



# Parliament of Sint Maarten

To: Honorable Minister of Education  
Mr. Rodolphe Samuel  
Government of St. Maarten  
Philipsburg, St. Maarten  
Dutch Caribbean

July 5, 2021

Re: Central Kitchen Project

Honorable Minister,

As a follow-up to our discussion during the 2021 Budget Debate, I hereby would like to re-enforce my approach for the construction of a Central Kitchen to service the country's breakfast program. I would like to re-iterate that throwing money at the situation is not a sustainable solution, despite the noble efforts of colleague MP's.

All over the world, including the Caribbean, central kitchens are becoming a more popular option for governments looking to streamline and expand their school breakfast or lunch operations whatever they may be. The central kitchen I proposed will provide healthy, sustainable, fresh, and local food to all schoolchildren in need of a good breakfast.

The benefits include:

- Better learning
- Increased meal consistency and quality control
- Increased production scale
- Reduced food waste through bulk production
- Better food safety
- More opportunities for public-private partnership

The idea is straightforward: A central kitchen, where all breakfast meals are prepared and shipped out to schools in the early morning hours. Preparing and shipping out for same-day service is efficient in terms of delivery at that time of day (no traffic) and also for food safety reasons.

A large, well equipped and well-staffed central kitchen with employees trained to cook or prepare meals from scratch and supervised by a culinary school graduate perhaps from NIPA or Sundial, would at long last enable us to produce and serve the kind of healthy, locally grown, freshly prepared breakfast meals our students need for optimal health and learning.

One thing is for certain – the well-being of our lowest-income students, who make up the majority of those eating school meals, cannot and should not be left to the availability of funds that have to be re-directed in the country's budget. A central kitchen will depend on public private partnerships, or grants that bring money into the breakfast program rather than putting the financial burden entirely on government or schools/school boards.

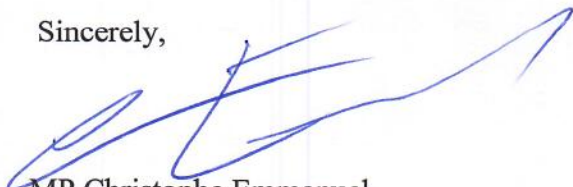
I believe that the private sector would jump at the opportunity to fulfill their corporate citizen role to the community by assisting our children and, by extension, their abilities to learn without worrying about a good meal to start the day. I will throw my full effort behind this project by encouraging potential private sector partners to participate.

I recommend as a first step the commissioning of a feasibility study. A feasibility study will explore the broader impacts a central kitchen could have on the entire community. Economic, environmental, and social impacts will be estimated for local farmers, businesses, restaurants, and other institutions that can contribute. Such a feasibility study is a low-cost approach to help us understand the potential benefits.

I propose the identifying and convening of a diverse group of stakeholders to oversee the feasibility study and future implementation of study findings. Funding will need to be secured to support the feasibility study. A budget and timeline can be determined once the scope of work has been set in partnership with the private sector and others with a significant interest in the project. Your Ministry has the resources and personnel to get this done and I am committing my time and that of my team to assist.

Honorable Minister, I am not one to see a problem and keep doing the same things over and over and expect different results. We must embrace final solution approaches in addressing the country's long-standing challenges. This particular challenge regards the children of St. Maarten and it behooves us to overcome this challenge with a creative and sustainable final solution. They deserve no less. I look forward to future discussions and actions on this proposal.

Sincerely,



MP Christophe Emmanuel