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PRESS RELEASE

Ministry of Education Holds Meeting with Belize National Teachers' Union

Belmopan, July 1, 2025.

On June 30, 2025, Hon. Oscar Requena, Minister of Education, Science, and Technology, chaired a meeting between the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) and the Belize National Teachers Union (BNTU) from 1:30 PM to 4:30 PM. The Ministry and the BNTU held cordial discussions on the following points:

1. Convening of National Working Groups

The MoEST and the BNTU agreed to convene two working groups on July 11, 2025, to:

- A.** Develop and propose criteria, terms of reference, and allowances for Heads of Departments at the secondary level.
- B.** Review and update the requirements for Continuous Professional Development and Licensing criteria for teachers.

2. Employment and Professional Development Needs for School Counsellors

The MoEST reported on the establishment of a secondary school staffing schedule, which will address the employment needs of school counsellors using a phased implementation approach starting in the 2025-26 academic year. Additionally, the MoEST informed the BNTU that a Certification Programme for School Counsellors, which will have implications for licensure and tenure, will commence at the start of the 2025-26 academic year via the Teacher Learning Institute (TLI).

3. Compensation for Additional Teaching Duties Due to Teacher Shortages and Unpaid Salaries Resulting from Teacher License Issuance Delays

The MoEST informed that compensation for additional teaching duties due to teacher shortages at the secondary level will continue at BZ\$25.00 per additional hour. The MoEST and the BNTU agreed to continue the dialogue regarding the splitting of classes resulting from teacher shortages at the primary and secondary levels. The MoEST also indicated that it is continuing

to process payments for salary losses resulting from delays in license issuance, for which the Ministry is accountable.

4. Increment and Allowance Updates

The MoEST relayed its continued work regarding the processing of increments and allowances, appointments and confirmations, and pending salary revisions across the primary and secondary levels, demonstrating its commitment to resolving outstanding financial awards. The MoEST also provided updates on the digitisation of processes relating to increments and allowances, which will be in effect for the 2025-26 academic year. The digitised processes are expected to reduce submission errors, enhance processing efficiency, provide real-time feedback, and improve overall record-keeping.

5. BNTU Scholarship Initiative

The MoEST reaffirmed its commitment to awarding eleven (11) tuition scholarships per cohort for in-service teachers in high-priority areas. The BNTU agreed to recommend the recipients and submit supporting documents to the MoEST for the tuition scholarship awards at local teacher education institutions.

6. CPD Hours for Workshops Conducted During the 2025 BNTU Convention

The MoEST noted that the inclusion of professional development workshops during the National Convention is commendable and encouraged their full utilisation. Additionally, the MoEST confirmed that participants in these workshops will be allowed to complete any pending requirements for the award of CPD hours via the TLI during the month of July 2025.

7. The Joint Statement Action Plan and Further Stakeholder Engagement

Following the Joint Statement signed by the MoEST, the BNTU, and the Managing Authorities of Schools on January 23, 2025, the MoEST drafted a comprehensive action plan targeting the agreed commitments. The MoEST shared its action plan with the BNTU and provided status updates for the outlined action steps. The MoEST proposed that the next Joint Stakeholder Meeting be held at the end of July 2025.

The MoEST will continue to collaborate with the BNTU and other key stakeholders in its work to elevate the teaching profession and improve the education system of Belize.

Ends