



*Government of Bermuda*  
Ministry of Education  
OFFICE OF THE MINISTER

30 March 2012

Ms. Azuhaa Coleman  
President  
Victor Scott Primary School  
Parent Teacher Association  
#4 Glebe Road  
Pembroke HM 15

Dear Ms. Coleman,

**Re: Transfer of Victor Scott Principal and Related Matters**

Thank you for your letter of 23 March concerning matters as detailed above, along with a signed petition.

Let me begin by thanking you for the letter. I am sensitive to the needs of all education stakeholders and I take your concerns seriously – correspondingly, you will also appreciate that I put the interests of Victor Scott Primary School students, and all our public school students, as a priority.

I also appreciate and understand your passion and desire for the best for your children and I gladly accept your apology.

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 similar 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, I am the political head of the Ministry, and just like the Civil Service, I have no role in the appointment or placement of staff. My role is to establish policy. Within my remit, I have made it a priority to raise the quality of teaching and learning in all public schools so that 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