



Government of Bermuda  
Ministry of Education

To the House of Assembly  
By  
**The Hon. R. Wayne Scott, JP, MP**  
Minister of Education

**Ministerial Statement**  
Public School Reorganization Update  
Friday May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2015

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**Mr. Speaker,**

I am pleased today to provide this Honourable House, our parents, educators and the broader community with an update on progress towards public school reorganization.

**Mr. Speaker,**

You may recall that last month I announced that the difficult challenge of public school reorganization would be more successful if additional time was taken to look at our public education system in greater depth. I made this statement based on the input received during the initial public consultation on this important issue.

The public consultation process provided good feedback from both internal and external stakeholders. Thus, the decision I have made allows for significantly more time to extend the process of public consultation and to undertake a more thoughtful and deliberative process before I consider the possible closure of specific schools.

**Mr. Speaker,**

Since making that announcement in late April, the Ministry of Education, in collaboration with stakeholder representatives from our community has made progressive strides towards determining a better way forward for public school reorganization. This includes the formulation

of a Working Group that includes parents, educators, a representative from the Board of Education and community members. This working group guided by representative stakeholders from the Coalition for Community Activism Bermuda (also known as CCAB), has been working collaboratively with the Permanent Secretary, Acting Commissioner of Education and the Ministry Policy Analyst to frame a terms of reference that will guide the process for developing recommendations regarding school reorganization and possible closure.

**Mr. Speaker,**

The terms of reference will become a working document developed with the benefit of consultation submissions, feedback, research, diverse knowledge and experience. It is intended that the terms of reference will steer the work of a soon to be established School Reorganization Advisory Committee, also referred to as the SCORE Committee.

**Mr. Speaker,**

I have always emphasized the importance of consulting and partnering with our key stakeholders as we make decisions that will impact the education of our children. In this regard, the SCORE Committee will have broad representation of both internal and external stakeholders of the public education system. Invitations for participation will be formally extended to the Bermuda Union of Teachers, the Bermuda Public Services Union (representing public school principals), parents, community members, the Board of Education, as well as educators representing key technical areas, such as preschool and/or primary school and special education. Additionally, the Ministry Policy Analyst and the Acting Commissioner of Education will be involved as Ministry representatives.

**Mr. Speaker,**

The terms of reference will specifically outline a well-described mandate for the SCORE Committee. This will comprise its guiding principles, the types of data and information the SCORE Committee will use, criteria and study factors to be considered, and of course a step-by-step process it will follow to consider and make recommendations regarding which schools should be consolidated and/or closed.

**Mr. Speaker,**

I am pleased to share that the current working group has already commenced their meetings and is currently working on the formulation of the terms of reference. Without foreshadowing what is to come, I will state that a commitment to students, transparency, integrity, effective communication, as well as further engagement with the community is being embedded within the terms of reference. And, in support of transparency regarding school reorganization, the terms of reference, once completed will be made available to internal and external stakeholders, and the general public.

**Mr. Speaker,**

As mentioned earlier, the SCORE Committee will be advisory in nature. Using the finalized terms of reference, the SCORE Committee will carry out its responsibilities with the ultimate aim of making recommendations regarding possible school closures, in time for the beginning of the school year in September 2016. The SCORE Committee is therefore expected to complete their work early within the 2015/2016 school year, at which time the recommendations will be shared accordingly.

**Mr. Speaker,**

I am very thankful to each member of the working group and the time that they are committing to assist with this initiative of national importance. I recognize that they have busy schedules and greatly appreciate their willingness to volunteer time in service of public education. Therefore, as we partner and embrace this opportunity to improve and enhance the public education system, I believe that the end result could only lead to the achievement of better outcomes for our children.

**Thank You, Mr. Speaker**