



Parliament of Sint Maarten

Staten van Sint Maarten

To the Hon. Minister of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport Affairs
Mr. drs. R.E. Samuel
Government Administration Building
Philipsburg

UV/406/2019-2020

Philipsburg, August 17, 2020

Re: Questions from MP S.A. Wescot-Williams regarding the opening of the school year 2020-2021

Hon. Minister Samuel,

Herewith I submit to you questions posed by Member of Parliament, Mrs. S.A. Wescot-Williams pursuant to article 62 of the Constitution and article 69 of the Rules of Order of the Parliament of Sint Maarten.

The letter is self-explanatory.

Yours truly,

R. Brison
President of Parliament



Sarah A. Wescot-Williams

Member of Parliament Sint Maarten

To:
Parliament of Sint Maarten
Attention: President of Parliament
Wilhelminastraat #1
Philipsburg, St. Maarten

STATEN VAN SINT MAARTEN		
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Philipsburg, August 11, 2020

Dear Honorable President of Parliament,

I hereby submit to you questions directed to Minister of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Honorable drs. Rodolphe E. Samuel regarding Education - Opening of school year 2020/2021.

I kindly ask that these be forwarded.

Respectfully,



Sarah A. Wescot-Williams,
Member of Parliament
United Democratic (UD) Party



Sarah A. Wescot-Williams

Member of Parliament Sint Maarten

Honorable drs. Rodolphe E. Samuel
Minister of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport
Government Administration Building
Philipsburg, Sint Maarten

Philipsburg, August 11, 2020

Ref: OV 34:Education - Opening of school year 2020/2021.

Honorable Minister Samuel,

It is with much disappointment that I took note of your decision not to return to parliament to provide the members of parliament with answers to their questions regarding the opening of the school year 2020/2021 and our students abroad, until further notice.

This meeting was requested urgently by the factions of the UD, PFP and USP and was scheduled to continue on Tuesday, August 11, 2020.

1. What is your reason for canceling at the last hour the continuation of the meeting scheduled for Tuesday, August 11, 2020?
2. Do you have answers to any of the questions posed by the members of parliament in the first round?
3. If you do, can you provide those answers posthaste?
4. When do you anticipate returning to parliament to continue this meeting?
5. What is the status of the educational system as far as the opening of the school year is concerned? How many schools have presented a request for permission to give classes in person? How many have been given permission and which are these?
6. Were all public schools able to start their on-line education on Monday, August 10, 2020? What reporting mechanism is in place to monitor the overall results of online education?

I look forward to the answers to these questions as soon as possible and for expediency sake also below kindly find my questions of August 6th, 2020 from Public Meeting no.34.

Questions Minister of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport: - August 6th, 2020 | OV 34.

Thanks for providing the Education Continuation Plan. May I suggest that a public version of this plan be made available, sharing with the public the information that will give parents and students insight into Government's strategies to keep the school population safe, yet able to receive education, taking also into account the social side of on-location, in-class education. As Minister, you are the public

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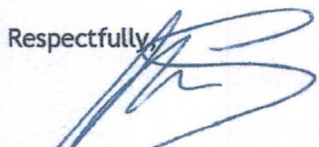
schools' authority and the authority for education in general. Freedom of education is anchored in our constitution.

From this Education Continuation Plan, a lot is required from schools, schoolboards and teachers to meet the requirements for a safe school in this pandemic era.

That brings me to my first question:

1. How are schools and schoolboards expected to finance the investments associated with the measures they have to take?
2. Does government have a preference for the focus on reopening? Online or in-class? What are government's arguments for its preference?
3. What about the status of playschools? Any special attention for this group 0-4 years?
4. How are our study financing recipients being guided through this maze of school closures internationally? How is the payment to these students regulated, in terms of grading and payments?
5. What information and data can the minister share with parliament regarding the level and provision of education during the physical closure that lasted from March 18, through the closure of the schoolyear 2019-2020? And the results of the surveys conducted? What will or has been done with this information? What about the monies initially reserved for the one laptop per child, that later became a broader digitalization within education (Istep) ?
6. Are there any reports or assessments available how schools have been able to manage and the results achieved during the first period of online education?
7. Is the government willing to introduce a phased back-to-the-classroom process? Or must it be "all together"?
8. Is there a preliminary budget for the extra cost?
9. How does the minister view the part of the country reform, proposed by State Secretary Knops that regard education reform. What is the minister's overall vision with respect to education reform and what policy or document guides this vision?
10. Is the minister willing to give a closer look at home-schooling and provide this option as well?
11. On the basis of what legal instrument is the minister mandating certain actions regarding education that could infringe on the freedom of education principle, enshrined in our constitution?

Respectfully,


Sarah A. Wescot-Williams,
Member of Parliament
United Democratic Party