

**Statement to the Legislative Assembly
Meeting 2014/2015**

By Winston Connolly, MLA

Temporary Minister of Education, Employment and Gender Affairs

*Young Life Lost:
Support for the school community*

28th October, 2014



MINISTRY OF
EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT
& GENDER AFFAIRS
CAYMAN ISLANDS GOVERNMENT

The Ministry of Education and the Department of Education Services offer sincerest condolences to the family of the young life lost this week. As this incident is currently under police investigation, we are unable to comment further.

We can however say that the Department of Education Services ("DES") is putting together a plan of support for the affected school in dealing with this tragedy. Critical incident response specialists are already working with the school leadership to assist with developing a plan regarding the school's response to this incident. One of the educational psychologists employed by the DES is certified by the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, and has valuable personal experience offering specialised support to medical and police teams who dealt with critical incidents in Florida. This person is experienced in offering such special support and will be taking the lead on the school support plan, working alongside the lead counselor to do so.

The Department of Education Services will be offering walk-in support for teachers, students and families later this week, and full support to the school community on Monday and through next week, as school reconvenes. This support will be extended to the school community as long as is necessary.

A representative from the Health Services Authority has also been contacted and informed that the DES would be prepared to help other agencies with their response/debrief activities relating to this incident.

As schools are currently on mid-term break, we realize that not all teachers and students may be on-island at present. Nevertheless, beginning today, specialists will be at the school to provide counseling services to staff and students who may need it.

The DES will shortly be making an announcement to the public about how to access this support offered.