input.

## School Refurbishment

In September 2023, GDOE solicited for the refurbishment of public school facilities. In December 2024, the GDOE launched the \$125 M refurbishment project funded by the ARP grant and contracted to Core Tech International. The project encompasses a comprehensive overhaul of 12 schools across the GDOE's four regions: Haya, Kattan, Lagu, and Luchan. The focus areas of this refurbishment include critical infrastructure needs such as crack and spall repair, restroom renovations, exterior door replacement, walkway canopy repair and construction, and electrical upgrades. Additionally, a \$10.1 M contract, also funded by ARP, was awarded to Northern Construction for the refurbishment of F.B. Leon Guerrero Middle School. These projects are aimed at elevating Guam's public school facilities to the highest standards of safety, accessibility, and functionality.

## Management Audit

In FY 2024, the Governor of Guam approved PL 37-44, which requires the GDOE to conduct periodic management and curriculum audits for the purpose of evaluating the agency's performance in critical areas to include the implementation of board policy, effectiveness of instructional personnel, correction of systemic deficiencies, management functioning, and ultimately, whether the GDOE is providing an adequate public education.

The law requires that management and curriculum audits of GDOE be conducted at time intervals no longer than 5 years. PL 37-44 set FY 2024 as the scope of the first management audit with a target completion date of June 30, 2025. The audit is to be funded by FY 2025 local appropriation.

GDOE's last management audit was conducted in 2009 by Evergreen Solutions, LLC.

## Simon Sanchez Campus

In 2022, Taniguchi Ruth Maiko Architects completed the design for the new Simon Sanchez High School campus. The next steps required GDOE to procure construction services and financing for the new school facility. Due to lengthy procurement processes and procurement protests, GDOE was unsuccessful in obtaining a construction contract. As a result, in July 2023, the Governor of Guam signed Bill 94-37 into law, simplifying the procurement process for the construction and financing of the new school campus. The law authorizes GDOE, through the Department of Public Works (DPW), to solicit the construction contract as well as financing for the project. The law authorizes GDOE and DPW to enter into a leaseback agreement with a financing cap of \$163.4M over 30 years.

In August 2024, DPW finalized negotiations with construction manager, SSFM International Inc. and expects to award a construction contract by July 2025. This progress brings the island one step closer to completing the long awaited school campus that will provide a permanent and safe learning environment of hundreds of Guam's public school students.

