



Government of Bermuda
Ministry of Education

To the House of Assembly
By

The Hon. E. Wayne Scott, JP, MP
Minister of Education

Ministerial Statement

School Re-Structuring and School Registration

Date: Friday February 27th, 2015

Mr. Speaker,

Thank you for your indulgence in allowing me to make this very important Ministerial Statement this morning. I do promise to keep it brief.

As all members of this Honourable House are aware, Bermuda continues to face significant economic challenges. The Ministry of Education faces a 5% budget reduction equivalent to approximately \$5.9 million during the 2015/16 fiscal year. This coupled with continued demographic trends such as a decline in student enrolment has left us little choice but to consider restructuring the way public education is delivered. As a result of the economic challenges we face, we will have to discuss with all interested stakeholders the requirement for fewer Government Preschools and Primary Schools in the first instance, and therefore the consolidation or the closure of schools.

Mr. Speaker,

Many parents will be understandably concerned, but the Ministry and Department of Education stands firm that our Children will be first priority. We will consult and consider the views of affected PTAs before any definitive decisions are made. We will also consult all key stakeholders.

To that end, I have reached out to key stakeholders which include the PTAs of primary schools, primary school principals and the administrators of preschools to

provide in general terms some of the factors that have led to the decision to consider school closures.

These factors include by way of example, the following demographic trends:

- A declining birthrate, declining population growth rates, emigration and overall declining student enrolment; and
- A decreased budget allotment for the Ministry of Education, the Department of Education and schools.

In due course, I will ensure that PTAs, as well as other parents, principals, teachers, other school staff, Unions and community members are provided with more specific data related to:

- past, current and projected enrolment figures;
- budgets for preschools and primary schools; and
- cost per student for preschools and primary schools.

Qualitative information will also be provided related to safety and health concerns, the state of school facilities, the effective and efficient use of school facilities, and the consideration of optimal preschool and primary school size for effective educational delivery.

Mr. Speaker,

Decisions on school closure and consolidation can only be made following consultation with PTAs and stakeholders. Accordingly, a decision has been made to suspend the 2015 school registration process for preschools and primary schools. As such, it is necessary to delay decisions on school registration until after a determination has been made on school closures and consolidation, and at least until the end of April 2015.

Thank you Mr. Speaker