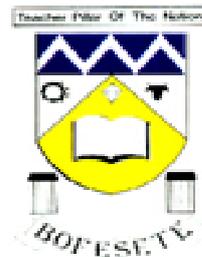


# **BOFESETE**

## **BOTSWANA FEDERATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS**



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### **PRESS RELEASE**

Botswana Federation of Secondary Teachers (BOFESETE) is extremely worried by the way the authorities are handling the impending separate pay determination, parallel progression and other benefits meant for teachers.

Though teachers long submitted their input on parallel progression to the review task force through BOFESETE last year, there has been no communication to them nor to BOFESETE about the progress of the policy or the separate pay structure. This has left teachers in so much frustration and anxiety and is in fact fast degenerating into a crisis unless the authorities act expeditiously and decisively.

It has become a disappointing trend and development in education that teachers either receive their benefits late or have the few withdrawn. This is however, in sharp contrast to what the 1994 Revised National Policy on Education (RNPE) has called for. In the main issues of the RNPE 2.0 (v), the policy calls for the "enhancement of the performance and status of the Teaching Profession". The policy further states that "the commission has cited evidence received from both the teacher and the general public confirming that the teaching profession is characterized by low morale and declining professional status. Teachers have not received many of the benefits available to public servants due either to administrative problems or communication lapses. Enhancing the professional status may therefore raise the morale of the teacher and will go a long way to improve the educational system". It is however evident that this recommendation has not been fulfilled since the approval of the policy by the National Assembly on the 7<sup>th</sup> April 1994.

Examples of demoralizing practices in the teaching profession abound. The suspension of Parallel Progression in 2000 have disadvantaged many teachers since their progression has been frozen. Many of these were due for progression and others have also long matured for such. The committee reviewing Parallel Progression Policy handed their report to the authorities last August, almost a year now and teachers are still waiting. In fact Parallel Progression was implemented in the public service in 1994 while in the teaching service it was in 1996. Teacher's attempts to have it backdated to 1994 implementation date were not entertained. Scarce Skills Policy was also introduced in the teaching service late (2000) while for other government employees it came quite earlier. The policy has since been stopped after dividing the teachers. After stopping it, Deputy Heads in Senior schools are now being frustrated further by being made to pay government back because they were allegedly not entitled to benefit in the first place! The Leave Encashment Policy was accepted in teaching last year and the processes of encashing put in place, yet not a single teacher

has been allowed to encash so far. Other government employees have been encashing since July 2001.

In 1999 the Ministry of Education slapped CJSS teachers with far more than 100% rent hike. Teachers from Ledumang senior occupying Kerekeng flats are also paying astronomical high rentals for substandard housing units. Their call for addressing the problem had to be heard in courts of law, at high costs.

The Tsa Badiri Consultancy and subsequent government white paper had recommended a separate pay structure for teachers, health services, police, and prisons. The recommendation stated that such a structure should be ready by the beginning of next financial year i.e 1<sup>st</sup> April 2002. It is a year now since that recommendation has been made.

Teachers however, legitimately expect the separate pay structure as per the Tsa Badiri and subsequent government recommendations.

Teachers' morale is currently at its lowest as policies are being held back by the authorities. Attempts to meet the authorities to enquire about the progress of the policies have not been successful. BOFESETE therefore calls upon the authorities to release both the Separate Pay Structure and Parallel Progression without further delay. The rigorous patience test teachers have been put under is enough. BOFESETE would like to see a motivated teaching force that would improve the educational system in the country.

Thank you.

BOFESETE National Executive Committee