

Press Release

Dear Editor

Botswana Federation of Secondary School Teachers (BOFESETE) is seriously concerned by the delays in implementing parallel progression for teachers by Teaching Service Management. We cannot over emphasize the injustices that teachers have been subjected to in the implementation of this exercise. It is more than ten years now since parallel progression has been introduced. It took several years and the court intervention for TSM to accept that teachers are rightfully entitled to parallel progression. In fact, they are reluctant to accept that these are teachers due.

Now, instead of teachers smiling all the way to the bank, they are subjected to delaying tactics by Ministry of Education (MOE) officials. Some teachers have received letters of progression since last year, while other thousands are still in the dark, without any letters updating their status. For how long should teachers wait? The MOE has been making promises that the number of teachers to be paid will increase every month. This is not the case. The payments are coming in dribs and drabs.

Last November, during the Teaching Service Management Consultative Committee meeting chaired by the secretary to the MOE, in the presence of TSM and Secondary schools director and other government officials, we asked for an implementation timetable of parallel progression. This was for the purpose of knowing when the whole exercise would be completed so that it does not get tangled with new financial year. The ministry however refused to accept this proposal.

In mid February, BOFESETE wrote to the MOE requesting for a meeting to be updated on issues pertaining to parallel progression. The agenda items sought the MOE to explain the cause of delayed payments and why other teachers have not received their letters yet.

The meeting was to further establish whether the delays were caused by the MOE or Accountant General. The MOE is yet to respond, and it seems it is undermining the diplomatic route that BOFESETE was taking.

The MOE does not seem to be serious at all on this issue as the promise of speedy delivery is not taking place. Teachers impatience has completely run out and the Gaborone regions have planned strings of peaceful demonstrations to protest these delays. It is not surprise that teachers ultimately had to go for industrial action like those at Kgosisimpe CJSS in Jwaneng. There has been an outbreak of such incidents throughout the country. The Kgosisimpe issue is not only about parallel progression, but a litany of welfare issues that have built up over time. BOFESETE observes with concern that the Chief Education Officer for the region, Mr Albert Legwaila has already pre-judged the teachers and found them guilty, yet he has not investigated the cause of the debacle. BOFESETE expects him and his subordinates to rescue themselves following his public statement in the media.

BOFESETE has also received a worrying report from teachers who were acting during the poor implementation of parallel progression and now have had their money retained by government under the pretext that the acting allowance they received then corrected the wrongs brought about by parallel progression. The acting appointments then were for the work teachers did then and had to be paid for the while parallel progression is for the injustices that teachers were subjected to. BOFESETE is seeking advice on this.

Thank you

Yours faithfully

Justin C. Hunyepa
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