

Dominic Terlaje
Education Suruhanu

Office of the Adequate Education Suruhanu
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March 1, 2010

To: Superintendent of Education
From: Education Suruhanu
Subject: Expired Fire Extinguishers.

30-10-0203
B3/2/10
MUN

Dear Dr. Bretania Underwood:


This correspondence is to inform you that my office recently performed an inspection of the Carbullido Elementary School and during the course of the inspection, it was discovered that the annual service date for all of the fire extinguishers observed in the classrooms was expired. In addition, I have recently been informed that PC Lujan, FBLG, and UPI are still without properly serviced fire extinguishers even after the school was cited for such discrepancy in recent inspection reports.

Please be advised that according to a letter dated January 7, 2010 from the Guam Fire Department to your office, the Fire Chief stated among other things that fire extinguishers are a "Life Safety" issue and that all "Life Safety" issues are a major concern for the Fire Department that must be corrected immediately. In addition, the Fire Chief also indicated that failure to comply with the requirement of having properly serviced fire extinguishers in the schools may result in consequences not limited to closure of a school.

I strongly recommend that the GDOE identify the schools that do not have properly serviced fire extinguishers and rectify the problem immediately. In addition, I am respectfully requesting in writing, the efforts GDOE has taken or will take to rectify this matter and the problems or difficulties that GDOE may be experiencing in working to have the fire extinguishers properly serviced. Please provide the requested information to my office immediately.

If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office.


Respectfully submitted,

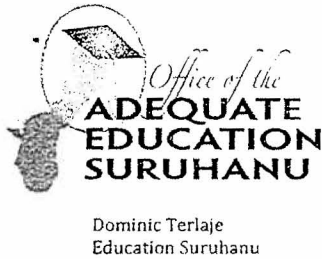

Dominic Terlaje

Attachments. (3)

cc: Honorable Speaker, 30th Guam Legislature
Chairman, GEPP
GFD Captain Joe Muna (via email)
Pat Mason, Deputy Attorney General

1675

GUAM LEGISLATURE
REPRODUCTION/MAIL ROOM
DATE: 3/2/10
TIME: 8:25 AM [IPM]
RECEIVED BY: 



Office of the Adequate Education Suruhanu (OES)
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January 7, 2010

FILE

To: Fire Chief
From: Education Suruhanu
Subject: Expired Annual Service Date for Fire Extinguishers at the PC Lujan.

1/7/2010
3:13 PM

1/7/10
2:35 pm
[Signature]

Dear Chief Peredo:

This correspondence is to inform you that my office recently performed an inspection of the PC Lujan Elementary School. During the course of the investigation, it was discovered that the annual service date for the fire extinguishers observed was expired. The date punched or marked on the sticker that is affixed to the fire extinguisher is April 2008. In addition, such sticker indicates that the fire extinguisher should be re-serviced 12 months after the punched or marked date. In other words, the fire extinguishers at PC Lujan should have been re-serviced sometime in April 2009. As such, the school has been without properly serviced/working fire extinguishers since May 2009. Further, a report prepared by GSA and issued to PC Lujan administration on December 12, 2009, indicated that approximately 60 fire extinguishers in various classrooms and other rooms were deemed inoperable.

I also inspected J.Q. San Miguel on December 15, 2009 and discovered that the annual service date for their fire extinguishers expired in May 2009. I have recently been informed by the J.Q. San Miguel Principal that Safety First delivered 20 fire extinguishers to the school sometime in mid December 2009. However, J.Q. San Miguel was without properly serviced/working fire extinguishers for approximately six months. In an effort to address this problem, I recommended that GDOE address and rectify such matter immediately in order to come into compliance with the Fourteen (14) Points as well as any regulatory code. In addition, I also recommended that proper planning and scheduling be a priority to ensure that properly serviced/working fire extinguishers are available in the schools at all times to ensure that student safety is not compromised.

I am respectfully requesting that your office provide a written response indicating the violation of the regulatory code, if any, where it is found that the annual service date has expired for all of a school's fire extinguishers. Please indicate the corrective measure that GDOE must take to rectify such discrepancy and the time frame in which the discrepancy must be rectified. In addition, please indicate GFD's determination of fire extinguishers that are expired and that are currently installed and provided in public school classrooms or other school rooms. Any other pertinent information concerning this matter would also be appreciated.

I look forward to your response. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Respectfully submitted,
[Signature]
Dominic Terlaje

cc: Honorable Speaker, 30th Guam Legislature
Captain Joe Muna (via email)
Superintendent, GDOE
Chairman, GEPB

9 GEPB
2:35 pm
[Signature]
1/7/2010



Felix P. Camacho
Governor

Michael W. Cruz, MD
Lt. Governor

GUAM FIRE DEPARTMENT
DIPATTAMENTON GUAFI GUAHAN



David Q. Peredo
Fire Chief

January 7, 2010

10.1.08
RECEIVED
JAN 11 2010
Adequate Education
Suruhanu Office

Dr. Narissa Underwood
Superintendent, Guam
Dept. of Education
Aspinall Avenue,
Hagatna, Guam 96910


Dear Mrs. Underwood,

It has been brought to our attention by concerned parents and the Education Suruhanu Mr. Dominic Terlaje that several public schools which have been inspected recently, are without adequate or properly serviced portable Fire Extinguishers. This issue has been noted during past inspections conducted with the Health and Safety Task Force, however, it appears that rather than it being corrected, it has only gotten worse. Your staff has been informed and also provided with copies of the code referencing the Fire Extinguisher requirements.

As an example, the Southern High School Campus was plagued with several fires last school year, and was properly extinguished by the school staff using the available Fire Extinguishers. Imagine what would have happened if none was available or did not work properly. Furthermore, the Firewatch imposed due to non-working Fire Alarm Systems require the use of Fire Extinguishers in the event a fire occurs.

As a reminder, Fire Extinguishers are a "Life Safety" issue. All "Life Safety" issues are a major concern of the Guam Fire Department which we do take seriously and must be corrected "immediately". Failure to adhere to this requirement may result in consequences not limited to the closure of a school.

Should you require additional information or assistance, you may contact Fire Captain Joey M. Muna at 472-3311.


DAVID Q. PEREDO

CC:

Honorable Speaker, Judith T. Won Pat 30th Guam Legislature
Joe S. San Augustine, Chairman, GEPA
Dominic Terlaje, Education Suruhanu



Problems still abound in public schools

Posted: Jan 10, 2010 1:54 PM

Updated: Jan 10, 2010 4:00 PM



by Heather Hauswirth

Guam - It was recently when education suruhanu Dominic Terlaje sent a letter to Fire Chief Dave Peredo about his concerns over the Department of Education's lack of properly serviced fire extinguishers at both P.C. Lujan Elementary School and J.Q. San Miguel. The lack of fire extinguishers is one of several issues plaguing the island's public schools.

DOE's safety administrator, Bruce Williams, scanned the letter sent by Terlaje to Chief Peredo last Thursday, which cites his concern over a lack of properly serviced and operable fire extinguishers at Guam's public schools. "Fire extinguishers are really more dangerous than useful but it's a fire code you must have them so I'd rather have my people in doubt get out. Ok? So this thing about the fire extinguishers yes we are in the process of getting an annual inspection, which is a visual inspection to say yes, this is in good working order," he said.

In an e-mail to KUAM News, Guam Fire Department Spokesperson Joey San Nicolas said that the fire chief is currently drafting a formal response to the suruhanu's letter of concern and that the department has been in continuous dialogue with DOE about the issue.

San Nicolas said, "This is a major issue that affects the life safety of our children as well as the DOE employees that work at these sights. A couple of fires at southern high and Simon Sanchez were kept from causing death or major damage because they had proper extinguishers and either fire watch or smoke alarms in place. We will get in contact with Mr. Williams and address this matter."

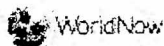
In the meantime, Williams maintains that parents should not be alarmed. "It doesn't mean the fire extinguishers sitting in the schools now that haven't been inspected are not working, it doesn't mean they aren't working, it means they have not been inspected and the tag updated," he said.

When probed further by KUAM about the reason for the delay in inspections, Williams cited a lack of funding, saying, "Some of them have to be replaced. We are in the process of doing that. Show me the money. It's a money issue."

After a slew of financial problems at DOE over an RFP that was awarded and put out last year then protested and cancelled which would have paid for a vendor to check and verify the fire extinguishers, Williams added that DOE is currently waiting for the contract go out to bid one more time. In the meantime, he says that the fire extinguishers are not the only safety concern when it comes to detection of the fire.

"They are not working, only new schools have working fire alarm systems. And the problem is money? Money, it's always money," he said.

Until DOE can find the funds for a permanent solution, San Nicolas says DOE was instructed to put in place a fire watch system which consists of adults either school aids or teacher strategically located at various parts of each campus who would maintain watch as long as students are in the building.



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