



**Arnold I. Palacios**  
Governor

**David M. Apatang**  
Lieutenant Governor

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS  
**OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**

July 16, 2024

GOV 2024-506

Jesus I. Sablan  
Chairman  
Commonwealth Election Commission  
P.O. Box 500470  
Saipan, MP 96950

Dear Chairman Sablan,

On July 12, 2024, the Commonwealth Election Commission wrote to notify me of a vacancy on the Board of Education due to the resignation of Chairman Herman M. Atalig.

Pursuant to 1 CMC § 2263(a), the Governor “shall appoint the candidate who received the next highest number of votes in the same election and district” as the departed board member. However, my office has been informed by the Election Commission that Mr. Atalig was the only candidate on Rota in the 2020 election.

Accordingly, per 1 CMC § 2263(b), a special election must be conducted within 30 days after the vacancy is declared.

The statute is silent as to what constitutes declaration of a vacancy. As my office has just received your memorandum dated July 12, 2024, this letter to you constitutes my declaration of the existence of a vacancy on the Board of Education as of today, July 15, 2024.

I hereby respectfully request that the Commonwealth Election Commission conduct a special election on Rota to fill the vacant board seat within 30 days of my formal declaration of a vacancy, i.e., by August 14, 2024.

Sincerely,

  
**ARNOLD I. PALACIOS**  
Governor