



The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago  
**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**

*Office of the Permanent Secretary*

E: 19/1/28

February 16, 2022

Ms. Jacqui Sampson-Meiguel  
Clerk of the House  
Office of the Parliament  
Parliamentary Complex  
Cabildo Building  
St. Vincent Street  
Port of Spain

Dear Ms. Sampson,

**First Report of the Joint Select Committee on Human Rights, Equality and Diversity on an Inquiry in Right to Access Education with Specific Focus on the Underachievement of Schools in the Port of Spain and Environs District with Respect to Performance in Terminal Examinations**

Reference is made to your letter Ref. No. Parl.: 14/3/55 Vol. V dated January 05, 2022 on the subject at caption.

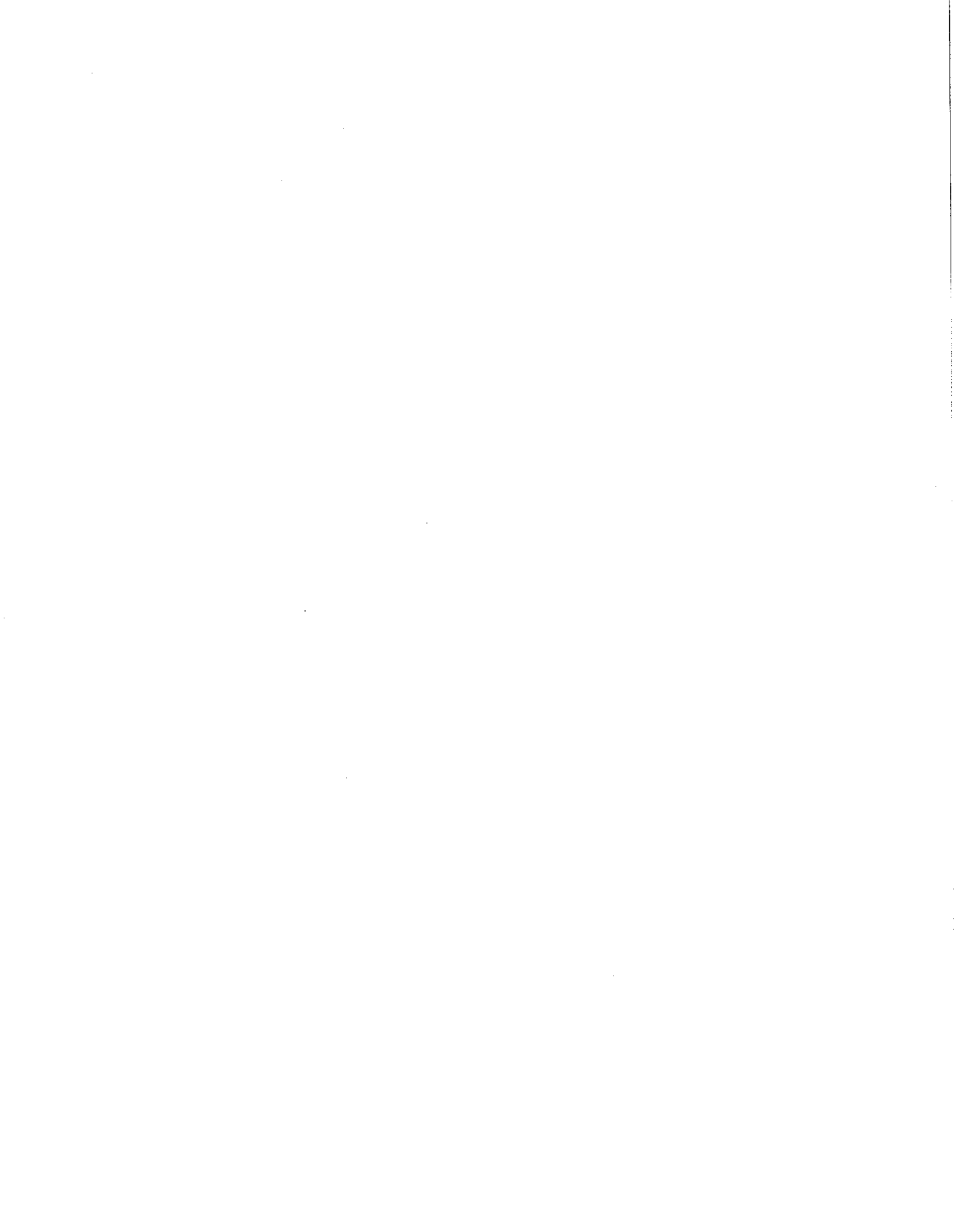
Please see attached Ministerial response to the ***First Report of the Joint Select Committee on Human Rights, Equality and Diversity on an Inquiry in Right to Access Education with Specific Focus on the Underachievement of Schools in the Port of Spain and Environs District with Respect to Performance in Terminal Examinations.***

Please note, electronic copies have been forwarded to your email.

Should you require additional information kindly contact the office of the Chief Education Officer at [ceo@moe.gov.tt](mailto:ceo@moe.gov.tt).

Yours respectfully,

.....  
**Lenor Baptiste-Simmons (Mrs.)**  
**Permanent Secretary**  
**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**





Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago  
**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**  
Education Towers, No.5 St. Vincent Street, Port of Spain, Trinidad

**Joint Select Committee on Human Rights, Equality and Diversity**

**Request for Information**

**The First Report of the Joint Select  
Committee on Human Rights, Equality  
and Diversity on an inquiry into the  
Right to Equal Access to Education  
with Specific Focus on the  
Underachievement of Schools in the  
Port-of-Spain and Environs District  
with Respect to Performance in  
Terminal Examinations**

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*The Ministry of Education monitors **performance trends of terminal examinations** for **placement** from the Secondary Entrance Examination (SEA) and for **certification** with respect to Caribbean Examination Council's (CXC) Caribbean Secondary Examination Certificate (CSEC) and Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE).*

*Where schools have performed below the national average in the terminal examination, the Ministry has mechanisms in place to provide support in order to implement intervention strategies geared towards improved performance.*

*At no time are schools defined as 'underachieving' but are categorised as schools of focus for targeted support and intervention.*

**4.1. *The Committee found that the majority of the submissions from the stakeholders, highlighted that underachievement should be measured not only by the pupils' performance in relation to scores received in terminal examinations, but should also take into account, pupils' performance on other areas in which they achieve success as seen in Table 7.***

The Ministry of Education acknowledges the recommendations of the Committee and takes note of the importance of students' participation in co- and extra-curricular activities, which allows for cultivation of a more holistic individual. In fact, many of the subject categories offered in schools provide avenues for students to engage in co- and extra-curricular activities as well as national, regional and international school competitions in the areas of music, dance, art, drama in Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA); choral speaking, poetry, scrabble, debate and creative writing in the Language Arts; chess, robotics, environmental clubs and mathematics Olympiad in Mathematics and Science; and sporting competitions in Physical Education and Sport are but a few available to students.

Additionally, schools, as a cultural practice, readily host award ceremonies, which commend students for their achievements in areas, other than academics, such as good citizenship, willingness to help, concern for the environment, leadership and responsibility, athleticism, sportsmanship and avid participation in the life of the school.

Furthermore, students who participate in organised competitions that are based on a variety of co- and extra-curricular activities have the potential to hone their acquired skills and competencies into successful careers of Calypso and Soca artistes, sportsmen and women, musicians and arrangers.

However, further clarification is required with respect to **Table 7 – Contributory Factors to Underachievement of Schools**, in referencing “*pupils' performance on other areas in which they achieve success.*”

**4.2. The Committee acknowledged the societal and economic factors highlighted by submissions from several stakeholders in Table 7 which may contribute to the underachievement of schools within the POS and Environs District.**

The MoE takes note of the economic factors highlighted in Table 7.

**4.3. Based on stakeholder submissions, the Committee acknowledged that the challenges to address the contributory factors influencing achievement of public primary and secondary schools are apparent in the following areas:**

- **Overwhelming socio/ economic issues;**
- **Parenting programmes made mandatory at several levels yet not well attended;**
- **Truancy of students - reports made to the School Social Worker;**
- **Lack of parental involvement due to other factors;**
- **Lack of interest in education;**
- **Time-off from employers especially for daily/ hourly paid parents;**
- **School Administration and parent relational issues:**
  - **Consultation and other interventions are mainly scheduled between the traditional working hours of 8am to 4:15pm;**
  - **Inadequate parenting skills;**
  - **Heightened family trauma through death and loss, imprisonment, gang related activities and community violence;**
  - **Little or no educational qualifications and/ or vocational skills; and**
  - **A heightened sense of apathy towards life;**
- **Community Factors:**
  - **Low community investment;**
  - **Community members lack interest in educational development;**
  - **Community violence/ gang activities negatively impact on residents' habits and behaviours; and**
- **Non-contact time for primary teachers to address tasks perceived as "extra work" (planning, item analysis, data analysis, referral forms).**

The MoE takes notes of the many challenges faced by students and has well-developed services, strategies and interventions in place, as outlined in several responses to Recommendations, such as "4.4", "4.15", "4.19" etc., to mitigate their potential negative effects in so as far as parents and students alike are willing and committed to the process.

**4.4. The Committee noted that the Expanded Core Curriculum was necessary for students with disabilities/Special Education Needs to have the opportunity to access the MoE Core Curriculum. Consequently, improper and ineffective implementation of the Expanded Core Curriculum can cause the students with disabilities that require special education to be inadequately tooled with the requisite skills to perform at their true potential in the classroom and terminal examinations.**

The MoE recognises that exposure to the Expanded Core Curriculum for students with disabilities is critical to their optimum development and to their success at school and beyond. The expanded or Plus Curriculum exposes students to the additional skills and competencies they required to efficiently access, and to fully and effectively participate with the national curriculum, regardless of the placement options selected.

The desired outcomes for students require targeted training and upskilling of Special Education Personnel in specific disability areas (Education of Deaf and Hard of Hearing; Blind/Visually Impaired; Physical Disabilities, Learners with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity and Autism Spectrum Disorder, etc.), each of which requires specific skill sets to be developed to support students' learning and development.

In this regard, the MoE has placed emphasis on teacher training initiatives to enhance the skills of Special Education Teachers working with students in various disabilities. Training for general and Special Education Officers encompassed the following areas:

- Applied Behaviour Analysis
- Screening and Assessment of Students with ADHD
- Sign Language – Level One
- Sign Language – Level Two
- Bridging the Literacy Gap – ECCE, Primary Special Education Teachers and Curriculum Officers
- Use of Special Need Assessment Profile (SNAP) Screening Tool for the Early Identification of Students
- Sensitization and training for teachers working with students who are blind and visually impaired.

Additionally, the Ministry provides services that include school-based student screening for *learning, developmental, and behavioural challenges*. Students with presenting

issues are then referred to the Student Support Services Division for relevant intervention via a multi-disciplinary team consisting of *Special Education Instructors, School Social Workers and Guidance Officers*. Moreover, a detailed psycho-educational assessment is conducted for students as the need arises through the services of our *Clinical Psychologists, School Psychologists and Behavioural Intervention Specialists*.

Students who are diagnosed with a disability continue to receive targeted intervention via the use of an **Individual Education Plan (IEP)** that individualises an approach to the curriculum specific for the student involved. The implementation of the IEP may include the assignment of a Special Education Aide or Interpreter Assistant as is necessary.

Teachers in the general education system are provided with school-based support and training in the identification of a range of Special Needs traits and the relevant classroom-based intervention to treat with each specific challenge identified.

The Ministry also provides alternative arrangements and enhanced learning resources, such as braille, large print, and sign language interpretation for students with diagnosed disabilities. These arrangements are also offered to students writing our local examinations through the provision of **Special Concessions**. Approximately Six Hundred (600) special concession applications are processed each year for students eligible to write the: *Secondary Entrance Assessment (SEA), National Certificate of Secondary Education (NCSE), and Primary School Leaving Examination*.

The variety of resources provided to students with disabilities allow for them to perform to their potential in the classroom, at terminal examinations and beyond.

- 4.5. *The Committee noted that children with disabilities may learn differently from their peers in the regular classroom, as such, it would be unfair to judge the achievement of these students, using the same criteria used for their peers who may not have such challenges. Additionally, inadequate provisions for the special education needs of students with disabilities, impairs the ability of these students to perform equally and*



*equitably with their peers in terminal examinations and defeats the merit/ efficacy of the examinations.*

See response to “**Recommendation 4.4**” above.

- 4.6.** *The Committee found that there were no Curriculum Officers for Special Education and Special Education School Supervisors in the MOE. As a result, the curriculum delivery and assessment examinations were not appropriately adapted for children with Special Education Needs and support was reduced for administrators of special schools, and that have students with Special Education Needs.*

The MoE ensures that all the necessary services are delivered to all students. With respect to Special Education Needs students, the MoE developed a Unit with suitably qualified staff dedicated to the provision of requisite services and support to them. Therefore, the need to recruit staff as identified in the recommendation does not fall within the MoE’s preferred internal structure for treating with Special Needs Students. The committee’s attention is also directed to the MoE’s response to Recommendation “4.4” above” and Recommendation “4.40” below.

- 4.7.** *The Committee noted a shortage of certified and trained" Special Education Teachers to work with children with diagnosed disabilities. Additionally, the existing service delivered is incongruent with the standard and quality required for students with disabilities to optimally function or succeed in terminal examinations in the mainstream school system.*

The MoE seeks to attract qualified personnel to fill existing vacancies. To this end, every effort is made to ensure that current staff adhere to professional standards of practice within the existing framework. As noted, staff are continuously exposed to training opportunities to enhance their skills in keeping with international best practice.

Furthermore, job evaluation and structural reviews are ongoing in an effort to identify existing gaps and improve the efficiency of service provided.

- 4.8. *The Committee found that there was a lack of professional and semi-professionals required to staff interdisciplinary teams and transdisciplinary teams in Special Schools, and Inclusive Schools. The Committee further acknowledged that while some of the professionals and semi-professionals available were under SSSD, they function as a multidisciplinary team and their services are not provided in a coordinated manner, as required by Special Schools, Inclusive Schools and students with disabilities and special education needs attending mainstream schools.*

See response to Recommendation “4.4” above.

- 4.9. *According to the Education Act, Chap.39:01, Section 2. "Intermediate school" refers to "a school recognised under the former Education Ordinance as providing primary or post primary education for pupils up to the age of eighteen years". The Committee found that the Special Schools educated persons between preschool age (early intervention) and above 18 years of age but are categorized as an intermediate school as it is the nearest category of schools provided in the Education Act, Chap.39:01, which is serving this age range.*

The definition of an “intermediate school” as stated in the **Recommendation “4.9”** of the Findings and Recommendations of the First Report of the Joint Select Committee on Human Rights, Equality and Diversity (the Report), is accurate based on Section 2 of the Education Act Chapter 39:01. The Report indicates that Special schools are referred to as intermediate schools, which provide primary and post primary education for pupils up to the age of 18. According to **Section 76 (1) of the Education Act**, the compulsory school age is between 5 and 16.

However, the recent Cabinet approved Education Policy Paper 2017-2022 consists of proposals for the amendment of the Education Act to include the areas of Early

Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) and Tertiary Education. The Education Policy Paper 2017 to 2022 was approved by Cabinet. These amendments allow for the inclusion of pre-schoolers to those above the compulsory school age (see *Appendix I*).

The Education Policy Paper also emphasises increased inclusivity and equity in the above-mentioned areas so that educational opportunities can be accessible to all learners as well as be responsive to their special needs and abilities.

- 4.10. *The Committee recommends that the Ministry of Education should improve the Continuous Assessment Programme to allow for the identification of student achievement along non-traditional assessment means. The measures should cater for the multiple intelligences and special education needs of students, to assist them in discovering their strengths, help them to realize their true potential, and engender intrinsic motivation within students and assist them in becoming more successful at the Primary School Level.***

The Ministry of Education acknowledges the recommendations of the Committee and would bring such into consideration and for discussion.

- 4.11. *Given the workload of the SSSD, the Committee recommends that the MoE re-establish the Special Education Unit, independent of the Student Support Services Division, and reform the unit to create a Division of Special and Inclusive Education. This Division may be responsible for the supervision of all Special Schools, all Inclusive Schools, and delivery of the Expanded Core Curriculum for students with disabilities and with Special Education Needs, attending mainstream schools.***

The MoE acknowledges the Committee's recommendation and would table these suggestions for discussions. However, the Committee should be aware that any additional Unit or Division would incur an increased cost to the Ministry as a result of the need for the recruitment of increased staff, inclusive of senior management.

Additionally, the MoE has to consider whether or not duplication of functionality, oversight and overlap the supervision of staff may arise as a result.

**4.12. *The Committee recommends that the MoE develop a three (3) year action plan to assist public special schools with the following:***

- *The appropriate facilities based on established international specification and standards for children with disabilities or Special Education Needs;*
- *The appropriate resources for teaching and learning for all categories of children with disabilities; and*
- *The appropriate established standards for operation of Special Schools and Inclusive Schools (private and public)*

The development and implementation of an action plan as recommended by the Committee requires collaboration among several divisions/units of the MoE. These divisions may include facilities management, planning and school support divisions. There is need to first conduct a needs assessment of plant, people and processes in order to determine the inputs and time needed to accomplish the recommendations as specified.

**4.13. *The Committee recommends that the Ministry of Education conduct an investigation into school underachievement and undertake a comprehensive analysis of the physical, material, human and financial resources invested into schools in Port-of-Spain and Environs.***

The Ministry of Education recognises the importance of evidence-based policies and will continue to conduct research to inform decisions made.

**4.14. *The Committee recommends that the MOE liaise with the Office of the Attorney General and Ministry of Legal Affairs to draft an amendment to the Education Act, Chap.39:01 which would reclassify all Public Special Schools to reflect the age range taught at these schools.***

See response at Recommendation @4.9.” above.

- 4.15. *The Committee recommends that the MoE consider the establishment of interdisciplinary teams to service primary schools and secondary schools at the district level and transdisciplinary teams at the Special School and Inclusive School level staffed with the professionals and semi-professionals tailored to service the unique special education needs of the special school service.***

The MoE has established District Leadership Teams (DLTs) that function at the level of the Education District operates at both levels with members from School Supervision, Curriculum Planning and Development Division and Students Support Services and readily co-opts the services of professionals in a variety of disciplines sourced from other Ministries, NGOs, Private Organisations and International Organisations.

Additionally, the Inclusive Schools Project collaborated with a host of stakeholders, from the list identified above, and developed professional relationships for the benefit of Special Needs Students.

- 4.16 *The Committee recommends that the positions of School Supervisor and Curriculum Officer for Special Education be established to ensure continuous review, improvement, monitoring and evaluation of the pedagogies for special needs students and the delivery of the expanded core curriculum and the core curriculum for special schools.***

The Committee’s attention is drawn to MoE’s responses to Recommendations “4.6” “4.11”, “4.15” and “4.40.”

- 4.17. *The Committee recommends that the MOE collaborate with the Ministry of Sport and Community Development (MSCD), the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services (MSDFS) and other agencies to formulate incentivized, nationwide parenting courses and workshops to assist parents in improving their parenting skills to assist their children in attaining academic success and the ability to value lifelong learning.***

The MoE welcomes suggestions of collaboration with other government Ministries that provide services to parents. The SSSD, as part of its mandate, readily provides parenting skills development workshops and sessions. These sessions are delivered by the Guidance Unit as well as the School Social Worker Unit.

However, further clarity is sought with regard to your reference to “incentivised.”

**4.18. *The Committee acknowledged that schools must be provided with the resources to cater for students with psycho- social and learning challenges. As such, the Committee recommends that the MOE consider the following:***

- *the provision of additional trained and competent professionals (such as, clinical psychologists; learning specialists, etc.) who can support the learning and behavioural needs of students; and*
- *the placement of a Guidance Officer and School Social Worker in each school.*

Though the provision of a Guidance Officer and School Social Worker in every primary and secondary school is ideal, the cost for providing such staff for 582 schools (127 secondary, 444 primary and 11 special) would create a shortfall in allocations for many other programmes developed by the MoE.

Additionally, the Committee’s attention is drawn to response to Recommendation “4.4.”

**4.19. *The Committee recommends that the MOE together with the various school boards develop a plan, for the schools under their purview, to promote mentorship, apprenticeship or training for students, with businesses and tradesmen within communities to create linkages between the schools and the community to increase community ownership and identification with the school.***

The MoE, under the Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) subject grouping, has an established system to facilitate student acquisition of practical skill and competencies via the VAPA Tutor Programme. This programme facilitates collaboration among teachers,

students and community specialists in the fields of dance, drama, music in the secondary schools.

A VAPA Tutor is required to plan and implement programs of work in accordance to the needs of the school and the curriculum mandate. This includes improving motor skills, which would enhance the practical components of the arts, foster collegiality among students, in ensemble performances, and to improve students' individual performance skills. VAPA Tutors provide opportunities for students to demonstrate and display their skills and talents within the school but not limited to the confines of the school.

Cultural experts are engaged by schools, upon approval by the Ministry of Education, to provide the additional educational support services as needed and this provides a rich learning experience to students. Engagement in practical skills training and development is provided through a variety of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities stemming from the associated subject area.

- 4.20. *Given that schools in 'at risk' communities face different challenges from schools in "low-risk" areas and are associated with negative stereotypes, the MOE should consider training for administrative and teaching staff of these schools to detach the stereotypes and stigma they associate with the area.***

The MoE acknowledges the recommendation.

- 4.21. *The Committee recommends that the MOE consider reduced teacher/student ratio and smaller classes in schools with a higher population of students who are in need of individualized or remedial attention.***

Reduced Teacher/student ratio may involve increased staffing, the hiring of remedial teachers in the areas of English and Maths to work alongside the teachers assigned, and the allocation of substitute teachers to assist, all of which requires approval of Cabinet.

Furthermore, this may require expansion of school facilities to accommodate more classrooms.

**4.22. *The Committee recommends that to improve parental involvement in schools the MOE consider implementing the following in schools:***

- *Provide parents information on school curriculum offerings and performance;*
- *Teaching parenting practices to stimulate children's learning and support;*
- *Training parents on how to enhance children's learning at home;*
- *Providing adult literacy classes; and providing after-school tutoring for low achieving students (homework centres).*

The MoE readily engages parents and key stakeholders for the provision of services accordance with our **core business**, that is, the provision of educational services to students of compulsory age, at Primary, Secondary Levels, at the ECCE Level, as well as the tertiary level.

The MoE recognises the importance of parental engagement and has provided resources for parents as follows:

- the curriculum for each level from the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) to the Secondary School Level on the MoE website,
- workshops and support material for parents in parenting skills,
- workshops for parents in supporting their child's education,
- parent conferences and meetings to discuss individualised student progress,
- online after-school programme for students in the Laventille Morvant School Improvement Project schools. and
- sensitisation sessions for parents on programmes and services available to them at other Ministries and governmental agencies as well as NGOs and international organisations.

**4.23. *The Committee has recognized that the Ministry is aware of the contributory factors to the underachievement of some schools in the POS and Environs District and have tried to address same with certain initiatives. However, a comprehensive action plan should***



*be implemented to include a wider cross section of the school population with a monitoring and evaluation team to provide effective follow-up.*

The Port of Spain and Environs Education District project plan contains a comprehensive action plan with the DLT as the monitoring Team.

- 4.24.** *The Committee noted that there is a need to include a comprehensive qualitative analysis of student data to provide a better contextual understanding of the problem of underachievement of schools.*

The Student Support Services Division, through the various units, produces comprehensive qualitative reports on students referred for targeted intervention. These reports are confidential and have been utilised to prepare Individual Education Plans for students as well as the engagement of parents in development of solutions to student issues. Also, the Division conducts surveys on many “at-risk” schools and produce confidential reports (qualitative and quantitative) on the schools’ culture and climate and how it impacts on student learning.

These reports, though confidential, provide a platform for discussions at the DLTs.

- 4.25.** *The Committee was informed by TTUTA that discipline matrices for students are not always adhered to and there is a need for continuous professional development for teachers and principals to enhance teaching/ learning strategies and classroom management.*

The MoE has developed a comprehensive National School Code of Conduct that outlines systems and procedures for developing a disciplined school environment. A School Discipline Manual was completed and presented to all primary and secondary school principals in 2019. These two resources will form the basis for training and monitoring school culture and climate through the DLTs.

**4.26. *The Committee found that according to APPSSTT, the areas of deficiency in the School Development Plan (SDP) are the provision of feedback on SDPs from School Supervisors and the execution of the plans. Feedback is supposed to be available before the plan is executed but in most cases after the initial feedback is offered, follow up is deficient. The lack of finances also impacts the ability to execute plans in an effective manner.***

The MoE notes the information and would work towards reducing identified deficiencies through the DLTs.

**4.27. *Additionally, in spite of the expressed vision of the MOE, that administrators and staff at schools would take responsibility for the transformation and improvement of their individual organizations, this goal is often stymied as, administrators and staff spend more time fulfilling requests for data from the MOE, than implementing other tasks that are integral to the school-based management process.***

The MoE acknowledges the statements made. It should be noted, however, that current business models demand conformity to data driven decision-making. As such, the MoE historically collects data on its human resource, budgeting and resource usage data from schools. The current pandemic has led to the need for collecting its own unique data that was not required in previous years, but is necessary for making informed decisions with respect to the health and safety of our staff, students and visitors to the school compound. With the advent of online teaching, and rotation as measures to mitigate against the spread of the COVID-19 virus, there was a reduction of available human resources to treat with the usual request for school data.

The MoE has developed and is currently testing its e-solution to data collection through the implementation of an online Student Management System (SMS) that will alleviate the issue of data collection (see *Appendix IV*).

**4.28. *The Committee noted that regarding the value-added measure for secondary schools, the MoE has successfully merged the SEA and CSEC data for the years 2015 to 2019, developed a value-added indicator and run preliminary analyses.***

The MoE acknowledges the statement.

**4.29. *Additionally, during the months of January and February 2020, the MoE shared this preliminary data with the Principals of the Government Secondary Schools in each of the seven (7) districts in Trinidad to pilot the indicator and gain feedback for its improvement. However, plans to share the data with Denominational Boards in March 2020 were halted due to the COVID restrictions.***

The procedure for the dissemination of data first requires meeting with each Denominational Board of Education group of schools. This ensures that staff and Board members would be able to understand and adequately treat with data upon receipt.

The MoE met with the RC schools, but, as stated, did not continue with these meetings as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The MoE is planning to resume this process for the remaining Denominational Boards of Education in 2022.

**4.30. *The Committee was informed by the Private Primary School Principals Association (PPSPA) that the quality of education provided is the only area in the Private Primary Schools which are monitored by the MOE through the School Supervisor.***

All government Ministries are limited in the scope of interaction with and influence over private businesses/organisations. Oversight and management of private organisations is not under the remit of the MoE. However, it is our responsibility to ensure that Quality education is provided to students as identified in the Sustainable Development Goal-4 (SDG), which states, “*Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.*”

However, as an important stakeholder, Principals of private schools are invited to Education District Fraternity Meetings and Administrator Conferences so that they are made aware of the policies and procedures applicable to public schools.

- 4.31.** *The Committee was informed by the AEMB that while there is monitoring of the leadership and management of persons of authority of the school; there is need for additional personnel to serve this function and timelier responses/action on matters from MOE.*

See MoE's response to Recommendation "4.39."

- 4.32.** *According to the CEBM, the MOE monitors education quality provided by the schools, teachers, staff and student behaviour and attitudes, leadership and management of school personnel in authority largely through the Schools Supervision Division with support from the divisions with responsibility for management of human resources and teacher professional development. Additionally, the Curriculum Planning and Development Division bears the main responsibility for the curriculum that aims at the holistic development of each child. However, the Committee learnt that the terminal examination results over the last five (5) years indicated that while this framework may provide for observation and careful checking of these aspects of education in the schools, it does not achieve the goal of providing quality education to every child in every school.*

The provision of quality education requires input from a variety of institutions: the family, the formal education system, the religious/spiritual community (if applicable) and the community within which the child resides and interacts (see response to Recommendation "4.22" above). Successfully accessing quality education requires not only the efforts the MoE (response to Recommendation "4.22" refers), but equal effort is necessary on the part of the parent/guardian and also the inputs from other key stakeholders. Therefore, access to quality education is not solely the responsibility of the

MoE, but is achievable through the combined endeavours of school, home and community.

However, where gaps are identified from monitoring, via the DLTs, the MoE initiates strategies to remedy any issue identified.

**4.33. *The Committee noted the views of the NAPSPA on the monitoring of the MOE in the following areas:***

- ***Quality of Education- the MOE monitors quality but the results only tell of the students' ability on that test, it is not adequate in assessing what was learnt.***

The Ministry of Education agrees that success “at life” cannot be measured by scores alone, and established educational practice and theory does not support the position which states that:

*...the results only tell of the students' ability on that test, it is not adequate in assessing what was learnt.*

In fact, results of tests provide rich feedback for student intervention and remediation. Data obtained from terminal examinations allow for closer interrogation of student performance through the use of standardised rubrics that reveal what a student has learnt.

It is routine for MoE officers to engage in item writing and item analysis of exams at the SEA, NCSE, CSEC and CAPE levels that contributes to assessing what students learned.

- ***The Limited Curriculum as it does not reflect the true nature of a student's talents and abilities.***

The MoE curriculum from ECCE to secondary school offers a wide range of subjects that cater to students' interests, talents and potential as well as for matriculation into universities locally, regionally and internationally. Additionally, CXC's subject combination, which is under review periodically, is renowned worldwide and students certified under the body find no barriers to furthering their education at home and

abroad. The ECCE, primary and secondary curricula is comparable to developing local students for UK's General Certificate of Education (GCE) and the USA's Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), response to Recommendations "4.1" and "4.19" refer.

- ***Leadership and management of properly trained staff in an adequately resourced school. The school leaders must also be aware of the community, culture and the economic background of the parents in their schools, which can alter the level of parental support provided to the school and its ability to provide resources to students.***

The MoE acknowledges the statement made on Leadership and Management.

- 4.34. *The Committee found that according to APASS, the framework of the MOE does not adequately monitor behaviour; attitudes required by the schools for its students, teachers and staff as some of the MOE monitoring instruments are outdated. For example, the continued use of the Staff Confidential Report which does not capture the developmental needs of teachers. In most cases it is left up to individual schools and their administrators to determine how "quality control" is done.***

The MoE is in agreement with the statement made. In 2005 a comprehensive Performance Management Appraisal Process instrument was developed for use in schools. The MoE believes that the implementation of the PMAP instrument can lead to the resolution of deficiencies identified. It was agreed that it would be introduced in schools on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2014, firstly with school Principals, but to date it has not been implemented. The October 2013 TSCSPEAKS publication treated with the issue of PMAP in an article entitled "*The Performance Management and Appraisal Process,*" by Mr. Alwyn Daniel, and outlined the PMAP and its benefits. Based on the article

*...the Ministry of Education (MOE) and TTUTA reached agreement on the introduction of a potentially robust performance management system which is due to be implemented by January 01, 2014. This system [is] known as the Performance Management and Appraisal Process (PMAP).*

However, PMAP was not implemented in schools as the evaluative instruments are currently being reviewed by the PMAP Committee that is comprised of representatives of the MOE and TTUTA. The current review is in keeping with changes proffered by TTUTA representatives.

The last meeting of the committee was held on January 25, 2021. Subsequent bi-monthly meetings were cancelled due to issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic, team members unavailability due to being on leave, having other work commitments. Communication was sent to TTUTA's Team Lead in January 2022 requesting dates to re-convene the PMAP Committee Meetings.

On completion of the review process, the Manual and the Evaluative Instruments will be submitted for the consideration and approval by the Permanent Secretary of the MoE.

Once approved training of School Supervisors, Principals and Vice Principals and will be facilitated by Teacher Training and Development Section prior to its implementation (see *Appendix II*).

**4.35. *Furthermore, in Government Assisted Secondary Schools, the Boards of Education have a degree of oversight and control as far as setting expectations and quality control in the recommendation of suitably qualified individuals to ensure that the school's vision and mission are achieved. They also serve as a check and balance in ensuring that staff works to a high standard of expectation.***

The Teaching Service Commission is charged with the responsible of hiring the "suitably qualified individuals" for entry into the Teaching Service.

**4.36. *The Committee was informed by APASS that the secondary school curriculum, is heavily focused on the academics and the results of Technical/ Vocational subjects are***

***not used to assess the achievement and or performance of schools as this is only determined by student academic performance.***

Data on all subjects, inclusive of Technical/Vocational subjects sat by students in Trinidad and Tobago, is provided on an annual basis by CXC for CSEC and CAPE subjects. This data is then utilised to analyse school performance, which includes Technical/Vocational Subjects.

***4.37. The Committee found that School Supervisors should meet with Principals and Management Teams more often to provide guidance and to give feedback on the progress of the school. Additionally, there should be an induction and orientation programme for new administrators addressing financial management, infrastructural and plant management, change management, curriculum delivery, school discipline and student support.***

Schools Supervisors meet with principals, vice principals on a regular basis either in group during the monthly District Administrators Meeting or individually on a need only basis at the relevant school or at the Education District office. During the monthly meetings principals and vice principals discuss issues and concerns that they may experience in school as well as receive training in school administration from invited guests on topics identified above. Additionally, district conferences are organised for principals, vice principals, senior teachers and for Heads of Department and Deans, where applicable.

In 2019, all principals, primary and secondary school principals received training from School Supervision and Management Division, Curriculum Planning and Development Division, the Finance and Accounting Division and other divisions in all of the areas identified.



Additionally, Schools Supervisors hold periodic meetings and conduct training sessions with middle managers (heads of department and deans) in many of the areas identified above.

With the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, organising district conferences and conduct meetings did pose some challenges: however, training of officers continued online and monitoring of school through visits by School Supervision carried on.

- 4.38. *The Committee learnt that PSSATT schools offer a curriculum that includes not only academic, but practical skills. The schools have created an environment that comprises accommodation, adaptation and differentiation, thereby giving each student and opportunity to excel in their strengths.***

The MoE acknowledges this statement.

- 4.39. *The Committee found that the complement of School Supervisors within the POS and Environs District is not adequate to provide the necessary capacity for monitoring, evaluation and implementation of interventions/school policies.***

The Teaching Service Commission has begun the process for the recruitment of Schools Supervisor with the publishing of posts via Circular Memoranda inviting suitably qualified officers to apply for vacancies positions of Schools Supervisor III and I. With the completion of the recruitment process by the Teaching Service Commission, it is expected that Education Districts will be staffed according to the establishment.

- 4.40. *The Committee was informed by the AAPSSTT that School Supervisors II and School Supervisors I, are incapable of monitoring the quality of education provided by special schools. The School Supervisors I and II are not trained in special education and try to fit special schools into a primary school mould, as a result, it neglects the expanded core curriculum which is a necessity in implementing the core curriculum of the primary school for students with special needs. Additionally, the monitoring***

***framework is inadequate for the Special Schools setting as most of the staff are not certified, qualified, and assessed Special Education Teachers.***

Any perceived shortfall in the monitoring process stems from a lack of clarity as to the MoE's internal structure. The delivery and monitoring of quality education is effected through the MoE's systemic operationalisation of its longstanding and robust internal structure, which includes the collaborative operations of divisions and units, inclusive of School Supervision and SSSD. Collaboration among divisions and units of the MoE readily includes interdivisional training in areas that build capacity among officers which supports the delivery and monitoring of quality education to all students.

Additionally, the Special Education Unit of SSSD is charged with the responsibility of monitoring the quality of education in special schools as well as for Special Education Needs (SENs) students in the general education system where Special Education Instructors and Aides are placed.

This system is further buttressed via the operationalisation of the DLTs in each Education District where resides the opportunities to share knowledge with respect to all aspects of teaching and learning, assessment, training, evaluation, leadership and management, and monitoring among others.

- 4.41. *The Committee noted that while the curriculum provides for academic development, the type of attention required for the personal development of persons with special education needs are not adequately achieved. The schools lack the resources required for full implementation.***

The MoE requires clarification on “personal development of persons with special needs” in order to adequately respond to the recommendation.

- 4.42. *The Committee noted that there is a need for clarification on the job description and what is required of the leadership and administrative function of a Principal in Special Education. This creates a challenge since the absence of the intricate***

***understanding of what is required tends to cause conflict and difficulty between the Principal and the leaders and administrators within special schools.***

The MoE acknowledges that a lack of clarity of one's job description would indeed be a cause for concern. However, there are undeniable roles and responsibilities for the position of 'principal' that would obtain in any intermediate educational institution regardless of its type. All principals must:

- ensure the safety and security of students;
- prepare a school development plan for improvements or success in the following areas:
  - student academic achievement
  - student holistic development
  - development of a school discipline/school culture matrix/plan with the requisite documents
  - teacher training and professional development
  - leadership and management training and professional development (principal, vice principal and middle management)
  - curriculum delivery
  - curriculum monitoring
  - plant management – maintenance and repair
  - internal stakeholder engagement – interaction with the divisions and units of the MoE in order to adequately implement policies and directives and to ensure the provision of all services are available to staff, students and parents
  - external stakeholder engagement – parents and the various communities (immediate school community, business community, other government Ministries, NGOs etc.) that readily engage with schools.
- Manage internal and external examinations; and
- Provide the necessary reports to the MoE as per the normal schedule or as requested for engagement in data driven decision-making.

Additionally, the recruitment process of the Teaching Service Commission ensures that all candidates that apply for positions therein are well acquainted with the job description that is provided for perusal and review in readiness prior to the interview process.

**4.43. *The Committee recommends that the MOE conduct a competency assessment to determine the necessary training matrix required for continuous professional development in the following areas:***

- *the provision of targeted support for students with literacy and numeracy challenges;*
- *specialized training to cater to remedial students or students in need of individualized attention;*
- *the use of trauma informed practices in teaching;*
- *curriculum delivery using pedagogies that are student centered and makes use of ICT and other innovations in education; and*
- *recognize students with learning and other challenges*

The MoE understands that the public may not be aware of its internal operations. However, with respect to the perceived deficiencies, the MoE, through its normal operations, covers all of the areas identified in this recommendation with new and returning teachers through the following:

- Clinical supervision, “*a formative evaluation method of working with teachers for the purpose of improving instruction. This teacher-centred, collegial, and collaborative model requires the establishment of rapport and trust and a proper climate,*” is the means through which teacher competency is built. Heads of Department are tasked with this exercise in schools and are supported by the Curriculum Planning and Development Division.
- The MoE has a division dedicated for the purpose of teacher training and professional development. Training is in partnership with local and international educational institutions that provide the necessary skill and competency development for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century classroom.

- The Guidance Unit and School Social Work Unit of SSSD works along with school officials to assess the needs of teaching staff along the affective spectrum of teacher training, and in so doing treat with concerns of trauma informed practices.
- The CPDD has, as its mandate, teacher competency assessment and training. See *Appendix III* for a comprehensive list of training.

**4.44** *The Committee recommends that the MOE take the lead role with the relevant Ministries (MSDFS, MSCD) to develop creative methods to expand the funding of existing programmes and services (i.e. trauma intervention services, the Laventille/Morvant School Improvement Project, and other social and restorative justice programmes), that students require to disrupt the impact of poverty.*

The MoE takes note of the Committee's recommendation. However, the Committee is reminded that the "core business" of the Ministry remains the provision of educational services to our nation's children at the ECCE, Primary and Secondary Levels as well as evening and post-secondary education.

**4.45.** *The Committee recommends that the MOE provide a status update on the implementation of the value-added measure of school effectiveness which assesses the level of progress or growth achieved by students within secondary schools.*

The Ministry is currently engaged in the process of merging and analysing data from the Secondary Entrance Assessment (SEA) and the Caribbean Secondary Education (CSEC) to determine the value-added measure of school effectiveness.

Examination results from the two (2) cohorts who wrote SEA 2015 and 2016 will be merged with results from CSEC 2020 and 2021, respectively.

**4.46.** *The Committee recommends that all schools should have the same level of access to remedial assistance and student support services. The cost and length of time that it usually takes to have access to this type of intervention also needs to be taken into consideration.*

The MoE acknowledges the recommendations made by the Committee. It should be noted that the procedure for accessing services of the SSSD obtains in all schools, which entails the referral of students and involves the teaching staff, student, SSSD officer(s) and the parent.

- 4.47. *The Committee recommends that the MOE conduct a competency assessment to determine the necessary training matrix required for continuous professional development for principals and middle managers, addressing; financial management, infrastructural and plant management, change management, curriculum delivery, school discipline and student support. Additionally, training should also be provided for Principals in special education schools on the requirements of the position and the differences in the role in comparison to the same post in a mainstream school.***

The Teacher Education Performance and Professional Development Division, the School Supervision and Management Division, the Curriculum Planning and Development Division, the Education Planning Division, and the Finance Division have provided training for all levels of staff at all types of schools.

Additionally, the Committee's attention is drawn to the MoE's response at Recommendation "4.42."

- 4.48. *The Committee recommends that the Ministry of Education convey standards for assessment and evaluation, and produce and disseminate examination and evaluation data through online publications as a cost effective and efficient means of circulation.***

Standards for assessment and evaluation in the nation's schools are readily available on the MoE's website where curriculum guidelines are posted for 10 subject areas ranging from Infants 1 to Standard 5. These all identify the intended student outcomes and how students are assessed.

With respect to the CSEC and CAPE examinations, summaries of analyses of the results of the examinations are shared on social media. The MoE also intends to share similar data on the SEA examination through these fora.

**4.49. *The Committee recommends that the MOE provide a wider range of alternatives to academic subjects including more technical/vocational subjects at the secondary school level.***

Please see responses to Recommendations “4.19” and “4.33” which speaks to the notion of the “limited curriculum.”

**4.50. *The Committee recommends that the MOE consider revising the monitoring frameworks to incorporate the unique situation of special needs schools.***

The MoE requires further clarification on the referenced monitoring frameworks as the MoE’s internal structure had specialised units that develop the relevant monitoring instruments for students with special needs in special schools as well as for those in the general education system. See responses to Recommendations “4.6” and “4.40.”

**4.51. *The Committee recommends that the MOE compile data on identifying school improvement needs and based on the data, focus technical support for improvement on the schools that need it most and provide differentiated monitoring through inspection/supervision and pedagogical support.***

The Ministry, as part of its normal operations, compiles data on school performance on an annual basis. Additionally, schools prepare a school-based development plans for the purpose of school improvement. Currently, the MoE has implemented an interdivisional plan “Enhancing School Performance” that is geared towards improving schools that perform below the national average. The divisions involved are the SSMD, CPDD and SSSD.

**4.52. *The Committee recommends that the MOE and schools boards collaborate and communicate about policies to be implemented inclusive of the strategies to be used to maximise implementation success and determination of the schools' capacity in terms***

*of resources and training to enact policies. Additionally, in order to facilitate this communication and collaboration, the Committee further recommends that the MOE consider conducting regular strategic meetings (before each school term) with these stakeholders where ideas and information are shared, with a focus on improving and enriching student learning beyond student pass rates.*

The MoE recognises the merits of this recommendation.

- 4.53.** *The Committee recommends that the MOE collaborate with the Catholic Education Board of Management to review the Board's Quality Assurance Programme (see item 3.33) to consider its implementation in public and government assisted schools in Trinidad and Tobago.*

The MoE acknowledges this recommendation. It should be noted, however, that the MoE, holds regularly scheduled meetings with the CEMB and other Denominational Boards of Education, to discuss areas for the educational advancement.



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**Draft Education Policy Paper 2017 - 2022**

Effective Governance and Administration  
Management and Administration: Public Awareness, Legislation

**ISSUES IDENTIFIED**

- Lack of public awareness regarding the purpose of ECCE, its curriculum and areas of learning;
- Lack of alignment between teacher preparation and MOE expectations;
- No current legislation to mandate the implementation of the National Curriculum Guide or Standards document in the ECCE Sector; and
- Insufficient data regarding: a) the level of student readiness to transition to primary level, and b) centres' adherence to National Curriculum Guide.

**POLICY STATEMENT**

The Ministry of Education will:

- Develop a qualification framework to address professional preparation and development for ECCE staff;
- Pursue rigorous data collection which give greater insight into the sector through the creation of a quality assurance framework;
- Ensure that internal as well as external stakeholders are aware of the benefits and structure of ECCE provisions to students through improved stakeholder engagement and a publicity campaign;
- ***Facilitate the development of legislation to ensure uniformity of practices as well as governance of private centres to ensure equity of ECCE, as part of the reform of overarching Education Act; and***
- Ensure that the National Standards for regulating Early Childhood Services are supported by enabling legislation.

TSC/F/WKS: October 2013

## The Performance Management and Appraisal Process

Mr Alwyn Corriel

Historically, teachers have been appraised by an instrument known as the Confidential Staff Report. While progressive organisations, especially in the private sector, have implemented an objective and effective appraisal system, the Teaching Service remains anchored in an archaic system which is subjective, lacks transparency and does not provide an evidential basis for the rating given. The rating 'satisfactory' is linked to a teacher's annual increment. The Confidential Staff Report does not provide an analysis which could be used in making decisions about a teacher's confirmation, development, potential or current performance. A more effective system is needed.

Recently, the Ministry of Education (MOE) and TTUTA reached agreement on the introduction of a potentially robust performance management system which is due to be implemented by January 01, 2014. This system, known as the Performance Management and Appraisal Process (PMAP) is described in this article.

This article presents PMAP as an objective and effective appraisal system with a transparent and collaborative process. It was developed in 2005 but for reasons unknown, there was no sustained drive to secure its implementation.

Consequently the Confidential Staff Report is still in place. PMAP embraces the main positions in the school system – Principal, Vice Principal, Senior Teacher, Head of Department, Dean and Teacher. The focus will be on the Principal since minimal changes are required to the form.

The structure of the system consists of five major components: the concept of performance appraisal, job objectives, performance standards, job behaviour assessment and human resource development initiatives. Details are provided hereunder in respect of the final four of the major components as these represent a radical departure from the present system.

The concept of performance appraisal focuses on, inter alia, the purpose of appraisal, the weaknesses of the Confidential Staff Report and the attributes of an effective PMAP. Objectives are written as output performance areas derived from the job description. For the position of Principal, they are as follows:

1. **To lead and manage the performance of staff in the school** (Example of performance standard: Staff meetings are held to discuss matters impacting the school are held at least once per month)
2. **To implement the approved school curriculum in compliance with all policies, guidelines and instructions issued by Ministry of Education.** (Example of performance standard - Report books are reviewed and approved each term)
3. **To prepare and submit reports on the performance of the school and on any other matters impacting the functioning of the school.** (Example of performance standard: An Assessment Report reviewing the school's overall performance and its success in achieving its goals is prepared and submitted to MOE through the District Office by the fourth week in the first term of the following year)
4. **To provide efficient and effective management of the day-to-day operations of the school, including the use of existing resources, and the development and maintenance of a safe and disciplined work environment.** (Example of performance standard: Arrangements are made by Administration for staff involved in co-curricular activities within the first month of the new school term)
5. **To promote the interests of the school and its members, through collaboration with**



## **Curriculum Planning and Development Division Training**

### **English Language Arts (ELA):**

The Reading Officers of the CPDD conducted reading assessment in October of 2021 which gave data reflective of the Literacy levels of students in the identified schools. These will be used to plan for targeted support needed by the schools as evidenced by the data.

### **Mathematics/Numeracy:**

The Mathematics unit addresses numeracy challenges of primary and secondary students as follows:

- The use of diagnostic tests and other formative diagnostics strategies for assessment of students' numeracy proficiency, identification of students with challenges and support with remediation strategies. Reference is made to the following materials prepared and disseminated to all schools:
- Diagnostic tests for Infant Two to Standard Five in primary and Forms One to Three in secondary
- Summary Report on Diagnosis and Remediation at Primary and Lower Secondary: Mathematics
- Optimal Learning Guidelines for primary and secondary schools which comprise such formative diagnostic strategies for Mathematics/Numeracy
- Recommended Remediation Strategies in Mathematics for teachers and parents of primary and secondary schools
- The Mathematics Unit continues to promote the use of student-centred approaches to mathematical instruction inclusive of the Concrete-Pictorial-Abstract (CPA) approach, necessary for deep conceptual understanding and the application of higher order thinking skills such as problem solving, reasoning and critical thinking. Adaptation of the CPA approach is recommended for online delivery through teacher demonstrations, use of videos etc.
- The development of literacy in Mathematics is necessary for conceptual development, application of skills and higher order thinking and problem solving. Communication using appropriate mathematical vocabulary is encouraged in

classroom settings, with an emphasis on language development from the early years onward as outlined in mathematics primary and secondary curricula

- Further training of officers and school personnel is required for mathematical instruction in an online environment including the use of virtual platforms and applications. This is facilitated by the teacher training division.

### **Visual and Performing Arts:**

The Visual and Performing Arts continually provide training to teachers and Heads of Department in the disciplines of Dance, Drama, Music and Visual Arts. In addition, teachers are trained in the integration of the arts as well as integration of arts and technology.

One such completed training is the Integrated Arts and Technology Project, which goal is to develop a symbiotic relationship between the Arts and technology, and the core curricular subjects, with an aim to improve student engagement and achievement. The project seeks to leverage on the strategies used in both Integrated Arts as well as in the building of ICT competencies to assist in improving the academic performance of students through teacher delivery of content in curriculum areas such as English Language Arts, Mathematics and Science. Teacher training in the project facilitated capacity-building and empowerment of teachers to provide an environment to express creativity and innovation through the Arts and the use of Technology. Following are details of training completed:

#### **Workshop dates:**

- **January 15<sup>th</sup> - January 26<sup>th</sup> 2018** - Music and English Language Arts (ELA) Teachers

**Skill Developed:** Integration of Music in ELA and the integration of ELA in Music. Development of Integrated lessons

**Resources Created:** CD with Demonstration Lesson in Music and ELA integration

- **18<sup>th</sup> March - 29<sup>th</sup> March 2019** - Dance, Science and Mathematics teachers

**Skill Developed:** Integration of Dance in Science and Mathematics and the integration of Science and Mathematics in Dance. Development of Integrated lessons.

**Resources Created:** Videos and pictures taken during sessions

**Professional Learning Community:** Edmodo.com was the website used. Teachers were provided with the opportunity to collaborate and share their ideas online.

**Marketing:** Team appeared on TV6

- **20<sup>th</sup> May - 30<sup>th</sup> May 2019 - Dance, Science and Mathematics Teachers Skill Developed:** Integration of Dance in Science and Mathematics and the integration of Science and Mathematics in Dance. Development of Integrated lessons.

**Resources Created:** Videos and pictures taken during sessions

**Professional Learning Community:** Edmodo.com was the website used. Teachers were provided with the opportunity to collaborate and share their ideas online.

- **4<sup>th</sup> Nov to 15<sup>th</sup> November 2019 - Dance in Science and Mathematics**

**Skill Developed:** Integration of Dance in Science and Mathematics and the integration of Science and Mathematics in Dance. Development of Integrated lessons.

**Resources Created:** Videos and pictures taken during sessions

**Professional Learning Community:** Edmodo.com was the website used. Teachers were provided with the opportunity to collaborate and share their ideas online.

**Marketing:** Team appeared on TV6 and TTT

### **Information and Communications Technology**

The use of ICT for classroom instruction simultaneously supports student acquisition of ICT competencies and skills and student learning. Teacher training in ICT for online and face-to-face instruction has been made available to all educators.

There are varieties of ICT productivity tools, (word processing, spreadsheets, and presentation software) that students use in class and to complete assignments. Online tools assist in the creation of blogs for communicating ideas and sharing observations.

The use of Web Quests for researching topics across the curriculum is a strategy that is being used that incorporates online research and internet use.

Teachers' exposure to a variety of ICT tools especially over the last two years enables them to determine which tools can be used effectively to teach areas of the curriculum and at the same time build the information technology skills of students.

### **Technical Vocational Education and Training**

Workshops for teachers and Heads of Department in the TVET and Technology Education subject areas. Training for the following is scheduled as required:

- Teachers trained as Assessor – for the effective implementation of CVQ subjects in schools.
- Teachers trained as Internal Verifiers - to strengthen the quality assurance process required for the effective implementation of CVQ in schools.
- Professional Development workshops on
  - the application of competency-based approaches to teaching
  - the recognitions of social factors and impairments that may impede students' progress.



**School Data Collection System**

**Student Management System**

