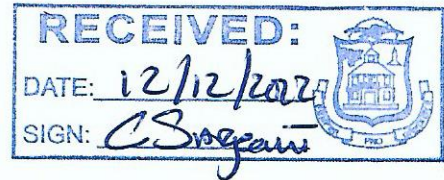


Division Public Education Teachers
2022 National Summer School Program
Prins Willem Alexander School
Dr. Alma Fleming-Rodgers Care Center
Rockland Estate,
Belvedere, St. Maarten



December 5, 2022

The Honorable Rodolphe E. Samuel,
Minister of Education, Culture, Youth, and Sports
Soualiga Road # 1
Pond Island, Great Bay
Sint Maarten

Dear Minister Samuel,

The staff of the DPE National Summer School Program have not received the full agreed financial compensation for instructing the students at the DPE National Summer School Program of 2022. We have outlined the events as they occurred chronologically up to this point in time.

- On July 4, 2022, the 2022 DPE National Summer School Program began with 19 Division Public Education teachers and 1 technology specialist who reported to work consistently throughout the program Mr. Marks, Acting Division Head of Public Education, welcomed 20 National Summer School Program employees. We were all committed and dedicated to ensuring the success of the 2022 National Summer School Program.
- As professionals, we needed the security that we would be compensated, in accordance to the amount that was communicated to us verbally. On July 8, 2022, Mr. Daison Marks attended our daily debriefing meeting where we signed temporary employment contracts for the 2022 National Summer School Program. The contracts were never returned to us.
- In the Live Council of Ministers Press Briefing on July 13, 2022, you were pleased to announce that the 2022 National Summer School Programs (at Hillside Christian School and Division of Public Education) have both commenced.
- On July 14, 2022, we were asked to submit our banking information to Mr. Marks. We still did not have a written agreement, so on July 19, 2022, we

sent an email to Mr. Marks informing him that the 2022 DPE National Summer School Program was coming to a successful end and that we needed an update on when we would be receiving payment.

- On July 20, 2022 in the Live Council of Minister Press Briefing, you stated, "It is important to note that the funding for the program is in place and everyone who participated in the program will be paid". This however did not take place. Instead, we have been treated unfairly and disrespectfully.
- On August 3, 2022, we received a partial payment. There was no explanation or communication to inform us as to this new arrangement. We do not know how this partial payment correlates with the agreement that we signed on July 8, 2022. Our technology specialist was the only person who received the agreed upon payment on August 3, 2022. So, 19 trained, teaching professionals, received partial payment, while the technology specialist received full payment. The policy that exists is unfair, unethical, and unjust. This policy clearly undervalues Division Public Education teachers. To pay one teacher fully and have the other 19 teachers fighting for the balance of their payment is awful. We are not accepting this!
- When anything was communicated and that was through our efforts of seeking information, we were told throughout this whole process that the issue of partial payment was an internal bureaucratic issue, due to the fact that we are civil servants. We feel that since it was known that DPE would have a summer school and that the teachers would be teaching, these issues should have been resolved ahead of time. We feel this whole bureaucratic issue has been treated as an afterthought and it is high time that a concrete solution be found to remedy this bureaucratic issue once and for all. We felt we were caught up in this bureaucratic quagmire due to know fault of our own.
- On the Live Council of Ministers Press Briefing on August 10, 2022, you said, "The National Summer School Program was indeed a great success and we are in the stage where we are making payments to the persons that helped in the program...the teachers...the vendors and everyone else that was there. And I would like to indicate that even though, we were not able to pay the teachers full, we have started by paying them an advance. And when the administration of everything is finished, the balance of the payment will be made to the teachers." This did not happen. Instead, we continue to be treated unfairly and disrespectfully 5 months later.

- You did meet with us on September 24, 2022 where there were no updates as to when we will get the balance of our payment. But you did ensure us that you will like to be given two weeks to rectify the matter and that you will be off island as well.
- You have received phone calls and other forms of correspondence from some of us requesting updates. You have not responded to most of our messages or calls. You did however, on November 10, 2022 contact one of our colleagues, to relay to us that a long-term solution was found to pay us, but you did not have a definite answer as to when the payment will be made to us.

Please bare in mind, that we all sacrificed our time away from our families. We worked for 3 weeks during our summer vacation and would have one additional week left with our families before we report back to school for the 2022/2023 academic school year. We were depending on our compensation to enjoy what was left of our summer vacation.

We were also aware that Christian Hillside School teachers were compensated for their work with the 2022 National Summer School Program. We expected equal treatment. We fulfilled our responsibility of educating St. Maarten's public-school students attending the summer school. It is your responsibility to solve the archaic, outdated, and bureaucratic red tape that exists in order for us to be paid.

The lack of communication on this matter is insensitive. We are your St. Maarten public school teachers! We play a critical role in ensuring that our democracy works and the economy grows. We are disheartened by the disregard and poor treatment given to us under your administration. We are now requesting the remainder of the payment owed as per our agreement, as six months has passed since we had the DPE National Summer School Program.

This program was indeed very instrumental for our students who attended the program and the students still often speak highly about the program. This is unfortunate that we are still discussing disbursement of partial payment six months later. It casts a dark shadow on the entire program and jeopardizes the future of other programs for the public-school students, who really need that extra instructional support.

We demand that the balance of our payment be made by December 30, 2022. We will like to conclude this matter of payment before the year 2023 begins. The contents of this letter will also be shared to both union leaders as our DPE Summer school staff is apart of WITU or the WICSU/PSU Union.

Respectfully,

2022 DPE National Summer School Teachers

cc. Silveria E. Jacobs, The Honorable Prime Minister/Minister of General Affairs
Shermina Powell Richardson, Acting Secretary General, Hiro Shigemoto,
Comptroller of the Ministry of Education
Daison Marks, Interim Head, Division Public Education
Stuart Johnson, President Windward Islands Teacher Union (WITU)
Sharon Cannegieter President of Windward Islands Civil Servant
Union (WICSU/PSU)

Signature of teachers:

Robert Drummond - Orange Primary
12/2/2022

Charles-constant Rollon - Orange Primary School
12/12/2022

Henrick Pinto - Orange School
12/12/2022

Ruchinela Macaya - Orange School - 12.12.2022