

COMPACT OF FREE ASSOCIATION: THE IMPACT OF STUDENTS
FROM THESE AREAS ON GUAM'S SCHOOL SYSTEM

Prepared by: Jeff Shafer, Department of Education

The Compact of Free Association: The Impact of Students from These Areas on Guam's School System

Jeffrey E. Shafer, Ed. D.

The Compact of Free Association gives citizens from the freely associated states (FAS) the right to attend schools in the United States and its possessions. All federally funded programs are available to FAS children once they are enrolled in school. Children from the FAS are eligible for programs such as Headstart, Bilingual Education, early intervention services for handicapped students, early intervention for handicapped infants and toddlers, gifted and talented education, special education programs for the handicapped and other compensatory programs. Some of these programs have ceilings as to the number of students that can be accommodated.

Why do people move to Guam from these areas? The answer to this question is as old as mankind itself; people move because they perceive the change will benefit their families socially, economically and educationally. The lack of educational opportunities in the FAS serves as a driving force that fuels the desire of FAS parents to provide the best possible education for their children while at the same time offering opportunities for employment on Guam that can contribute to the overall economic well-being of their extended family. Guam has difficulty dealing with the new influx of people from the FAS. However, Guam is excited by the potential benefits that awaits all islands, including Guam, if assistance is applied in a manner that will accomplish the following three goals:

- **1. Provide a free and appropriate education for all students,**
- **2. Assist families immigrating to Guam from the FAS and other areas to make a successful transition to Guam through education, economic support and services designed to ease the transition, and**
- **3. Provide information to immigrating families about Guam's requirements with respect to a.) school entry b.) health records c.) realistic employment opportunities, etc.**

It has been documented (Lee, 1984) that immigrants to Guam from the Freely Associated States (FAS) often bring children to our public schools whose educational backgrounds are lacking in both substance, quality and adequacy to meet both the educational requirements of our school system and the demands of life

filled with non-traditional values and customs. Lee also documented an over representation of these children in the Guam special education population when total numbers were compared in relation to other groups. The Micronesian child often comes to Guam with limited or no English language skills, poorly documented health, immunization, or academic records. These all make it difficult for Guam educators to properly place students and address the needs of these children. Many of the Micronesian children, while of adolescent ages (12, 13 and 14), are performing at primary levels (grades 1-3).

Education in the FAS is compulsory through 8th grade; class sizes are generally large (50 to 60 students); and less than half of the children of high school age are able to attend high school because of limited educational resources. Guam, by contract agreement with the Guam Federation of Teachers, has strict limits on class sizes. This coupled with the perennial shortage of teachers on Guam and the settling of Micronesian families in the already crowded Northern and Central regions of Guam creates a dynamic that is detrimental to all children of public school age. That the various state governments are committed to education is not in question here; they are committed and view education as a primary solution for an entire range of social and economic issues facing the emerging nations of the Pacific Basin. In spite of increased commitment of the various state governments, FAS students entering our public school systems are likely to be disadvantaged educationally and economically; we know they experience a great deal of social disequilibrium and do not possess the skills needed to adjust to the rapid change a move of this nature brings. Americans like to think of themselves as highly adaptable; able to cope with any situation; capable of meeting any challenge and able to solve problems while juggling any number of activities that range from child care to weekend tennis tournaments. The "Superhuman" image of the American mind set is intact, however it is a myth; our own problems with drug and alcohol addiction, obesity and apathy are not among those we wish to bestow upon our island brothers and sisters. Morally we are bound to assist our island brothers and sisters to overcome the difficulties of such a drastic change in life styles. People from the Freely Associates States do not possess the experiences, either individually or collectively, to deal with rapid social, economic, and physical changes that accompany setting up an entire new life style on Guam.

However, Guam's ability to deal with the social, educational and economic problems of families immigrating to Guam is limited. Guam's resources (human, physical and financial) are not infinite. Guam's political and educational leaders are faced with the realization that Guam can not cope with the influx of families that have children with immediate health, education and welfare needs without significant financial and human resources external to Guam.

Hamm (1988) noted "the Guam Department of Education has monitored enrollments based on ethnicity since 1973". Unfortunately, the data on FAS citizens is probably underreported since no information is collected on a child's geographic origin. In 1980 the Department of Education began reporting students by "Trust

Territory", "Northern Marianas " and "Other Pacific Islands". Since the establishment of the Compact in late 1986 there has been no attempt to standardize how school level clerks report students from the freely associated states. Ham in reporting the data in Tables 1 and 2 therefore, combined the old categories of "Trust Territory", and "Other Pacific Islands" into one "Micronesian" category for consistency.

Based on this system of classification, the number of Micronesian students between 1980 and 1985 fluctuated annually from 314 to 402 students as reported by official Department of Education enrollment statistics (October, 1980 Enrollment Reports). After the Compact was signed into law, the number of Micronesian students showed a steady rise from 402 in 1985 to 615 in 1988; a 53 percent increase in two years. It should be pointed out that it is not known how many are from Belau or other Pacific areas besides the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshalls. Department of Education Officials believe the majority of students are from Truk and Belau; very few are known to be from the Marshalls. Marshallese, for whatever reason, tend to migrate to Hawaii and the West Coast.

The official per pupil cost of the Guam Department of Education for School Year 1987-88 was computed to be \$3,908. It was this figure that was used in the Department of Education/Department of Defense contract negotiated by the Government of Guam in fiscal year 1988-89. The Department of Education incurs costs in the neighborhood of 1.5 times the computed per pupil cost for educating special needs children. Impact Aide (P.L. 81-874) funding also allocates more money for special needs children. To adequately provide for the education of Micronesian children a per pupil cost of one and one half (1.5) times the cost of regular education should be used. It is conservatively estimated the Government of Guam spent \$3.6 million during school year 1987-88 to meet the educational needs of these children.

Although increasing enrollment in the public schools represents a significant financial burden to the Government of Guam, the Government is more than willing to work with island governments and the federal government to develop strategies to deal with the problems created by the influx of children into the Guam system. Educating all of Guam's residents is a high priority and preferable to encountering the results of neglecting a significant proportion of our school aged children.

Another problem deals with the education of temporary residents between the ages of 5 and 16 years; compulsory school attendance for temporary residents under Guam's laws is not required! While it is probable that most parents/guardians voluntarily enroll their children in school, they have no legal duty to do so. It is not known how many children may have their education interrupted or terminated because parents do not enroll them in school when they arrive here.

The impact of Micronesian students on the education system of Guam is probably greater than what is indicated here. A complete census survey and needs assessment of children in the public schools must be conducted to accurately determine the actual numbers of these children in our schools. This would contribute immeasurably to providing a free and appropriate education to *all* of Guam's students. A full outreach program needs to be developed to identify those who, by law must be in school, but for whatever reason are not enrolled. Adequate funding must be secured to help Guam offset the costs associated with educating these children.

Guam needs assistance in the form of funds for classroom construction, programs for children who speak a language other than English, health screening services, additional special education services and programs, testing, counseling and placement services in the child's native language and programs designed to ease the transition of our new residents.



Note: *The Division of Research, Planning and Evaluation, Department of Education is indebted to Susan Hamm of the Bureau of Planning and Luis K. Martinez and Dr. Steve Spencer of the Guam Department of Education for providing the bulk of the material presented in this report. The author takes full responsibility for the enrollment information reported. in Tables 1 and 2*

Table 1. Ethnic Origin of Student Population of Guam Public Schools
As of October 1: 1975 to 1988

Ethnic Origin	School Year						
	1988	1987	1986	1985	1984	1983	1982
Total Students	24,678	25,551	25,294	25,334	25,663	25,895	25,345
Chamorro	12,914	13,398	13,383	13,486	13,723	13,795	14,048
Filipino	6,460	6,841	6,805	6,559	6,394	6,202	5,621
Northern Marianas	204	212	255	263	279	314	270
Micronesian [1]	615	604	503	402	380	314	317
Chinese	133	159	162	171	173	169	136
Japanese	87	85	97	120	109	109	121
Korean	206	226	261	270	313	332	332
Indo-Chinese [2]	64	68	103	95	115	106	107
Caucasian	2,822	3,070	3,007	3,211	3,317	3,532	3,396
Black	413	442	412	348	391	328	365
Other	760	446	306	409	469	694	632

Ethnic Origin	School Year						
	1981	1980	1979	1978	1977	1976	1975
Total Students	25,352	26,056	26,868	25,630	27,236	27,272	28,188
Chamorro	13,620	14,099	14,750	14,384	15,338	15,743	15,747
Filipino	5,718	5,478	5,693	5,278	5,191	4,896	4,918
Northern Marianas	230	326	-	-	-	-	-
Micronesian [1]	391	396	591	556	428	391	422
Chinese	229	258	-	-	-	-	-
Japanese	110	133	173	168	756	777	804
Korean	294	296	304	305	-	-	-
Indo-Chinese [2]	138	158	-	-	-	-	-
Caucasian	3,759	4,154	4,244	4,150	4,558	4,419	5,455
Black	316	309	205	258	195	187	259
Other	547	449	908	531	770	859	583

[1] Includes former Trust Territories (Marshalls, Truk, Yap, Ponape, Kosrae, Palau) and other Pacific Islands.

[2] Includes Vietnamese.

Source: Research, Planning and Evaluation, Department of Education.

Table 2. Percent Ethnic Origin of Student Population of Guam Public Schools
As of October 1: 1975 to 1988

Ethnic Origin	School Year						
	1988	1987	1986	1985	1984	1983	1982
	** Percent **						
Total Students	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Chamorro	52.33	52.44	52.91	53.23	53.47	53.27	55.43
Filipino	26.18	26.77	26.90	25.89	24.92	23.95	22.18
Northern Marianas	0.83	0.83	1.01	1.04	1.09	1.21	1.07
Micronesian [1]	2.49	2.36	1.99	1.59	1.48	1.21	1.25
Chinese	0.54	0.62	0.64	0.67	0.67	0.65	0.54
Japanese	0.35	0.33	0.38	0.47	0.42	0.42	0.48
Korean	0.83	0.88	1.03	1.07	1.22	1.28	1.31
Indo-Chinese [2]	0.26	0.27	0.41	0.37	0.45	0.41	0.42
Caucasian	11.44	12.02	11.89	12.67	12.93	13.64	13.40
Black	1.67	1.73	1.63	1.37	1.52	1.27	1.44
Other	3.08	1.75	1.21	1.61	1.83	2.68	2.49

Ethnic Origin	School Year						
	1981	1980	1979	1978	1977	1976	1975
	** Percent **						
Total Students	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Chamorro	53.72	54.11	54.90	56.12	56.32	57.73	55.86
Filipino	22.55	21.02	21.19	20.59	19.06	17.95	17.45
Northern Marianas	0.91	1.25	-	-	-	-	-
Micronesian [1]	1.54	1.52	2.20	2.17	1.57	1.43	1.50
Chinese	0.90	0.99	-	-	-	-	-
Japanese	0.43	0.51	0.64	0.66	2.78	2.85	2.85
Korean	1.16	1.14	1.13	1.19	-	-	-
Indo-Chinese [2]	0.54	0.61	-	-	-	-	-
Caucasian	14.83	15.94	15.80	16.19	16.74	16.20	19.35
Black	1.25	1.19	0.76	1.01	0.72	0.69	0.92
Other	2.16	1.72	3.38	2.07	2.83	3.15	2.07

[1] Includes former Trust Territories (Marshalls, Truk, Yap, Ponape, Kosrae, Palau) and other Pacific Islands.

[2] Includes Vietnamese.

Source: Research, Planning and Evaluation, Department of Education.