



## Ministerial Statement

**The Hon. Dame Jennifer Smith, DBE, JP, DHumL, MP**

**Minister of Education**

### **Primary School Registration**

**19 March 2012**

**Mr. Speaker**, last month, on 10 February 2012, I advised this Honourable House of the implementation of an amended *First Entry into Primary School Policy*, the first update in some 15 years.

The process is currently underway and I think this is a prime opportunity to advise you of the status to date.

**Mr. Speaker**, I have already informed members of the increase in numbers from **three hundred and ninety-seven** Primary One students last September to **four hundred and eighty-five** applications for entry for this September.

Looking at the birth data for the year 2007 (the birth year for students entering primary school in September), there was an increase which represented an anomaly in comparison to other years.

This made the placement of students quite challenging.

Accordingly, four additional schools will have two Primary One classes.

They are:

- St. George's Preparatory;
- Prospect Primary;
- Port Royal Primary; and
- West End Primary.

And, based on the number of late applications, Victor Scott Primary School may also have a second class.

In order to ensure an equitable distribution of the larger number across zones, some Primary One classes will have more than **fifteen** students but less than **eighteen**.

This will not impact learning as there is **no** significant variance in the number of fifteen to eighteen in reference to our preferred teacher/student ratio for Primary One.

**Mr. Speaker**, these changes are consistent with our revised *First Admission into Primary School Policy*, our Collective Bargaining Agreements and the Education Act 1996. **No schools are designated to take three Primary One classes.**

**Mr. Speaker**, the Ministry has been receiving calls from concerned parents regarding children not being accepted into the same school as their brother or sister.

While the Education Act establishes that, *a sibling may be admitted to the same school, if they reside in the zone*, I wish to remind parents that they have the right of appeal if they are not in agreement with their child's placement in Primary School.

Under the Education Act 1996, His Excellency, the Governor, appoints the members of the Committee which hears appeals about the placement of students and makes a binding decision.

**Mr. Speaker,** in conclusion, I must thank all of our Primary School Principals. Yearly, they have the difficult task of sorting through the many applications, checking addresses for proximity to schools and selecting students for admittance. They work hard and that work is much appreciated.

Thank you!