



Government of Bermuda
Ministry of Education
OFFICE OF THE MINISTER

29 March 2012

Mr. Quinton Ming
President
T.N. Tatum Middle School PTA
60 Middle Road
Warwick, WK 03

Dear Mr. Ming,

**Re: Transfer of TN Tatem Middle School Principal, Possible Discontinuation
of the Employment of Deputy Principal and Related Matters**

Thank you for your letter of 22 March concerning matters as detailed above, along with a signed petition.

Let me begin by thanking you for the opportunity to respond to your concerns. I am sensitive to the needs of all education stakeholders and I do take your concerns seriously – correspondingly, I trust that you will also appreciate that I too put the interests of the students at T.N. Tatem Middle School, and all our public school students, as my priority.

Please note that the Permanent Secretary of Education, Mr. Warren Jones, will respond to the technical questions (those that deal with the employment and deployment of staff) on behalf of the Commissioner of Education who is on leave.

While the Education Act mandates that the Ministry must consult with the Board of Education on decisions affecting schools, no such role exists for parents (or PTA's) in the decision-making process. However, I do agree that matters relating to schools should be communicated to the school community prior to being announced to the general public. I apologise if this was not the case with your school; ordinarily, such information is transmitted to the parents (PTA) by the Principal.

As Minister, you will know that I am the political head of the Ministry, and just as with Ministers and the Civil Service, I have no role in the appointment or placement of staff. My role is to establish policy and within my remit, I have made it a priority to focus on the quality of teaching and learning in all public schools so that our public schools become the choice for parents, not the default choice.

In pursuit of this policy, the Commissioner of Education has reviewed the needs of every school. As a result, recommendations were made to promote professional learning, maximise instructional leadership, and improve student achievement and site renewal.

Your request to be included in this process, while reasonable, cannot be accommodated within the framework of the collective bargaining agreements upon which these decisions are based. However, I undertake to have the Ministry examine the establishment of School Councils.

If we were to adopt such Councils, they would provide a vehicle within which parental views can be taken into account in the education system's decision-making process.

Be assured - our only aim is to create equity across the system to ensure that all students benefit from the talents possessed by our teachers and principals.

I trust that you will support the exploration of establishing School Councils and be prepared to come forward with suggestions for developing a parent involvement framework.

Jennifer Smith

The Hon. Dame Jennifer Smith, DBE, JP, DHumL, MP
Minister of Education