

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 19-83

RE: C.R. NO. 19-149/EDUCATION

SUBJECT: A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING A GRANT AWARD IN THE
AMOUNT OF \$3,167,808 FOR THE FSM DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION, SPECIAL EDUCATION DIVISION

NOVEMBER 20, 2015

The Honorable Wesley W. Simina
Speaker, Nineteenth Congress
Federated States of Micronesia
Third Special Session, 2015

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Your Committee on Education, to which was referred C.R. No.
19-149, entitled:

"A RESOLUTION APPROVING AND ACCEPTING A GRANT IN THE
AMOUNT OF \$3,167,808 FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED
STATES OF AMERICA, TO FUND THE FEDERATED STATES OF
MICRONESIA'S SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR FISCAL YEAR
2015, INCLUDING ALL THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE
ASSISTANCE.",

begs leave to report as follows:

The intent and purpose of this resolution are expressed in
its title.

Your Committee recognizes the importance of the education
of our Nation's children, particularly those who face
special challenges. The above referenced grant is an
annual award that is well known to your Committee, as is
the good work of the Division of Special Education. Your
Committee held a hearing on November 19, 2015, with the

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staff of the Department of Education, including the Secretary of the Department of Education, and the Chief of the Division of Special Education, and their staff, and a representative from the Department of Justice.

Your Committee notes that the Chief of the Division of Special Education was very articulate regarding his Division's programs, and provided your Committee with a several page detailed summary of their work and budgets. This report is attached for the reference of members. The Committee believes that it is worthwhile to highlight that 2,061 students are being served in our Nation by 284 education specialists throughout our four states. The program serves young people from birth to 21 years old. It provides services for students in general education classrooms, and it also provides home services for students if appropriate. The budgets for each of the four states under this grant are calculated to be in proportion to the number of students served, and are shown in detail for each state in the attached report.

The total annual amount of the grant award for Special Education has remained the same for the past 15 years. But the Division of Special Education is continuing its work and is working on several new initiatives, including training teachers, and the implementation of initial identification steps prior to screening for disabilities so, for example, children with behavioral issues are not incorrectly categorized as disabled. The Division Chief stated that there are 17 major disability categories, and they mirror those set forth in the U.S. law. From these categories children are evaluated regarding the severity of their disability.

The annual report prepared for by the Division of Special Education is available at the National Department of Education. The Division Chief for Special Education did summarize that report and stated that the FSM does identify

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a higher percentage of children as disabled compared with other countries. Many of the children identified have specific learning disabilities making it more difficult for them to learn in the reading and math subjects. Further, work is being done to ensure that the screening process correctly identifies all children with special needs.

There was discussion regarding the process for identification of skills and specialist teachers for each state. The Division Chief stated that each state determines its own plan, and these plans are reviewed by local councils which include parents, teachers and administrators. Although most planning and implementation is done at the local level sometimes the NDOE does an initiative to train or provide specific specialists, such as screening for hearing or vision.

The states' special education programs are evaluated annually and currently these performance ratings show that they are doing well, but have challenges in the area of data collection and reporting; some service delivery issues for certain categories of disabilities in some locations and a general need for teacher training.

Finally, your Committee confirmed with the Departments of Education and Justice that the resolution for this grant as transmitted is for the FSM fiscal year 2016. For this reason the Committee recommends the following amendments:

Page 1, Line 4 of the title delete "2015" and insert "2016" in lieu thereof.

Page 1, Line 18, delete "2015" and insert "2016" in lieu thereof.

Your Committee has not received only positive communication from the witnesses, and the general public regarding the Division of Special Education. Further, your Committee

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strongly recommends the passage of the resolution accepting the special education grant funding so that the work of the Division of Special Education can continue smoothly throughout the Nation.

Your Committee on Education is in accord with the intent and purpose of C.R. No. 19-149, and recommends its adoption as C.R. No. 19-149, C.D.1 in the form attached hereto.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Joseph J. Uruemal
Joseph J. Urusemal, chairman

/s/ Esmond B. Moses
Esmond B. Moses, vice chairman

/s/ Florencio S. Harper
Florencio S. Harper, member

/s/ Bonsiano F. Nethon
Bonsiano F. Nethon, member

/s/ Ferny S. Perman
Ferny S. Perman, member

/s/ Wesley W. Simina
Wesley W. Simina, member

/s/ Paliknoa K. Welly
Paliknoa K. Welly, member