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**PRESS RELEASE**

31 January 2021

**Ministry of Education to Hold Parish Meetings on The Proposed Parish Primary Schools**

The Ministry of Education has issued a call to action to the Bermuda community - ‘Parents, Students, Teachers, Business Owners, Seniors, Clergy, Professionals, no matter what your background it takes a parish to ensure the success of all our young people’.

During February and March, several meetings will be held for parish communities across the island to share the proposed vision for parish primary schools.

The proposal states that parish primary schools will serve as hubs for each community; with parents, surrounding neighbourhoods, and community organisations rallying around schools; supporting educational programs and initiatives; and creating strong authentic partnerships to help schools transform into places that are relevant to the needs of 21st Century learners.

A Ministry spokesperson said: “The concept of community schools is growing around the world. These type of schools represent a vehicle for aligning the assets of students, families, teachers, and the community around a common goal which is to improve the success of our young people.

“Community schools purposefully integrate academic, health, and social services; youth and community development; and community engagement—drawing in school partners with resources to improve student and adult learning, strengthen families, and promote healthy communities.”

The Ministry is proposing to have ten high-quality and equitable primary schools. The change from 18 primary schools to ten (one primary school per parish, except Pembroke parish which would have two), is due to key factors such as:

* The continued trend of declining enrolment;
* Ageing and declining facilities which cannot support the delivery of 21st Century education, and;
* The need for equity across all primary schools.

Therefore, the Ministry is inviting critical stakeholder and community participation to obtain as much community feedback and input as possible on its Proposal for the Introduction of Parish Primary Schools.

Public meetings will be held in those parishes impacted to discuss the proposal over the next four weeks. Due to COVID-19, these meetings will be held virtually via the ZOOM video-conferencing on the following dates and times:

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| St. George’s Parish Meetings | Tuesday February 2ndThursday February 4th | 6:00 p.m. |
| Devonshire Parish Meeting  | Monday February 8thWednesday February 10th | 6:00 p.m. |
| Pembroke Parish Meeting | Tuesday February 16thThursday February 18th | 6:00 p.m. |
| Paget Parish Meeting | Monday February 22ndWednesday February 24th | 6:00 p.m. |
| Southampton Parish Meeting | Tuesday February 23rdThursday February 25th | 6:00 p.m. |
| Sandys Parish Meeting | Tuesday March2ndThursday March 4th | 6:00 p.m. |

To ensure wide access and participation, the parish meetings will be broadcast on The Government of Bermuda’s YouTube, Facebook Live and CITV platforms on Mondays and Thursday; February 4, 8, 18, 22,25 and on March 4.

To register for the parish meetings visit: <http://parishschools.live/parish>; those experiencing difficulty registering can email comms@moed.bm.

Zoom registration is required for security reasons to safeguard meeting attendees from inappropriate content and disruptions. Persons are encouraged to register early but must register by 3:00 p.m. on the day of the meeting they wish to attend in order for security protocols to be implemented.

Stakeholders can learn more about the proposals by reviewing the [Parish Primary School Consultation Document](https://www.moed.bm/files/user/90/file/Consultation%2520on%2520a%2520Proposal%2520for%2520the%2520Introduction%2520of%2520Parish%2520Primary%2520Schools%2520-%2520FINAL.pdf), which is also available at [www.moed.bm](http://www.moed.bm/).

Responses to the consultation should be submitted using the [Parish Primary School Consultation Form](https://forms.gov.bm/Parish-Primary-School-Consultation-Form). This form, which is also included in the consultation document, can be submitted by hand to the Ministry of Education, located at 44 Church Street (West Building), Hamilton, HM 12.

Questions, comments and feedback are welcomed and can be emailed to consultation@moed.bm.

*Please note: the deadline for all consultation submissions is Friday, March 12th, 2021.*