

51B, Golf Links Road,
Bandarawela
23 November 2015

To the Lord Bishop of Colombo,

and to The Headmasters of :

STPS, Kollupitiya,
STC, Bandarawela
STC, Gurutalawa

Dear Rt Rev. Dhilo, and Frs Dushantha, Christopher, and Nihal,

Election of Staff Representative for Branch Schools

From my separate conversations with you, what I have gathered is that there is agreement that the election of a Board of Governors Member is a matter for the Staffs of the three schools to decide. I hope that you are still of that view and I hope that at long last the Staff of our schools will feel that they are treated with respect.

As you may be aware, I am putting myself forward as a candidate. The history of the BoG is that somebody is always selected - by the Headmasters of the three schools. If we were to demonstrate that we are now choosing the Board Member according to the collective will of the teachers, I feel that there could possibly be a transformation of the attitudes of the teachers.

Ultimately, what is important is **not** that I be elected, but that we should establish a Tradition of Honesty.

Very few teachers seem to be aware of the Rules and Regulations pertaining to this election; here they are:

The relevant link was given here. There appears to be a technical problem inserting it now in 2019.

In 2008, I was a member of the staff of the Gurutalawa school. When, after working in the school for just one year, I was asked by the then Headmaster to be one of the two representatives of the Staff, I insisted on the decision being made by the entire staff at a formal meeting. The staff reposed their faith in me and there was a clean election as far as Gurutalawa was concerned. In 2012, I had left the Staff of Gurutalawa, and I stood as a candidate. I am glad to report that democracy prevailed in that school once more. I am sad to say that I met the Headmasters of the schools in Bandarawela and Kollupitiya, but neither was prepared to let the Staff decide. Ultimately, a better and more experienced man was elected, but he has informed me clearly that he feels it is time for a slightly younger man to succeed him.

These Board of Governors appointments are made in terms of an Act of Parliament, and the document, to which a link has been provided below, and which can only be changed by the Parliament of Sri Lanka, whilst being pertinent, is much less relevant to this election than the Rules formulated by the Board itself.

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I see the Rules as being inadequate in two respects. Parents also ought to be represented on the Board, and the three Branch schools ought to have much greater representation. I will speak up on both issues if they arise, but I feel that I can only be a herald of such change, and I will make no promises that I cannot keep. However, what I do pledge to do, if I am elected, is to speak boldly and clearly at Meetings of the Board, although I will necessarily have to maintain confidentiality regarding proceedings at Board Meetings. I will have to work in consonance with the other fourteen Members, and ensure that sufficient trust is built for free elections to be welcomed in 2020, when I hope that a younger and abler person than I will be elected.

I do not intend to deal here with hypothetical situations. However, I am presenting myself primarily as a person who has been a teacher for over forty-five years, and who knows how difficult it is to be a satisfactory teacher. I respectfully request the Headmasters to translate and to explain my message, to all the relevant Staff Members, in Sinhala and Tamil. I will always respond to telephone calls and to e-mails, but I must remind all Staff that this is a delicate transnational phase of administration and that I will seek to work in co-operation with the Headmasters of the schools. However, I do promise to do all that I can to raise the profile of the staff; I leave it to you to check on my credentials yourselves.

The last time we had elections, it was on the 22nd of January, 2012, with the new members assuming duties in March 2012. Therefore, I request that all staff be informed of the impending elections before school closes for the the Third Term of 2015; staff wouldn't then get distracted into having chats on the subject during school hours!

I humbly solicit your active participation and support at micro-level!

Yours sincerely,

Panini Edirisinhe

Telephones:

E-mail:

Copies to Members of the Staffs of the relevant schools