

Dear Principals,

Greetings and best wishes from the Grenada Union of Teachers. It is well known that principals and teachers have had to depend on the goodwill of organisations, alumni associations and on their own fundraising initiatives, often through their Parent Teachers Associations, in order to obtain the materials and supplies that they need for the effective functioning of their institutions.

Basic materials like chalk and dusters and the less basic ones like photocopying machines, fridges, sewing machines, computers and power saws are all purchased without the assistance of the Ministry of Education, but through the resourcefulness, hard work, toil and sweat of the principals and their teachers.

It is well known and documented that even though the government builds schools and technical wings, the principals are expected to outfit them with the necessary materials and equipment needed to render them functional.

It is in light of this that the Grenada Union of Teachers views the Ministry of Education's response to the GBSS issue as an unfortunate, irresponsible, reckless and dishonest knee jerk reaction to the well-intentioned and innovative decision of the principal and staff of the school to secure much needed furniture for their students.

The ministry in its press release, and later through the pronouncements of Minister Steil simply quoted a policy for the procurement of materials and supplies by schools when in fact it is aware that the policy is never implemented. The Grenada Union of Teachers challenges the Ministry of Education to present evidence which points to the fact that it has been supplying the nation's schools with the required furniture and other material resources.

Instead of recognising the plight of the GBSS, and most other schools nationwide and admitting that it has not been able to satisfy the furniture requirements of schools and praising the effort, ingenuity and imagination of principals and staff, the ministry resorted to using tactics geared at casting a dark shadow over the decision of the Principal and Staff of the GBSS. In short, they were unceremoniously thrown under the bus. The Grenada Union of Teachers would not sit idly by and watch the Ministry of Education treat our members in such a callous, insensitive and thankless manner.

To this end, the Grenada Union of Teachers has decided on a course of action to have the Ministry of Education recognise and respect the efforts and hard work of principals and teachers. The actions are as follows:

1. Demand an immediate and unequivocal retraction of the Ministry's Press Release and the statement made by Minister Steil.
2. We are asking all principals and teachers in the Tri-Island State to remain at home on Thursday 1 June to rest and reflect.
3. Further, we ask to suspend all fundraising activities geared at school improvement for 1 year beginning September 2017 to July 2018.

The Grenada Union of Teachers stands firmly and resolutely in support of the Principal and Staff of the Grenada Boys Secondary School and all the other principals and staff that continue to carry the effective functioning of schools on their shoulders.

Let us stand resolutely in defence of our hard work, commitment and sacrifices made to our schools.

Yours sincerely,

Lydon Lewis