



FAQs on the Signature School Process

In its 2017 Election Platform, the Government committed to the people of Bermuda that it would: “Reform public education by phasing out middle schools and introducing signature schools at the secondary level, which focus on the learning styles and interests of our children, including academic, technical and the trades, business, sports, arts and special needs.”

1. What are Signature Schools?

Signature Schools give students a specialized focus. Similar concepts include magnet schools in the United States, specialized schools in Canada, and some academies in the UK.

Examples of specialized schools in other countries include:

- Afrocentric education
- Career and Technical Education
- Information and communication technology (ICT)
- Fine and performing arts
- The International Baccalaureate, and
- Science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

2. Why phase out middle schools and introduce Signature Schools?

The Government is responding to community desires for change. Signature Schools will be designed to bring the following benefits to students, schools and the public education system:

- Meet individual and diverse student needs and interests
- Give students exposure and grounding in educational areas of interest
- Prepare students for post-secondary education, training and the world of work and citizenship, both locally and internationally
- Improve achievement and outcomes for all students; and
- Increase confidence in our public education system.

3. Hasn't the Government already made up its mind?

The Government has an open mind and decisions on how Middle Schools will be phased out haven't yet been made. We are committed to changing the public education system by phasing out Middle Schools, but need your help to do so in lines with the desired and future needs of Bermuda.

4. How will Signature Schools be developed? What will the development process look like?

The Government will engage all stakeholders, including students, parents, families, educators and other staff members, alumni, unions and the broader community. Therefore a 3-phase process will be introduced that is respectful, engaging and collaborative with our stakeholders;

- **Phase I** will lay the groundwork. This includes engaging with our stakeholders, growing trust, putting together the right team and establishing the necessary elements to support the development of Signature Schools.
- **Phase II** will involve the development of proposals after taking into consideration feedback from phase I. Along with additional research, this feedback will be used to create specific options for the introduction of Signature Schools and the phasing out of middle schools. At the end of *Phase II*, the Government will consider the recommended options, and determine which proposals will best meet the future needs of our students.
- **Phase III** will review the final proposals with consultation of key stakeholder groups and the wider community, before a final decision is made.

5. How long will this 3-phase process take?

This process will take about 18 months.

6. When will Signature Schools be implemented?

We recognize that this process will take time and won't happen overnight. The Government is committed to first undertake the 3-phase process before decisions on implementation can be made.

7. How will existing schools be affected?

Any possible changes to schools will depend on the proposals that are developed through an engaging, collaborative and consultative process.

8. How many Signature Schools will there be?

The number of Signature Schools will be determined during the 3-phase process, based on research, feedback, demographics and other information.

9. How much is this going to cost?

The cost of this initiative will be specific to the proposals that are developed during the 3-phase process.

10. Will there be regular updates?

Yes. The Government is committed to engagement and transparency and regular updates will be provided.

11. What if I have questions?

Questions are also welcome at this time; however, many of the answers will be developed during the 3-phase process. Please email SignatureSchools@moed.bm with any questions.

12. How can I participate in this process?

Your participation is encouraged and will be appreciated. Please email any suggestions, concepts and ideas to SignatureSchools@moed.bm. Your contributions will be considered during the 3-phase process.