

### **Statement from Shannon James, the President of the Bermuda Union of Teachers**

The situation today is a direct result of a lack of action by Government to address the needs of schools and teachers that we highlighted last week.

As I said then, people have just had enough and that has not changed.

Many of our para educators do not have breaks from their assigned students, are working without a job description and have not been given the entitlements they are due under the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

We have heard a lot about Plan 2022 but in order for that to work effectively, things must be fixed before then. As I said before, windows in schools are not working, some fire alarms do not work and computers often do not have fully functioning software.

We have education therapists with no job descriptions, we still do not have education officers for Math, English and Science, where there used to be nine Mentor Teachers there are now three and there are no allocated substitute teachers at primary schools.

In his press conference today, the Minister criticized the action saying it affected the students, but his lack of action affects students more – the list of issues we have highlighted all impact students because our teachers cannot do their job effectively. He said he is negotiating with us, but he needs to talk less and act more because the time for talking has long gone.

I find his remarks on the grades to be very misleading. As we have said before, teachers are confused on standards based grading and, therefore, the grades that have been entered have not been as accurate as they need to be. Standards based grading was the straw that broke the camel's back.

The ways in which teachers have arrived at a grade has varied from school to school due to the lack of training around standards based grading. Parents have expressed great concern over teachers not being able to explain this new way of grading and has left them utterly confused.

Again, the Minister can talk, but practical steps need to be taken, urgently, to address the issues we have raised.