



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **GSD Out of Touch on Education**

The GSD is totally out of touch with what is happening in Education. It takes considerable cheek and worse to make a statement criticising the Government on Education when the party when in government, and the current Opposition spokesman, who was Minister for Education, invested nothing in education infrastructure, built no new schools, allowed the existing schools to deteriorate and had no significant educational initiatives, allowing the system to stagnate instead. They now make promises to engage with teachers when they have a track-record of doing the very opposite. In contrast, the Government has proved conclusively that it engages with and listens to the teachers.

The GSD is wrong in alleging that all that the Government is doing is constructing new buildings. For example, they may have not noticed (or may have conveniently chosen to ignore) the press call last week highlighting the changes in teaching and learning strategies in Primary Schools. They may have forgotten the changes that are coming, such as co-education, alignment of key stages, and extending nurse provision. Indeed, last year the GSD was complaining that the Government was doing too much too quickly. Now they are saying that it is doing nothing at all!

The amount of consultation that is ongoing between the Government, the Department, teaching teams and the Gibraltar NASUWT is unprecedented.

Government has already replied constructively to the Union on the claim that was the subject of the ballot, and will be engaging in discussing options to take this forward. A longstanding claim on equalisation of pay in the primary sector has recently been settled, and a number of other claims are in the final stages of discussion and agreement. Today, a new Facilities Agreement has been signed between the Government and the Union, which provides for a modern, collaborative relationship.

In addition, a long awaited review of teaching responsibility posts (TLRs) is now being discussed by a joint working group of the Department of Education and the Union.

Direct consultation continues on a daily basis in relation to the new schools, both in the design and facilities and on the improvements to the system.

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In addition, the Social Partnership, made up of NASUWT Executive members, the Department of Education and Government Human Resources Departments is now meeting more regularly than ever before. The Partnership meets weekly to consider all matters of interest and concern, and has additional monthly meetings with the Minister. Matters already discussed include the TLR review, a review of the code of conduct, acting policy, and Learning Support Assistants. There have been ten meetings of a Social Partnership in the past six months alone.

Further even to this, the Department has set up think tanks on all the new workstreams. Membership of these think tanks was opened to all teachers. The think tanks have already met six times in the past few months.

Further to this again, a working group from both of the Comprehensive schools, also representing a cross section of teachers, meets with the Minister for Education on a regular basis, with an open agenda to discuss any and all areas of concerns and potential progress. Six of these meetings have so far taken place in the past few months.

Minister for Education John Cortes commented, "The GSD's statement is totally inaccurate. Whether you agree with our policies or not, the evidence is there that teachers are closely involved in driving the development of Education in Gibraltar. We are working closer than ever with the Union in dealing with ALL claims. I know how hard teachers work. And I know how hard they are working in particular this year with all the improvements that are coming. I see it for myself, and I am grateful, as the whole community is. Teachers matter. They are not being ignored, quite the opposite, and they will continue to be involved at all stages and at all levels. And teachers, together with the children they teach, will be the greatest beneficiaries of the improvements that we are developing together."