



# ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR SCHOOLS WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## ACS WASC District-level Accreditation Awarded to Guam DOE

### Press Release

**Burlingame, CA, February 1, 2016** — The Accrediting Commission for Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACS WASC) voted unanimously at its Winter 2016 meeting to approve district-level accreditation for the Guam Department of Education (GDOE). This marks the first district accreditation approved by ACS WASC and is a step forward for GDOE Superintendent Jon Fernandez who worked for over a year to pilot the district-level accreditation. GDOE received six-year accreditation status with a two-day visit scheduled for 2019 along with a requirement to submit annual progress reports from 2016–18.

“It’s important that we address improvements in education, not only at the school level, but from top to bottom as well, including at the level of the education board and management,” said Fernandez. “Accreditation for the district means that we are all focused, from the central offices to the front lines, on doing what’s best for students.”

The ACS WASC district accreditation process involved aligning the *Focus on Learning* protocol, used to guide school improvement efforts, with GDOE’s State Strategic Plan, which was approved in 2014. The initial self-study allowed GDOE management and employees to reflect on the central office support for school improvement and identify explicit areas for improvement. Among the findings was the recognition of the positive efforts by GDOE to strengthen its foundation for improving curriculum, instruction, assessment, and intervention efforts. The ACS WASC visiting committee, which visited Guam to validate the district’s activities, also stressed the need to set annual performance benchmarks and improve the use of data to track annual progress going forward.

“We are excited about assisting entire school systems with our new district accreditation process,” said ACS WASC Executive Director Fred Van Leuven. “School boards and superintendents now have a tool to assess and improve their district, school, and classroom’s impact on student learning.”

“On behalf of the Guam Education Board, I wish to congratulate Superintendent Jon Fernandez, the staff, and the entire GDOE Learning Community and our stakeholders,” said Guam Education Board chair Lourdes San Nicolas. “The gold star belongs to our Guam public school students.”

The Guam Department of Education school district is comprised of 41 schools, 31,000 students, and 4,000 employees.

The Accrediting Commission for Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACS WASC) is a world-renowned accrediting association and one of the six regional accrediting agencies in the United States. ACS WASC extends its services worldwide to over 4,600 public, private, independent, church-related, and proprietary pre-K–12 schools, especially to schools in California, Hawaii, Asia, and the Pacific Islands.

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For additional information about this topic, please visit the ACS WASC website at [www.acswasc.org](http://www.acswasc.org) or contact the ACS WASC office directly. For additional information about the Guam Department of Education, visit the GDOE website at [www.gdoe.net](http://www.gdoe.net).

**Accrediting Commission for Schools, WASC**

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