

## Eleven EPICS Scholars Graduate!!!

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*Christina Coles, EPICS scholar, proudly displays her diploma from San Jose State University.*

Eleven EPICS scholars have graduated and received their diplomas. Congratulations to Asha Advani, Cassandra Dimla Bala-an, Christina Coles, Lisa Eclavea, Joseph John Mendiola, Bobbie Obillo, Camile Onglao Gonzales, Dianne Sapida, Aileen Serrano, Meagan Terlaje, and Gabrielle Duenas Yashiro! BIBA!! BIBA!! BIBA!!!

The “Educating Pacific Island Clinicians in Speech Language Pathology” Project, better known as “EPICS,” is a personnel preparation project awarded to San José State University (SJSU) by the U.S. Department of Education (US DOE), Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). The goal of this five-year grant is for SJSU to deliver its Master’s Degree program in speech pathology primarily through online courses to produce highly qualified speech language pathologists from the U.S.–affiliated Pacific island jurisdictions to serve children from the region who need and are determined to be eligible for services in the area of speech and language development. Providing these services has historically been a challenge in the Pacific region due to the lack of certified Speech Language Pathologists (SLPs), thus the goal and urgency to produce more professionals from the Pacific region.

## EPICS Scholars (Cont.)



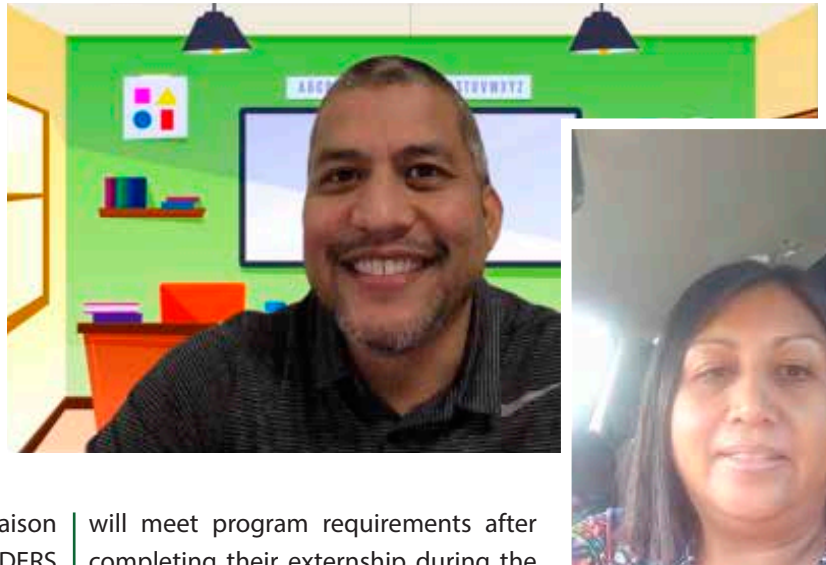
The following EPICS Scholars recently received their diplomas: Pictured (clockwise, starting at the middle top) Meagan Terlaje; Aileen Serrano with baby Jericho; Cassandra Dimla Bala-an with baby Ariel; Lisa Eclevea; Bobbie Obillo with baby Micah; and Dianne Sapida, with Carrie Sapida, her proud mother





## EPICS Scholars (Cont.)

Three scholars completed their externship requirements in their placements with the Guam Department of Education Division of Special Education Speech Therapy Program in December and also officially graduated. Joseph Mendiola, Camille Onglao-Gonzales, and Gabrielle Duenas Yasuhiro were paired up with their GDOE SLP supervisors for the semester. The overall practicum course supervisor for this semester was Keokia Mendiola, CCC-SLP. Right photo - Joseph John Mendiola (left) with Nicole Duenas, CCC-SLP, (right) his externship supervisor.



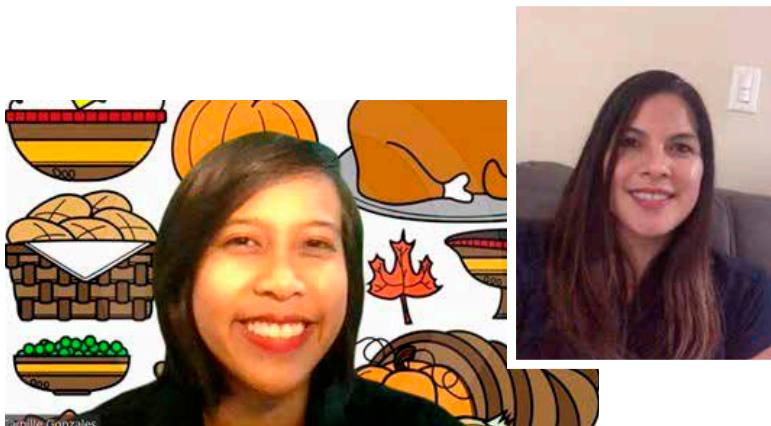
Guam CEDDERS serves as the Pacific region on-site liaison for the project. Beginning in May 2015, Guam CEDDERS facilitated the recruitment of applicants for the project and received applications from residents from American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), Pohnpei State, Federated States of Micronesia, and Guam. Coursework began during the summer of 2015. Completion of all coursework and the awarding of graduate degrees was targeted for August 2020.

Activities outlined in the initial timeline of events for the most part proceeded as planned. Students enrolled in EPICS, referred to as "EPICS Scholars" were on track to complete all requirements as scheduled. And then at the beginning of 2020, the anticipated final year of the project, the COVID-19 virus pandemic in March necessitated a change in plans. Instead of all scholars graduating at the same time, eight scholars from Guam graduated in August 2020. Three more from Guam graduated in December 2020. The remaining scholars in the program

will meet program requirements after completing their externship during the summer of 2021 in San Jose, California. Of the 17 scholars who will have graduated by August 2021, 15 are from Guam and two are from Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

It has been a long and challenging five years for all who have been involved with the EPICS Project. The investment made into preparing these highly specialized and skilled professionals has been well worth the wait and cost. With the addition of these professionals to the pool of speech pathologists in Guam and especially the CNMI, which had no nationally certified speech language pathologists on island for about 10 years, providing speech therapy services to children birth through 21 in these entities will be readily and locally available.

### BIBA Project EPICS!!!



Camille Onglao Gonzales (left) teamed up with Erica Sgro, CCC-SLP, (right) who served as her externship supervisor. Gonzales graduated December 2020. (Not Shown: Gabrielle Duenas Yasuhiro, EPICS Scholar and graduate, and Melanie Torre, CCC-SLP, her GDOE supervisor.

# American Samoa Implements the MSAA System

American Samoa Department of Education, Special Education Division is committed to improving educational results for students with significant cognitive disabilities through the implementation of the Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA) comprehensive assessment system. Ready, set, GO!

The MSAA comprehensive assessment system was developed to ensure that all students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are able to participate in an assessment that measures what they know and can do in relation to grade-level State Content Standards. The MSAA is one component of a system of curriculum, instruction, and professional development that allows students with the most significant cognitive disabilities to access grade-level content aligned to State Content Standards.

On October 9 and 23, Guam CEDDERS June De Leon facilitated 3-hour virtual sessions with 40 American Samoa special education teachers and specialists to support American Samoa's commitment to increasing personnel capacity to implement the MSAA system, which focused on increased understanding about

the purpose of the MSAA on-line alternate assessment system and the use of universal design for learning (UDL) principles for instruction.

In preparation for the administration of the MSAA on-line alternate assessment in March 2021, American Samoa prioritized building an understanding of how improving academic instruction is important for improving educational results for students with significant cognitive disabilities. A well-designed summative assessment alone is insufficient to achieving higher academic outcomes for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities in preparation for a broader array of post-secondary outcomes. The MSAA system must identify and address the curriculum, instructional, and professional development needs to ensure that students with significant cognitive disabilities have the opportunity to demonstrate what they've learned when taking the MSAA on-line alternate assessment.

Zoom Meeting (Locked)

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On October 9, June De Leon, Interim Director, Guam CEDDERS (top right) engages the American Samoa special education teachers and specialists in a discussion on the importance of the MSAA.



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# EHDI Updates for September – December 2020

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The past three months have been filled with virtual meetings for Guam Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) stakeholders. We began the month of September with a Quality Improvement (QI) Parent Engagement meeting with Guam Early Intervention System (GEIS), Guam's Positive Parents Together (GPPT), Guam Hearing Doctors (GHD), and the EHDI team. One of the new goals the EHDI Project needed to address was to connect GPPT, the parent support group, with children identified with a hearing loss by six months of age. At the completion of the QI meeting, both GEIS and GHD agreed to refer parents of newly identified children with a hearing loss directly to GPPT. EHDI staff worked with GEIS, GHD, and GPPT to develop a referral form for early interventionists and the audiologist. This process went into effect in late September.

Despite the continued COVID-19 restrictions, GPPT celebrated Deaf Awareness Month in September by airing a Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) ad on the Cherry Media Vision Large Screen located in Tamuning and produced a 30-second commercial that can be viewed on the GPPT and Guam EHDI websites as well as the GPPT and GHD Facebook pages as part of their outreach activities.

Guam EHDI held its first virtual Advisory Committee and Learning Community Meetings for the new grant year on September 22. The EHDI team shared the new grant objectives, hearing screening data throughout the hearing screening continuum, the challenges faced with outpatient rescreens, diagnostic audiological evaluations, and enrollment into early intervention, the successful agreement reached with GEIS and GHD in connecting parents of newly identified children with a hearing loss to GPPT, a supplemental grant applied for and received from HRSA to assist with the limited services received by DHH children and families during the COVID-19 crisis, and submitted a proposal in October and was awarded additional supplemental funding for telehealth services from the Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs (AMCHP) in November. Representatives from the Guam Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program from the Department of Public Health and Social Services (DPHSS) provided the EHDI Learning Community with an overview of the services they provide and resources of their current locations and how to connect families eligible for services to them. Mr. Stephen Weiss was open to partnering with Guam EHDI to provide WIC clients with newborn hearing screening information and potentially broadening our collaboration in the future.

## The Community

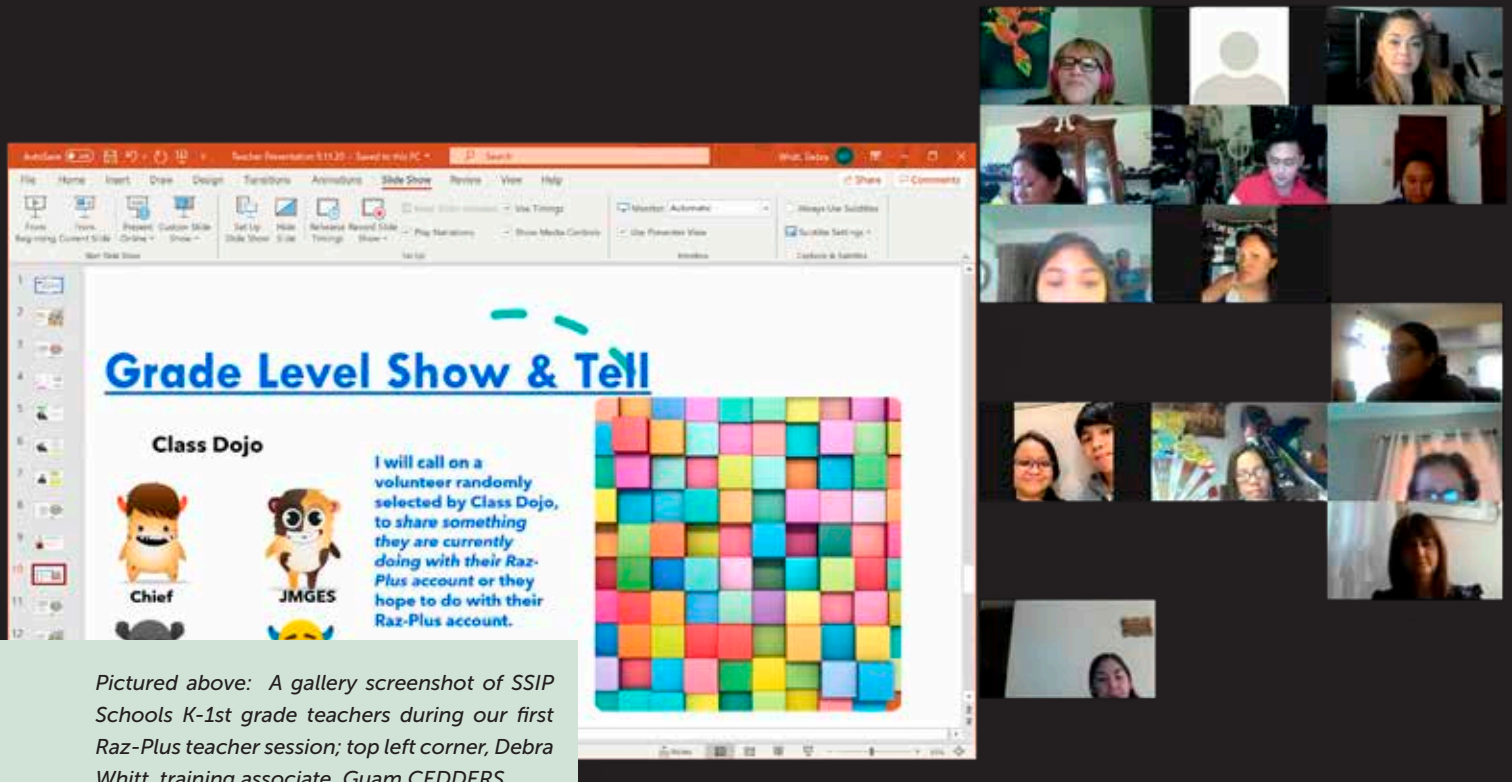
Two additional Learning Community Meetings were held, one on October 27 and another on November 17. The October meeting featured Department of Public Health and Social Services' (DPHSS) Medicaid Program. A representative from the program provided Learning Community members an overview of the program which outlined eligibility requirements, forms to fill out, documentation to bring, the referral process for diagnostic audiological evaluations, and contact information for the program. In November, the EHDI team presented the results of the EHDI Needs Assessment. Parents of children identified with a hearing loss, early interventionists, hearing screeners, and an audiologist completed an electronic survey detailing the impact of timely hearing screening services from initial hearing screening, outpatient rescreens appointments, diagnostic audiological evaluations, enrollment into early intervention (EI), family to family support, and continued EI services to children currently enrolled in GEIS. The members also received an update on the status of the AMCHP grant application, EHDI COVID Safety Protocols, and developed a schedule for future EHDI Sustainability Meetings.

With the reallocation of EHDI funds and the awarding of two supplemental grants, the Guam EHDI Project will provide infants with an outpatient hearing rescreen appointment, diagnostic audiological evaluations, speech therapy, and parent support telehealth sessions to newly identified infants with a hearing loss. An EHDI Family Shared Plan of Care Journal is in production to help families navigate through the early intervention services in the community.

As most of the outreach activities have been curtailed due to the pandemic, Guam EHDI outreach activities focused on banners posted at high traffic areas and the first virtual video workshop was posted on the EHDI website with other workshop topics currently being developed. To view the EHDI/JCIH 1-3-6 Plan video, visit us at [www.guamehdi.org](http://www.guamehdi.org).



# GDOE Provides SSIP Teachers with additional Raz-Plus Supplemental Reading Support



*Pictured above: A gallery screenshot of SSIP Schools K-1st grade teachers during our first Raz-Plus teacher session; top left corner, Debra Whitt, training associate, Guam CEDDERS*

On September 4 & 11, the Guam Department of Education, in a collaborative effort with Guam CEDDERS, provided support to its State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) teachers.

On September 4, a special Raz-Plus supplemental reading program training was conducted with sub-coordinators which outlined their roles as a sub-coordinator (teacher leader) for their grade level or school site. Sub-coordinators are trained to improve teacher leadership capacity within each of the four SSIP schools.

On September 11, training continued, with a total of three separate virtual sessions across all four SSIP schools. The first session included kindergarten and first grade level teachers. The next session included teachers from grades 2 and 3. The final session included Special Education (SPED), English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers, as well as fourth and fifth grade level teachers. Each of these sessions included an overview of the Raz-Plus survey results regarding usage of the program and what types of extra support would help improve their teaching practice when using Raz-Plus Teachers

indicated additional training and more step-by-step guidance would be beneficial.

Each session featured grade-level specific hands-on training within their own Raz-Plus teacher accounts. Additionally, a leveled resource guide and a step-by-step reference on how to manage students, access various integrated resources, and how to assign leveled reading books and assessments was made available for all participants. Through the Raz-Plus leveled reading program, the participants were given access to thousands of leveled reading materials that align with GDOE's three modes of instruction: face-to-face, hard-copy, and online learning. The Raz-Plus program provides downloadable books, passages, writing activities, and assessments that can be integrated with the other core subject areas to include science, and social studies. These downloadable materials may be printed for hard-copy distribution to families and or assigned digitally. This would address the immediate need to provide extra resources to families during lockdown when plans for face-to-face learning have been halted.

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# GDOE Provides Training to TVI

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*On November 18, GDOE TVI teachers participated in a training webinar with TVI Consultant, Donna McNear. Top Row, L-R: Donna McNear; Josephine Cruz, Associate Director, Guam CEDDERS; Bottom row, L-R: Darlene Taimanglo, TVI, GDOE; and Diane Artero, TVI, GDOE.*

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The COVID-19 pandemic has forced educators to pivot and change their strategies for delivering instruction. For Itinerant Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments (TVI) who service students who are blind or have visual impairments, the goal of providing accessibility to VI students in a remote learning setting presents many challenges. As a consequence, the Guam Department of Education (GDOE), Division of Special Education, in partnership with Guam CEDDERS, started a series of training webinars for Itinerant TVI beginning October 28. The training sessions are being conducted by VI Consultant, Donna McNear. The purpose of the training webinars is to support GDOE Itinerant TVI in delivering remote instruction to students who

are blind or have a visual impairment.

The sessions have focused on technology tools that promote accessibility for students in a distance learning context. Subsequent sessions will center on assisting Itinerant TVI in building the capacity of paraeducators to promote accessibility remotely. Other session topics will include: turning on touch thinking, conducting VI assessments remotely, and navigating technology to provide students with VI with alternate access. The GDOE currently services 37 students and is staffed with two Itinerant TVI—Darlene Taimanglo and Diane Artero. The Program Coordinator is Tricia Taitague.

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# GSAT Conference Goes Virtual

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*On November 6, Dr. Therese Willcomm was the guest speaker during the first day of the GSAT Conference. Dr. Willcomm is the Director of New Hampshire's State Assistive Technology Program with the Institute on Disability at the University of New Hampshire and an Associate Professor in the Department of Occupational Therapy.*

*On November 13, Mr. Neil Rochelle was the guest speaker during the second day of the GSAT Conference. Mr. Rochelle is a Program Coordinator with the Guam Department of Education Division of Special Education.*



Change is never easy. We can try to return to how we live our lives before the pandemic or we can adapt and create opportunities in this changing world.

**LOURDES ANN MESA**  
Chairperson, GSAT  
Advisory Council



Indeed, our world has changed due to the pandemic. Virtual for almost everything...ZOOM and GOOGLE meetings, socialization, shopping, paying bills, marathons and Esports. Who would have thought! It is a new normal for a new world. It appears that the pandemic has brought us to extreme sides of the pendulum. On one side, allowing us to realize the fundamental things that most took for granted in our busy world prior to COVID-19, such as spending more time with family, toiling the soil, as well as simply appreciating and enjoying the basic things life has to offer. The other side brings unbelievable technological advancements in every facet and makes what we thought impossible, now possible.

The 26th Guam System for Assistive Technology (GSAT) Virtual Conference sponsored by Guam CEDDERS and the Tri-Agency partnership with Guam Legal Services-Disability Law Center

and Guam Developmental Disabilities Council collaboratively planned a two-day virtual conference on November 6th and 13th that demonstrated how basic low-tech assistive technology can be created through simple household materials presented by Dr. Therese Willcomm. It showcased how, in the midst of a pandemic, creativity spouts inventions using items that surround us without having to spend an arm and a leg. While Mr. Neil Rochelle on the other hand presented on more advanced high-tech assistive technology devices and equipment. The message imparted was that both low and high-tech assistive technology can make a difference in the lives of individuals with disabilities and their families. Depending on which side of the pendulum needs fall on, individuals with disabilities and their families have choices in the utilization of various assistive technology devices/equipment.



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## GSAT Conference Goes Virtual (Cont.)

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# Remembering Tom Manglona...

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On December 21, 2020, the disability community lost a great advocate and friend.

Thomas Manglona has been involved in many organizations, including Guam System for Assistive Technology (GSAT) and Guam CEDDERS for more than 15 years. Other organizations he was a part of are Guam Developmental Disabilities Council and Guma Mami. He was extremely active during conferences, sharing experiences, providing solutions, and speaking his mind. This was evident during the meetings, where we fondly remember him urging members to participate and be committed to Guam CEDDERS and GSAT's mission.

Tom, as people call him, is from the village of Barrigada. He is the third in the line of seven siblings. Survived by his brother Gerry, and three sisters...Annie, Frances, and Jessica. At age one he was diagnosed with juvenile hyaline Fibromatosis (multiple tumors), a rare syndrome that affects the skin and joints. His disability didn't stop him from engaging in various organizations, where he strongly voiced his opinions.

In addition to his self-advocacy work, Tom was an experienced and passionate entrepreneur in horticulture and in animal care.

He may be gone but not forgotten. We want to reflect his passion for creating access and inclusion for all individuals with disabilities and inspire others to continue this legacy.

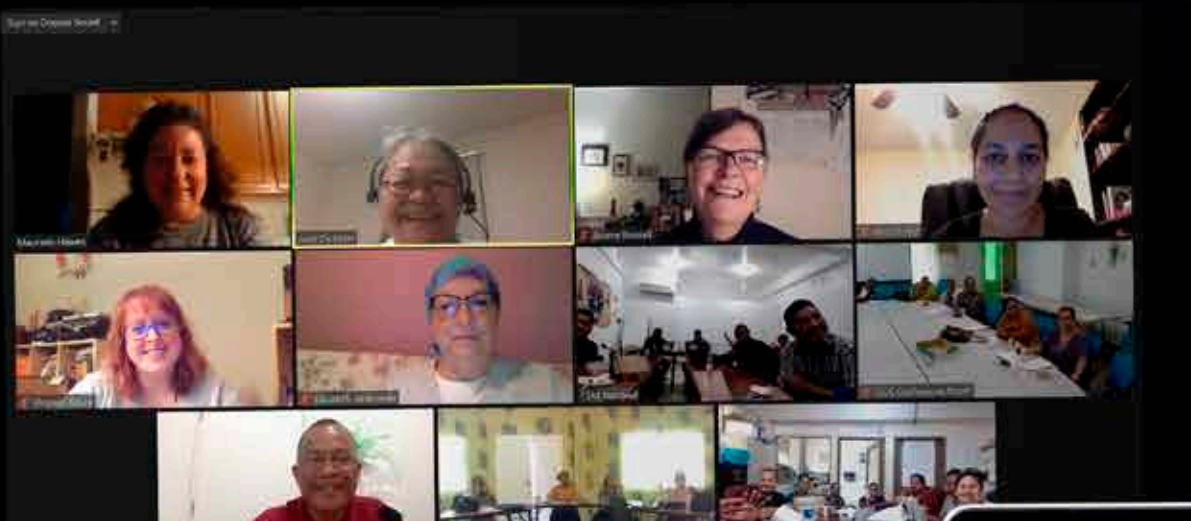
# FSM Engages Stakeholders in APR Development

On November 24, 25, and 27, the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) National Department of Education, Special Education Program conducted its FFY 2019 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part B Annual Performance Report (APR) Stakeholder Meeting. The purpose for the meeting was to convene key FSM National and State level stakeholders to review FSM's FFY 2019 IDEA Part B APR due to USDOE Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) no later than February 1, 2021 and to review the key reporting requirements for FSM's FFY 2019 IDEA Part B State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) Phase III, Year Five due to OSEP no later than April 1, 2021.

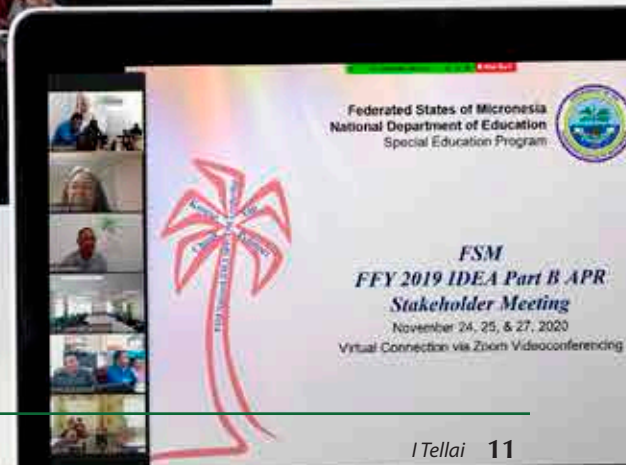
Guam CEDDERS June De Leon provided technical support during the three-day virtual engagement with the FSM National Assistant Secretary and coordinators and FSM State education administrators, special education coordinators, staff, and special education advisory council chairpersons. The meeting included a review of state-level data and information for inclusion into FSM's FFY 2019 IDEA APR, including reasons for "slippage" for required APR indicators.

On November 25th, virtual technical support was also provided by Elizabeth Jankowski, Ph.D. from University of Oregon, and Maureen Hawes, Ph.D., and Arlene Russell from Sigma Associates in the review of FSM's SSIP implementation and evaluation. Key reporting requirements were reviewed for FSM's SSIP reporting. Dr. Jankowski presented an update on the screening assessment data for reporting on the SSIP State-Identified Measurable Results (SIMR) and the virtual technical assistance activities conducted during the reporting period. Dr. Hawes and Ms. Russell provided an overview of the evaluation data collected and reported in the last SSIP report and the evaluation priorities for this reporting period.

As a result of the three-day stakeholder engagement, the draft FSM FFY 2019 IDEA APR was developed and disseminated to all FSM states for final input during the scheduled January 2021 APR meeting. In addition, specific state-level video-conferencing sessions will be scheduled in December 2020 and January 2021 in preparation for the development of FSM's FFY 2019 IDEA Part B SSIP Phase III, Year Five report.



Day Two of the three-day virtual FSM FFY 2019 IDEA Part B APR Stakeholder Meeting include technical support from University of Oregon (UO) and Sigma Associates, and participation by the National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO). Pictured Top row (L-R): Maureen Hawes, Ph.D., Sigma Associates; June De Leon, Guam CEDDERS; Arlene Russell, Sigma Associates; Anu Shekar, Sigma Associates. Middle row (L-R): Virginia Ressa, NCEO; Elizabeth Jankowski, UO; FSM National and Pohnpei State Teams; Kosrae State Team. Bottom row (L-R): Arthur Albert, FSM National; Chuuk State Team; Yap State Team





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# SSIP Schools Continue to Use Raz-Plus Supplemental Reading Program during Remote Learning

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In partnership with the Guam Department of Education (GDOE) Consolidated Grant State Systemic Improvement Project (SSIP), Guam CEDDERS provided data to GDOE regarding the Raz-Plus Supplemental Reading program and its usage within SSIP schools. The SSIP schools are Chief Brodie Elementary School, J. M. Guerrero Elementary School, M. U. Lujan Elementary School, and Captain H. B. Price Elementary School.

After months of remote learning, the SSIP schools have found that the Raz-Plus supplemental reading program is an invaluable resource for both their online and hard copy packet learning students. The Raz-Plus leveled reading program gives students access to thousands of online books in a variety of genres. Much of the material is accessible from home via the Kids A-Z app, as well as, through their Kids A-Z portal by laptop or computer. This engaging platform adapts to a child's reading level and moves them up through increasingly challenging leveled activities automatically. It also provides students with a reading library filled with books that feature a listening, reading, recording, and comprehension component. Moreover, students are able to highlight important text, create vocabulary lists, and annotate on virtual post-its regarding passages they have read online. Additionally, students can send recorded passages of their reading to their teachers instantly through the platform.

Students who opt to receive hard copy learning packets can obtain the same printed downloadable resources available to their online peers. Teachers would only need to provide written instructions for families to carry out these assignments or

communicate via phone (or another teleconferencing format) to ensure students understand how to complete them on their own. Some hard copy families have used their cell phones to record/video their child/ren reading the assigned passages and then forwarding these samples of oral reading to their child's teacher. Schools and families are continuously finding creative ways to make the best out of their remote learning experience.

Recent data regarding teacher usage across the four SSIP schools is at 97% as of October 2020 with a 37% increase over a three-month period (August 2020-October 2020). This indicates that teachers are using the program in some way to supplement their reading instruction for both online students and students receiving instruction through a learning packet. Furthermore, the data regarding the number of reading resources from Raz-Plus that have been downloaded and printed from August through October 2020 showed a 277% increase over three months. This is a strong indicator that teachers are using the Raz-Plus resources in support of the hard copy learning packets.

In testimony of the positive impact that the Raz-Plus leveled

*Inatan Leon Guerrero Dunn (pictured right), 9 years old, 4th grade, M.U. Lujan Elementary School, regarding using Raz-Plus at home, "I love reading on Raz Plus, especially in the Classics section because there are a lot of good books there. I just finished reading Dorothy and the Wizard of Oz. It was a good story, because Dorothy is very kind and despite how beautiful Oz is, she still wants to go home. This made me feel proud of her because I love my home, too, and I wouldn't want to leave it. Reading on Raz Plus is something I always look forward to."*



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## SSIP Schools Continue to Use Raz-Plus Supplemental Reading Program (Cont.)

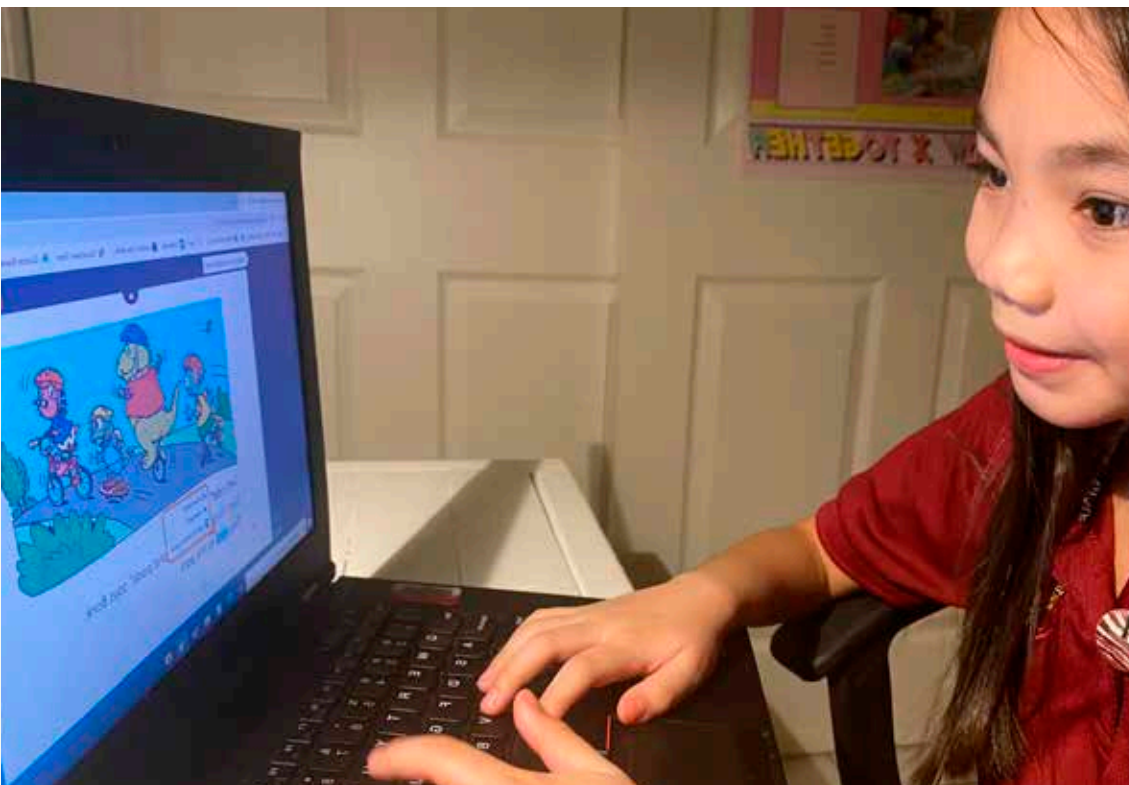
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reading program has made, parent and M. U. Lujan School Principal, Natasha Dela Cruz noted, "Reading has become more enjoyable for my children since they've started using Raz-Plus. They've been reading almost every day for the last month and a half and have already leveled up 3 times. They find the books interesting as they are learning a lot about the world around them, as well as about positive behaviors and values. Their confidence in reading has definitely soared!"

Furthermore, on November 20, in response to teacher requests, we invited Jennifer Nigh, Learning A-Z, Director, International Academics, and Curriculum, for another session on ways to integrate Raz-Plus and Google Classroom. Teachers from all four SSIP schools were invited to attend this event. SSIP teachers learned how to effectively use their Raz-Plus leveled reading resource within their GDOE online Google Classroom accounts.

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*Mattingan Leon Guerrero Dunn (pictured right), 6 years old, 1st grade, M.U. Lujan Elementary School, noted, "Raz Plus is a good resource. It strengthens your reading and you don't need to go and buy books, you can just read them on Raz Plus. I have fun reading on Raz Plus and it helps me read better. I like reading stories about animals. I also like changing my avatar and getting pets when I earn points."*



*Lauren Charfauros (pictured left), 8 years old, 3rd grader from Price Elementary School, using the Raz-Plus leveled reading program (Kids A-Z portal) from home. What Lauren has to say about the program, "Mrs. Meno encourages the class to go onto Raz Plus. There are so many cool books to read. I like that I can listen to the stories too. My favorite part of Raz Plus is dressing my avatar!"*



# GDOE Provides Brain-Based Reading Technology to Students with IEPs during Remote Learning



On October 22, the Guam Department of Education (GDOE) Division of Special Education, in a collaborative effort with Guam CEDDERS, provided an informational session for principals and teachers of students with Individualized Education Programs (IEP) regarding a pilot project involving Scientific Learning's Fast ForWord® brain-based adaptive reading program. This first session was conducted by a customer success specialist, from Fast ForWord®, Mr. David Rose. He provided attendees with the basic principles behind the success of the program with struggling learners and how students benefit from its train brain activities that better prepare children for reading and learning.

Subsequently, on November 10, a follow-up commitment session was held with principals and teachers of students with IEPs who agreed to implement the brain-based technology program with fidelity. This follow-up session was led by GDOE and facilitated by Guam CEDDERS and focused on the necessary groundwork for implementation of the Fast ForWord® program. The following schools that have pledged their commitment to implementation are as follows: M.U. Lujan Elementary School, Price Elementary School, C.L. Taitano Elementary School, D.L. Perez Elementary School, and Merizo Martyrs Memorial School. The first phase of the pilot project will involve students who are currently receiving online instruction or who have online access

*On November 10, GDOE held a school program consultation and Fast ForWord® commitment session, GDOE/Special Education, Terese Crisostomo, leading the discussion. Pictured L to R: Debra Whitt, Training Associate, Guam CEDDERS; Neil Rochelle, Program Coordinator, GDOE; Dr. Josephine Cruz, Associate Director, Guam CEDDERS; Terese Crisostomo, Special Projects Coordinator, GDOE; Elizabeth Aflague, RRT, Price Elementary, GDOE; Cherise Charfauros, RRT, M.U. Lujan Elementary, GDOE; Elias Taisipic, Principal, Price Elementary, GDOE.*

at home. The second phase will occur once GDOE begins face-to-face instruction. During this stage, face-to-face students will be phased into the program.

Professional development sessions were held on November 24 and 25 for the identified school principals and teachers with Mr. Kris Thibault of Fast ForWord®. The training covered the components of Fast ForWord® and Reading Assistant, reviewing and managing reports, and ways to better assist students with their learning exercises. Additionally, a parent/family informational session will be scheduled in December to assist families on how to navigate and access the Fast ForWord® platform from home. Guam CEDDERS will provide ongoing technical support and assistance for all participating schools and their families.



# CNMI Continues Virtual Professional Development

On November 13, Guam CEDDERS Consultant, Nieves Flores, Ed.D, facilitated the first of several virtual meetings with the CNMI Public School System's SSIP Core Team comprised of three target school administrators and district personnel to discuss the data collection and reporting requirements in preparation for this year's SSIP submission. Pictured Top Row (L-R): Nora Fujihira, Data & Compliance Program Manager; Fasefulu Tigilau, State Assessment Coordinator; Donna Flores, Special Education Director; Dr. Flores; Yvonne Pangelinan, Ed.D. (not shown), Student & Support Services Senior Director. Middle Row (L-R): Liela Yumul, Garapan Elementary School Principal; Suaad Younis, ELA Program Coordinator; Naomi Nishimura, Koblerville Elementary School Principal. Bottom Row (L-R): Paulette Sablan, San Vicente Elementary School Principal and Jacqueline Che (not shown), Acting ARE Senior Director.

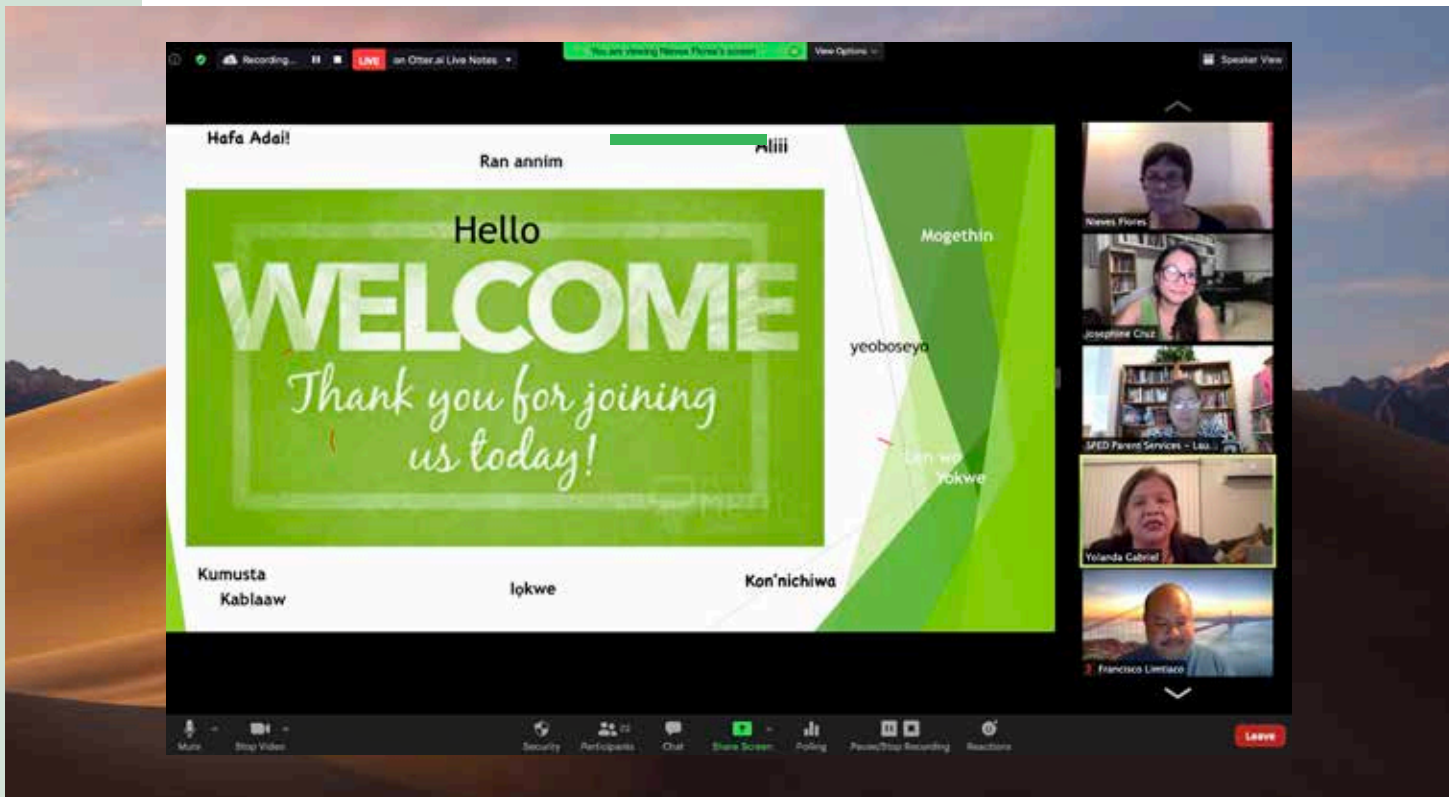


The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) early intervention and special education programs continue to prioritize professional development for their early intervention providers and special education teachers to improve services and supports, especially during these uncertain times due to the global pandemic. Virtual teaching and supports have been the new early intervention and educational delivery system in today's new normal. Distance learning is an adjustment for the teachers and learners, which requires engagement from their families.

Through a contract with the CNMI Public School System, Guam CEDDERS continues to address CNMI's prioritized PD through video conferencing sessions. Virtual professional development sessions facilitated by Guam CEDDERS professional staff and/or consultants during this quarter include:

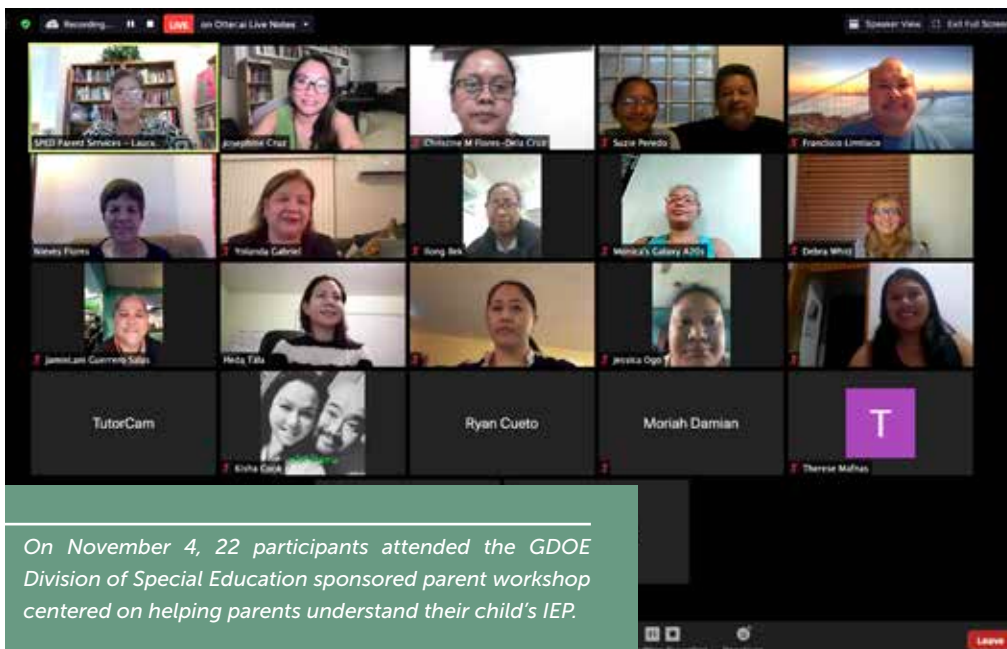
- Elaine Eclavea and Keith Villaluna supporting the early intervention program develop its FFY 2019 Part C Annual Performance Report (APR), including the Part C State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP).
- Elaine Eclavea, with technical support from Keith Villaluna, facilitating the parent coaching sessions with early intervention providers in support of the virtual home intervention services.
- Elaine Eclavea, with technical support from Keith Villaluna, facilitating virtual intervention supports with preschool special education teachers.
- Nieves Flores, Ed.D., facilitating Individualized Education Program (IEP) development and implementation with special education teachers.
- Nieves Flores, Ed.D., facilitating the CNMI SSIP Core Team meetings to review progress made in the implementation of the CNMI Part B SSIP and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on activities, and to review the development of the CNMI Part B SSIP Phase III, Year 5 report.
- June De Leon supporting the special education program develop its CNMI FFY 2019 Part B APR.

# GDOE Holds a 3-Part Parent Workshop Series



On November 4, the first of a 3-part parent workshop series titled "Understanding Your Child's IEP" took place. Top to Bottom: Nieves Flores, Ed. D., consultant, Guam CEDDERS; Josephine Cruz, Ed. D, Associate Director, Guam CEDDERS; Laura Taisipic, Parent Services Coordinator, GDOE; Yolanda Gabriel, Assistant Superintendent Division of Special Education, GDOE; Francisco Limtiaco, parent.

The Guam Department of Education (GDOE) Division of Special Education, in collaboration with Guam CEDDERS facilitated a 3-part virtual parent workshop series titled "Understanding Your Child's IEP". The purpose of the parent workshop series is to support parents in understanding their child's Individualized Education Program (IEP). The 3-part series covered the components of the IEP, the role and responsibilities of the parent in the IEP process, parent rights related to the IEP, and how parents can support their child to succeed in school. The series took place on November 4th, 10th, and 24th and was facilitated by Guam CEDDERS Consultant, Dr. Nieves Flores.



# 'Grit' Takes the Spotlight at Guam CEDDERS Professional Development

The COVID-19 global pandemic has brought the importance of resilience and perseverance amid crisis to the forefront. In response to the pandemic, Guam CEDDERS staff participated in a two-part professional development centered on grit. The professional development was facilitated by Guam CEDDERS Associate Director Josephine Cruz, Ed. D.

The phenomenon of grit is based on the research of University of Pennsylvania's professor of psychology, Angela Duckworth, Ph.D. According to Duckworth, grit is a unique combination of both passion and long-term perseverance. In her work, Duckworth interviewed people who were highly successful in their fields to determine what made them remarkable. The characteristics that emerged was direction and determination---passion and perseverance---which is what Duckworth describes as grit.

The first part of the series took place on October 30 and covered the following topics: What is Grit; How Do You Grow Your Grit; and Grit in Crisis. The second part of the series took place on December 18 and focused on how to develop organizational grit. The series started by first looking at grit on a personal and individual level and then expanding the concept to looking at what makes organizations gritty. The professional development allowed for reflection by having staff look inwardly at themselves and the organization to determine which areas can be grittier. Overall, looking at grit through both a personal and organizational lens allowed the Guam CEDDERS staff to reflect and articulate what the "CEDDERS Way" was all about and how to grow passion and perseverance as an organization in order to continue the mission of improving the lives of individuals with disabilities and their families.



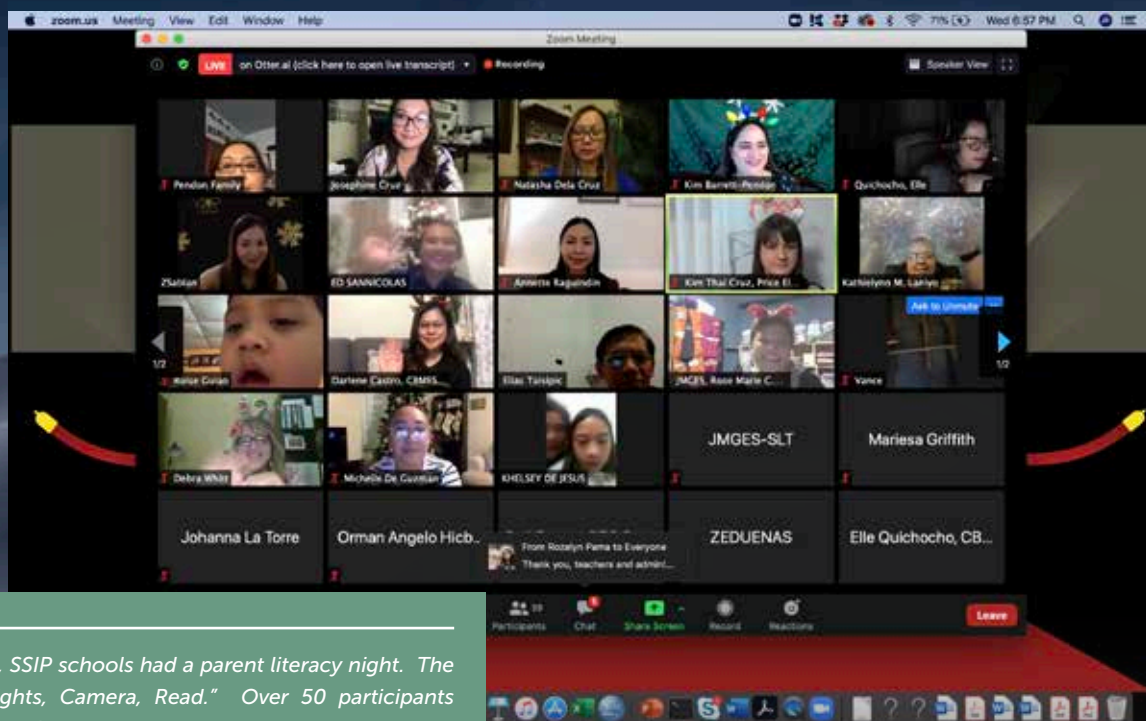
*On December 18, Guam CEDDERS engages in the second part of their professional development. Pictured above are Guam CEDDERS staff.*



# GDOE SSIP Schools Hold Virtual Parent Literacy Night

"Lights, Camera, Read" was the theme for the Guam Department of Education (GDOE) State Systemic Improvement Project's (SSIP) first ever virtual parent literacy night held on December 16. GDOE's four SSIP schools, Capt. H.B. Price Elementary, Chief Brodie Memorial Elementary, M.U. Lujan Elementary, and J.M. Guerrero Elementary worked in partnership with Guam CEDDERS to plan and facilitate the online event. Teacher leaders and principals from the SSIP schools: Dr. Kim Thai Cruz, Phan Aguilar, Ed San Nicolas and Acting Principal Elias Taisipic (Capt. H.B. Price Elementary); Dr. Kathielyn Laniyo, Michelle De Guzman and Principal Rose Castro (J.M. Guerrero Elementary); Annette Raguindin, Zena Sablan and Principal Natasha Dela Cruz (M.U. Lujan Elementary); and Eleanor Quichocho, Kimberly Barrett-Pendon and Principal Darlene Castro (Chief Brodie Memorial Elementary) along with Guam CEDDERS staff Josephine Cruz and Debra Whitt conducted the literacy activities. Over 50 parents from the SSIP schools logged on to participate in the event.

The purpose of the literacy night was to provide resources to parents to help them navigate remote learning more effectively. Parents received a virtual tour of the resources available on the National Center on Improving Literacy's (NCIL) website and watched two videos from the NCIL website that provided a model for parents on how to assist their child at home with literacy activities. In addition, teachers provided information on how to use the Raz-Plus online leveled reading program that is available to the SSIP schools. Raz-Plus provides families with access to thousands of books and literacy resources. The night ended with recognizing students from each SSIP school who moved up the most reading levels on Raz-Plus. In addition, books and Payless gift certificates were raffled off to participants. The books were donated by Rose Castro, the principal of J.M. Guerrero Elementary and the gift certificates were donated by Debra Whitt from Guam CEDDERS. Overall, the night was informative and fun-filled with parents leaving with a treasure trove of resources to support their child's reading development at home.



On October 16, SSIP schools had a parent literacy night. The theme was "Lights, Camera, Read." Over 50 participants attended the virtual event.

# GDOE SSIP Teachers Engage in Data Sessions

The Guam Department of Education (GDOE) in partnership with Guam CEDDERS provided support to teachers from the State Systemic Improvement Project (SSIP) schools, M.U. Lujan Elementary School (MULES), Capt. H.B. Price Elementary School (CHBPES), Juan M. Guerrero Elementary School (JMGES), and Chief Brodie Memorial Elementary School (CBMES). A teacher leader session was held on October 16 and subsequent follow-up sessions were held for each school. For MULES and CHBPES, the data sessions took place during each grade-level's Professional Learning Community (PLC). For CBMES, the session took place during time allotted for professional development. The purpose of the data sessions was to build the capacity of teachers in data literacy. By supporting teachers in understanding their student

data, they will be better able to target their remote instruction and interventions to meet the academic needs of students. Moreover, the data analysis process will assist teachers in setting improvement goals for students. Sessions were facilitated in collaboration with SSIP teacher leaders from the four SSIP schools and Guam CEDDERS staff. The SSIP teacher leaders are April Torres, Ed San Nicolas, Tina Aguilar, and Leilani Mesa from CHBPES; Zenia Duenas, Annette Raguindin, and Cherise Charfauros from MULES; Pearl Hamada, Eleanor Quichocho, Kimberly Barrett, and Jamie Baza from CBMES; and Kasundra Penaflor, Monica Garcia, Hannah Bidaure, Merlyn Villaverde, Lalainne Ocampo, Aurelia Perez, Rebecca Bidaure, Pechel Pascua, and Bianca Nguyen from JMGES.

On November 11, CHBPES 3rd grade teachers participated in a data session during their PLC. The session was led by April Torres, teacher leader. Top row, L-R: April Torres, teacher leader; Josephine Cruz, Associate Director, Guam CEDDERS; Maria Charfauros, teacher; 2nd row, L-R: Cellina Meno, teacher; Josephine Certeza, teacher; Dan Alig, teacher; Bottom row: Mariesa Griffith, teacher.



## Guam CEDDERS Holds Christmas Drive

The holiday season is a time to reflect and give gratitude for all that we have in our lives. Now more than ever, as families struggle to recover from the impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic, it is a time to give back to the community that has given us so much. In the spirit of giving, the Guam CEDDERS staff held a Christmas Drive to collect non-perishable food items and toys for the Salvation Army. On December 23rd, the items were dropped off to the Salvation Army in Tiyan. The Salvation Army distributed the items to families across the island in need of food and an extra dose of holiday cheer.



On December 23, Guam CEDDERS staff dropped off items collected in the Christmas Drive to the Salvation Army. Front row, L-R: Brittany Masang, Office Assistant, Guam CEDDERS; CJ Urquico, Public Information Officer, Salvation Army; Back row: Salvation Army staff



### GUAM CEDDERS WELCOMES NEW STAFF

Cullen Pinaula, from the CNMI joined Guam CEDDERS on November 16 as an Office Assistant. He is currently a senior at the University of Guam majoring in Criminal Justice and plans to further his education by pursuing an MPA. Cullen enjoys watching movies, visiting new places, and spending time with friends.

**Welcome aboard, Cullen!**



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Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities  
Education, Research, & Service (Guam CEDDERS) Newsletter

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Layout & Design: Zachary Hecita

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Alternative formats (e.g. Braille or large print) of *I Tellai* will be made available upon request.

Please contact Zachary Hecita at (671) 735-2455 (v), (671) 735-6531 (TTY), or (671) 734-5709 (fax) for more information.

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**For more information on any of these events,  
please call 735-2479 or visit [www.guamcedders.org](http://www.guamcedders.org)**

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