



GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA

**Ministry of Education**

Consultation on a  
**Proposal for the Introduction of Parish  
Primary Schools**

**Executive Summary**

December 2020

## 1.0 Executive Summary

### Introduction

In response to community calls for dramatic improvement in the quality of public education and lifetime opportunities for *all* young people, the Government of Bermuda has embarked on a visionary transformation process.

We have introduced the *Learning First* programme that focuses on necessary educational change and designs that are inspiring new learning solutions for young people. However, it is also critical that we modernize the structure and organization of the Bermuda Public School System to realize sustainable and long-lasting change.

While much attention has been garnered by the Government's commitment to phase out middle schools, introduce signature schools and move from a 3-tier to a 2-tier public education system, we are also undertaking a holistic, and therefore systemic approach in order to change the quality of education and outcomes for all young people across the entire public education system.

### Background

We have a primary school enrolment of 2,074 students, and considerable human and financial resources spread inequitably across 18 primary schools. Our primary schools are old and were designed and built to support education from an earlier era. They require significant maintenance and repairs, and cannot support new teaching and learning models, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning environments that our students need as part of a best in class education system. Therefore, we propose to introduce parish primary schools as tier-one of our transformed public education system.

In addition to sharing the vision and plan for transformation for the entire public education system, the consultation document also articulates critical decisions that have been made in support of the Government's commitments, including the introduction of legislation to phase out middle schools and introduce signature schools.

### Consultation on the Introduction of Parish Primary Schools

We are therefore inviting critical stakeholder and community participation in a consultation on proposals for the introduction of parish primary schools, including primary schools recommended for closure. We are consulting broadly and are looking for the views of all stakeholders, including all affected and interested persons and organizations. We are also open to any alternatives to the organization of primary schools that meet the objectives of improving the quality of education and student outcomes.

### Why We Need Systemic Change and Transformation

While there have been many attempts at change, and even improvements in several areas, the pace, quality, depth, and breadth of change, have not adequately addressed the diverse needs of all of our students and have not resulted in the outcomes to which all students in Bermuda are

entitled. Therefore, the time has come to finally consider, develop and make the changes that are needed to bring meaningful and long-lasting change to our public education system. If we are to see improvements in education across all school and year levels, we must:

- Shift to an assessment programme that is varied, robust, relevant and enables students to demonstrate what they have learned in a variety of authentic ways.
- Shift to a system-wide research-based 21<sup>st</sup> century instructional model for delivering the curriculum.
- Ensure that all teachers in our classrooms and all leaders of our schools have the qualifications and certifications needed to improve education outcomes for our students.

We believe that as we make the shift from our current state to our future state for primary level education, we will see an improvement in student achievement, student attainment and the outcomes for education.

There are four main reasons why holistic and wide-ranging change is being undertaken:

- i. The Government mandate to deliver on its commitment to change and transform public education
- ii. Community demands for change and transformation through the development and articulation of *Plan 2022: Bermuda's Strategic Plan for Public School Education*
- iii. The trend of declining enrolment, and
- iv. *Most importantly*, the need to improve student outcomes and attainment for all learners.

### **Vision for a Redesigned and Restructured Public Education System**

In order to *finally* realize the change required and demanded by our community, the Government has developed a vision and plan for a Bermuda Public School System that incorporates international accreditation and restorative practices.

Beginning with the end in mind, as a reflection of Plan 2022, we have developed a graduate profile, which encapsulates the minimum expectations for the Bermuda Public School System graduate.

Students at all year levels will be supported by:

- Internationally-recognized fit-for-purpose curricula that is vertically aligned to support seamless transition between year levels and school levels
- 21<sup>st</sup> Century Real World and Authentic Learning Facilities
- High Quality Leadership and Teaching for All Schools

We envision that within five years, we will have a 2-tier public education system that will consist of:

- Ten high-quality and equitable parish primary schools
- Five senior-level signature schools, each with 1 or more signature (or specialization)

- One exceptionalities signature school for students with special needs who now attend Dame Marjorie Bean Hope Academy; this signature school will also contain other special education programmes and services to meet the needs of exceptional students
- One signature school for alternative education for students with social-emotional and behavioural difficulties; this signature school will also provide education programmes and supports to meet the needs of students with other alternative needs.

The 2-tier public education system will consist of the following tiers:

Tier	School Level/Type	Age Range	Year Levels
Tier 1	Primary schools	5 to 12	P1 to P8
Tier 2	Senior-level signature schools	13 to 18	S1 to S5
'All Through Schools' - Tiers Covering Year Levels and Ages across Tiers 1 and 2	Exceptionalities signature school Alternative education signature schools	5 to 18	P1 to S5

The three years of middle school will be reallocated to the primary-level and the senior-level signature schools as follows:

Current Middle School Years	New Allocation of Middle School Years
Middle 1 (M1)	Primary 7 (P7)
Middle 2 (M2)	Primary 8 (P8)
Middle 3 (M3)	Senior 1 (S1)

### Vision and Proposals for Parish Primary Schools

We envision each primary school becoming the hub of its parish; with parents, surrounding neighbourhoods and community organizations rallying around schools; supporting educational programmes and initiatives; and creating strong authentic partnerships to help schools transform into places that are relevant to the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century learners.

It is proposed that each parish would have one primary school, except for Pembroke, where it is proposed to have two primary schools. Where there is more than one primary school in a parish, it is proposed that the other primary school(s) in each parish would close. The proposals indicate a need for fewer primary schools due to:

- Continued trend of declining enrolment
- Aging and declining facilities that cannot support the delivery of 21<sup>st</sup> century education
- The need for equity in all primary schools, and
- The need to better distribute, utilize and reinvest resources to improve primary school education.

## The Evaluation and Scoring Process for Parish Primary Schools

In order to undertake a fair, thorough and sound process to recommend specific primary school buildings to serve as redesigned, refurbished, and fit-for-purpose parish primary schools, the Ministry of Education (“the Ministry”) established the Parish Primary School Location Strategy Team. This Team was comprised primarily of expert professionals with specialized knowledge of buildings, and/or currently work on the Government primary school buildings on a daily basis.

A total of 19 specific study factors were identified as relevant criteria and used for scoring. The primary schools were scored against each of the study factors using a comprehensive rubric. The higher the weighted score for a school, the more favourable the building site for locating a primary school that will meet the requirements of the system vision for a 21<sup>st</sup> century learning facility.

With the exception of Pembroke Parish and Devonshire Parish, where there are two or more primary schools in a parish, the primary school with the highest score per parish as per the evaluation matrix, is recommended to be redesigned and refurbished as a fit-for-purpose school facility, and the other primary school(s) closed. Where there is only one primary school in a parish, that primary school is recommended to be redesigned and refurbished as a fit-for-purpose school facility for the parish. In Pembroke Parish, the two primary schools with the highest scores are recommended to serve as the parish primary schools due to the current and projected enrolment for the central parishes.

## Recommendations for Parish Primary Schools

Parish	Primary School
St. George	East End Primary
Hamilton	Francis Patton Primary
Smith's	Harrington Sound Primary
Devonshire	New Devonshire Primary School
Pembroke	Victor Scott Primary
Pembroke	West Pembroke Primary
Paget	Paget Primary
Warwick	Purvis Primary
Southampton	Dalton E. Tucker Primary
Sandys	Somerset Primary

## Recommendations of Primary Schools for Closure

PARISH	PRIMARY SCHOOL
St. George	St. George's Preparatory
St. George	St. David's Primary
Devonshire	Prospect Primary
Devonshire	Elliot Primary
Pembroke	Northlands Primary

Paget	Gilbert Institute
Southampton	Heron Bay Primary
Southampton	Port Royal Primary
Sandys	West End Primary

For Devonshire Parish, it is also proposed that the two existing primary schools in Devonshire Parish be closed and repurposed to serve as the exceptionalities signature school and the alternative education signature school. Devonshire Parish would therefore benefit from a newly-built primary school.

### Effects of the Introduction of Parish Primary Schools

Students, families and the community will benefit from the improved delivery of education in 21<sup>st</sup> century learning facilities that support the curriculum and new teaching and learning models.

#### *Students and Families*

- Primary schools would continue to be divided into zones, with enrolment based on priority for siblings and proximity. However, the zone boundaries would be reconsidered to ensure equitable enrolment across all primary schools, for the purposes of equity for staffing and resources. Some students may have to transfer to other schools.
- The Ministry will also consider allowing out of zone choice for enrolment, where primary schools are undersubscribed, subject to the principle of ensuring equity across all primary schools.

#### *Bermuda Public School System Staff*

- We know that the issue of staffing for primary schools, especially if a decision is taken to close any schools is a very sensitive one for staff, students, and their families.
- As the proposals necessitate new and diverse programmes to meet the needs of all students, there will also be new dynamic roles created that will need to be filled.
- We also expect that some staff numbers will change through attrition, via retirement or persons who take up other opportunities within or outside of the Bermuda Public School System. The Government and Ministry is committed to undertaking a fair and transparent process on how to best staff schools within the future transformed public education system.

### How to Share Your Views

We have developed the [Parish Primary School Consultation Form](#) so that you can submit your views and feedback on the parish primary school proposals. This form is also included in the consultation document and can be submitted by hand to the Ministry of Education, 44 Church Street (West Building), Hamilton, HM 12.

Consultation submissions must be submitted by **March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021.**

Questions regarding the consultation can be emailed to [consultation@moed.bm](mailto:consultation@moed.bm).