



Mazinga Shopping Complex #13, Fort Oranje Street, St. Eustatius, Caribbean Netherlands

Formal Statment by All For 1 Union Regarding Gwendoline van Putten (GvP) School Governance and Staff Treatment

August 15, 2025

Subject: Grave Concerns Regarding GvP School Board Conduct, Principal's Management and Violation of Staff Righths

Background

On Tuesday, August 12, 2025, and Wednesday, August 13, 2025, All For 1 Union (AF1) met with Mr. Nolly Oleana, former representative of the Ministry of Education (OCW), to address ongoing complaints regarding Gwendoline van Putten (GvP) School. The purpose of these meetings was to seek clarity, address persistent staff concerns, and ensure compliance with laws and policies that protect both employees and students.

Findings and Concerns

1. Absoulte Authority Without Accountability

Mr. Oleana stated that the GvP school board has full authority to act as it chooses and is not required to draft or publish certain policies. This position effectively allows the board to operate without transparency, oversight, or regard for staff legal protections.

2. Threats Regarding Funding and Retaliation

Mr. Oleana warned that if criticism toward the ministry, the board, Principal Fleur Lagcher, or the Minister continues, "they will shut off the pipe" — meaning funding could be withdrawn. This is perceived as a threat intended to silence legitimate staff and union concerns.

3. Principal's Conduct

Multiple allegations against Principal Fleur Lagcher include: bullying and threats toward employees; favoritism, nepotism, and conflicts of interest; disparate treatment of staff regarding return dates and medical leave; threats to deduct salaries or find ways to



Mazinga Shopping Complex #13, Fort Oranje Street, St. Eustatius, Caribbean Netherlands

terminate staff in the event of industrial action. Despite numerous complaints submitted to the school board, no investigation has been initiated, nor has administrative leave been considered.

4. Policy Gaps and Secrecy

There is no employee handbook in place that protects staff rights. No clear policies exist on awarding contracts, board member conduct, complaint procedures for staff, task hour calculations, or return-to-school requirements. Surveys about the principal are being withheld from staff and the public. The so-called Staff Safety Policy is a disciplinary tool, enabling management to take harmful actions against employees.

5. Governance Concerns

The current board consists of only three members, raising legal concerns if the statute requires a minimum of five. Each board member has stated that staff welfare is not their concern, focusing instead on students and parents while ignoring the conditions under which teachers must work.

6. Formal Rejection of Staff Handbook 2025–2026

AF1 formally rejects the draft Staff Handbook for 2025–2026 as it grants all authority to the school board and management team without any recognition of the legal position and rights of employees. This document is unacceptable and cannot be implemented in its current form.

7. Appointment of Confidentiality Coach

The appointment of the current “confidentiality coach” was non-transparent, with no union involvement in the selection process. This role is pointless in the current context as it does not address issues between staff and leadership — which is the central area of concern. The school board repeatedly cites the coach’s appointment as evidence of ‘steps taken,’ but in reality, it functions as a band-aid solution that does not address the systemic issues at GvP.

8. Retaliation Against Complainers and Ignored Staff Letter

Two years ago, staff submitted a signed letter outlining a list of concerns and complaints from the MR (Participation Council). These concerns were ignored by the school board and management. As a result of this non-recognition and retaliation from both the management and the board, AF1 was formally approached by staff the following year to intervene. Instead of addressing the issues raised, the board has continued to claim that no formal complaints have been submitted regarding



Mazinga Shopping Complex #13, Fort Oranje Street, St. Eustatius, Caribbean Netherlands

the principal — a statement that is both misleading and false. There have also been cases where individuals who voiced concerns were investigated themselves rather than the actual problems being addressed.

9. Suppressed Satisfaction Survey Results

A satisfaction survey was completed by over 70% of the staff. The results are being downplayed and withheld from public and staff view. These results are reportedly kept in the office of Board Member Mr. Lindo, preventing transparency and accountability.

Union Position

It is unacceptable in 2025 for any public educational institution to operate above the law and without transparent governance. The treatment of GvP staff under the current leadership is dangerous, unlawful in spirit, and corrosive to the education system.

AF1 demands: 1) Immediate independent investigation into the conduct of Principal Fleur Lagcher and the school board; 2) Suspension of the principal pending investigation; 3) Drafting and implementation of clear, transparent policies that protect staff rights and ensure fair governance; 4) Verification of the legal compliance of the current school board composition; 5) Public release of the surveys conducted regarding the principal; 6) Ministry oversight to ensure GvP aligns with the law and best practices in education management.

Conclusion

AF1 will not support the start of the 2025–2026 school year under the current conditions. We will take all necessary steps — including escalation to the highest levels of government, collaboration with other unions, and engagement with the public — to ensure that the rights and dignity of GvP staff are protected. The staff are the engine of any educational institution, and their welfare is not optional — it is essential.

Yours sincerely,

Charles A. Woodley
President, All For 1 Union