



Remarks By

**The Hon. R. Wayne Scott, JP, MP
Minister of Education**

Press Conference

Supreme Court Ruling

H. Matthie vs Ministry of Education and Commissioner of Education

3 June, 2016

Good Afternoon Everyone,

Thank you for taking the time to be here today. As you are aware, Justice Stephen Hellman issued a Supreme Court ruling this morning on the matter of Harry Matthie v. the Minister of Education and the Commissioner of Education.

On behalf of the Ministry of Education, I am pleased that this on-going dispute is now at an end.

Stemming from the 2012 Supreme Court “Ming” ruling, the Minister of Education and the Commissioner of Education were challenged on three “decisions” last year. These were:

- i. Principal and teacher transfers;
- ii. The Education (Parent Council) Rules 2015; and,
- iii. School Reorganisation.

The applications for judicial review of the transfers and the Parent Council Rules were dismissed, and the application for judicial review on school reorganisation was adjourned.

I am thankful for the decision of the Court as it related to transfers and the Parent Council Rules. On the issue of school reorganisation, any Judgment would have been premature in the absence of any decision.

Therefore, we fully support the Adjournment. I am close to making an announcement on school reorganisation, and you should expect to hear from me within the next few weeks, before the end of the current school year.

Ultimately, the Supreme Court of Bermuda decided that the Ministry had the right to make important changes to the public education system. The decision was definitive; and, our actions were in fact lawful.

We look forward to continuing our efforts to improve the public education system and to grow parental involvement in partnership with principals, teachers and parents. The Ministry of Education can better focus its attention on the progressive work to improve parental involvement for improved student achievement.

During the 2015/16 school year, the Ministry made good progress in promoting parental involvement, as we:

- i. Engaged PTAs in the recruitment of new principals;
- ii. Introduced parent councils to give parents a stronger say in school improvement, school budgeting and other matters important to parents at the school level; and
- iii. Established the School Reorganisation (SCORE) Advisory Committee made up of passionate parents, educators and community members to examine the issue of school reorganisation;

We are now following through on our commitment to improve school facilities; inclusive of increasing transparency, by making more information available to parents on the school facility improvement plan.

For the upcoming 2016/17 school year, we will continue to deepen our efforts to improve parental involvement.

I will appoint members to the Parental Involvement Committee – a new advisory body made up of public school parents that will work to improve parental involvement in all public schools. It will give parents stronger voices to make a difference across the public school system.

We will continue to provide support for parent councils and will increase the opportunities for two-way communication with PTAs, parent councils and parents across the public education system.

Throughout our efforts, emphasis will focus on improving schools and student achievement, and we will continue to act with the best interests of our children at heart.

Thank you.

