



TEACHING SERVICE COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT 2020

Service Commissions Department

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
MEMBERSHIP	4
Membership Profile	5
OVERVIEW	8
Meetings	9
Appointments 2020	10
Appointments- Primary and Secondary	10
Appointments- Promotions-Administrative-Delinked Offices	13
Appointments- Other Activities	16
Discipline	17
Stakeholders	19
Challenges	20
Acknowledgements	22

INTRODUCTION

This is the report of the Teaching Service Commission (TSC) for the period 1st January 2020 to 31st December 2020. The Teaching Service Commission (TSC) was established under the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (Section 124) and its mandate is stated in Section 125 thereof:

Subject to the provisions of this Constitution, power to appoint persons to hold or act in public offices in the Teaching Service established under the Education Act, including power to make appointments on promotions and transfer and to confirm appointments, and to remove and exercise disciplinary control over persons holding or acting in such offices and to enforce standards of conduct on such officers shall vest in the Teaching Service Commission.

In 2020, the Commission continued to strive to ensure equity and fair play in exercising its constitutional functions and, in so doing recognized the need to maintain effective channels of communication with all its stakeholders.

MEMBERSHIP

The Teaching Service Commission (TSC) comprises a Chairman and not more than four other members. The members of the Commission are appointed for a three-year term by the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, after consultation with the Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition. During the year 2020, a new Commission was sworn in on 6th October 2020 replacing Dr. Fazal Ali, Chairman, Mrs. Joanne Joseph Hannays, Mr. Alan Noreiga and Mrs. Anya Alcazar. Mrs. Elizabeth Crouch and Dr. Martha Des Vignes who were already a part of the outgoing Commission would continue serving with the other three members. The members of the Commission are:

Mrs. Elizabeth Crouch	-	Chairman
Dr. Martha C. Des Vignes	-	Member
Dr. Olabisi Kuboni	-	Member
Mrs. Claire Brathwaite-Alexander	-	Member
Mr. Inshan Mohamed	-	Member

The Executive Director, Human Resource Management, Teaching Service Commission (TSC) represents the Director of Personnel Administration (DPA) at the meetings of the Teaching Service Commission and presides over the Secretariat which provides administrative and advisory services that enable the TSC to effectively discharge its mandate.

THE TEACHING SERVICE COMMISSION 2020

Profile of Mrs. Elizabeth Crouch



Mrs. Elizabeth Crouch is an educator with forty-nine (49) years working experience in education with twenty-nine (29) of those as working experience as Principal at both the primary and secondary levels. She is a former Principal of St Joseph's Convent, Port of Spain. Mrs. Crouch was the founder of the School Leadership Center of Trinidad and Tobago and its President from 2000-2020. Mrs. Crouch was awarded the TT Public Service Medal of Merit (Gold) in 2007 and the Excellence in Education Award, Ministry of Education in 2012. She is a graduate of Hollins College, USA, with a B.A (Honors)

History; the University of the West Indies with a Diploma in Education and the University of Toronto, with a Master's in Education.

Profile of Dr. Martha Des Vignes



Dr. Des Vignes has been an educator in higher education as well as an attorney-at-law for over 22 years. She is a Senior Tutor II and the Course Director for Civil Procedure and Practice I at the Hugh Wooding Law School where she facilitates the practical training on procedure and practice in civil matters in Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean States. Dr. Des Vignes also possesses a Ph.D. and a MSc. Degree in Conflict Analysis and Resolution from Nova Southeastern University, Florida with a concentration in organizational conflict, school conflict and conflict in health care. She is a certified mediator in civil and family matters as well as is an experienced facilitator and trainer. Dr. Des Vignes has also served as a member of the Mediation Board of Trinidad and Tobago for two terms.

Profile of Dr. Olabisi Kuboni



Dr. Olabisi Kuboni is a retired Senior Lecturer of the University of the West Indies. Her last position in the University was as Head of the Open Campus' Graduate Programmes Department. In that capacity, she functioned as manager of student support and instructional design services. Earlier in her professional life Dr. Kuboni served as Educational Technologist in the School of Education, UWI St. Augustine, and before that, she taught Modern Languages at the secondary level. In December 2013, she was conferred the title of Honorary Fellow of the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) for her contribution to the advancement of open and distance learning in the Caribbean. Dr. Kuboni is the holder of a Ph.D. from the Open University United Kingdom.

Profile of Mrs. Claire Braithwaite-Alexander



Claire Braithwaite-Alexander has served in education for her entire working life and has functioned at all levels of the system. Her teaching career at the secondary level spanned thirty-five (35) years at the Bishop's High School, Tobago where she served as Principal for the last eight (8) years of her career. She served on the Methodist School Board of Management (primary schools) for two decades. In 2000, she took time off from the classroom to serve as Curriculum Development Coordinator for the Methodist Church in the South Caribbean District. She was also the District's Editor-in-Chief, coordinating the production of Sunday school materials written by Caribbean people. As Coordinator of the School Supervision Unit at the Division of Education (Tobago House of Assembly) she led the development of the fledging Early Childhood Care and Education unit. She has also functioned as part time lecturer at tertiary institutions. Mrs. Braithwaite-Alexander is the holder of a BA English, a Diploma in Education, a Post Graduate Diploma in Library Science (U.W.I) and a Master's in Education (Administration and Policy) at the University of Western Ontario.

Profile of Mr. Inshan Mohamed



Mr. Inshan Mohamed has over twenty-five (25) years working experience at senior managerial levels in the public and private sectors. He previously held the position of Director in the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services for ten (10) years. He is currently a Managing Director and serves as Chairman and Executive member of several ASJA Committees. He has earned the title of Haji having performed the Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca. He is a graduate of the UWI, St. Augustine with a BSc. (Hons) Double Major in Economics and Management Studies. He also pursued his MSc. in Economics and was a former Tutor of the UWI, Department of Economics. He previously functioned as a Lecturer at Cipriani College of Labour and Co-operative Studies.

OVERVIEW

From October 2020, the Commission developed 8 strategic goals as follows:

Goal	Goal	Goal	Goal	Goal
<p>Goal One: Complete the appointment of HODs into 349 vacancies after a seven year hiatus- now urgently required in view of the disruptions to the school year caused by the COVID 19 pandemic.</p>	<p>Goal Two: Begin the selection process of appointing Deans</p>	<p>Goal Three: Begin disciplinary action on regularity and punctuality for 2017 and 2018. There are more than 100 officers, each with over 1000 minutes late for the period.</p>	<p>Goal Four: Implement virtual tribunals for matters of misconduct.</p>	<p>Goal Five: Meet quarterly with the MOE regarding matters including the issue of a moratorium on applications in subject areas of glut; on transfers and on confirmations.</p>

Goal	Goal	Goal
<p>Goal Six: Revive the digitalization of the establishment books which had fallen into abeyance since 2015. At present all staff has been retrained in its use.</p>	<p>Goal Seven: Produce a quarterly e newsletter with a view to providing information and education to teachers in the country.</p>	<p>Goal Eight: Develop strong relationships with key stakeholders including Boards, Associations and TTUTA.</p>

*“The secret of change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new.”
Socrates*

MEETINGS

During the year 2020, the Commission held nineteen (19) statutory meetings and one (1) Special Meeting as illustrated in Table 1. At statutory meetings, the Commission considers and decides upon Notes which are prepared by the Secretariat with respect to the Commission’s constitutional powers: appointments (including acting and temporary), promotions, transfers, confirmations and disciplinary matters. The decisions of the Commission at its meetings are recorded in Minutes which are confirmed at its subsequent meeting and form part of its permanent records.

Table 1
Statutory and Special Meetings during the Period 2020

Year	No. of Statutory Meetings	No. of Special Meetings
2020	19	1

The Commission would have had an estimate of 23 Statutory Meetings annually but had 19 instead because of Covid-19 constraints. Despite this, the Commission continues to work towards building closer relationships with its key stakeholder groups.

APPOINTMENTS

Recruitment of Primary School Teachers

The recruitment and selection system for entry level primary school teachers is delegated to the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education and the Administrator, Division of Education, Innovation and Energy, Tobago House of Assembly. The process involves the following:

- ✚ The Ministry of Education and the Division of Education, Innovation and Energy, Tobago House of Assembly accept unsolicited applications from persons wishing to enter the Primary School system. An individual who is registered as a Teacher may apply to the Ministry of Education and the Division of Education, Innovation and Energy, Tobago House of Assembly for the position of Teacher in a primary school.
- ✚ The Ministry of Education and the Division of Education, Innovation and Energy, Tobago House of Assembly assess the application to determine whether the individual meets the stated criteria, that is, five (5) GCE 'O' Level/CXC subjects (General Proficiency level I or II) including English Language, Mathematics and Science for an Assistant Teacher (Primary) and the additional certification in teaching as evidenced by the possession of a Teacher's Diploma or equivalent for Teacher I (Primary).
- ✚ The Ministry of Education and the Division of Education, Innovation and Energy, Tobago House of Assembly conduct interviews using a structured instrument which was designed by the Commission, to identify candidates who meet the requirements to determine their suitability to teach in a primary school.
- ✚ Successful candidates are placed on an Order-of-Merit list (OML) established by the Commission for future placements when vacant offices arise. An Order-of-Merit List is valid for a period of two years.

Table 2 illustrates the number of candidates who were successful at interviews for offices of Teachers (Primary).

Table 2
Number of Persons Interviewed and Successful for Offices of
Assistant Teacher (Primary) and Teacher I (Primary)

Year	No. of Persons Interviewed	Successful candidates placed on OML
2020	219	145

Recruitment of Secondary School Teachers

The existing recruitment and selection process for entry level secondary school teachers include the following:

- ✚ An individual who is registered as a Teacher applies to the Ministry of Education and Division of Education, Innovation and Energy, Tobago House of Assembly for the position of Teacher in a secondary school.
- ✚ The Ministry of Education and the Division of Education, Innovation and Energy, Tobago House of Assembly through their Curriculum Division assess the applicant and certify him/her as being competent to teach at a particular level. This certification may be at either the level of a Teacher I, II or III or Technical Vocational Teacher I to IV.
- ✚ The applicant's file/assessment is then sent to the Commission where an interview is conducted to ascertain their suitability and fitness for an appointment.
- ✚ If the applicant is successful at the interview, his/her name is placed on an Order- of-Merit List and sent to the Ministry of Education or the Division of Education, Innovation and Energy, Tobago House of Assembly, for subsequent placement in a secondary school when such a vacancy may arise.

For the office of Teacher in Secondary Schools, during the period 1st January 2020 to 31st December 2020 a total of one hundred (100) persons were interviewed in the various subject areas with sixty-eight (68) persons being placed on Order-of-Merit Lists as follows:

Table 3

Number of persons Interviewed and successful for the office of
Secondary School teachers

Year	No. of Persons Interviewed	Successful candidates placed on OML
2020	100	68

Table 4

Persons interviewed in various subject areas for the year 2020

No.	SUBJECT	Number of persons interviewed
1	MATHEMATICS	6
2	ENGLISH	4
3	POB/POA/MOB/ACCTS	9
4	NATURAL SCIENCES	10
5	COMPUTER SCIENCE/I.T	8
6	SOCIAL STUDIES	3
7	AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE	4
8	MUSIC	7
9	GEOGRAPHY	5
10	HOME ECONOMICS	12
11	PHYSICAL EDUCATION	6
12	HISTORY	5
13	ECONOMICS	5
14	VISUAL ARTS	5
15	SPANISH	8
16	DANCE DRAMA, THEATRE ARTS	3
	TOTAL	100

Appointments/Promotions - Administrative Offices-Delinked Offices

Appointments /Promotions of all persons to the Teaching Service are made on the basis of merit. Merit-based appointments/promotions continue to play an essential role in ensuring that applicants are hired, and can advance, based solely on their abilities. Applicants must first satisfy the stipulated requirements of the respective office before they are interviewed for suitability. The TSC has designed and implemented assessment instruments/tools for each position for which it interviews. The instruments are aligned with roles and responsibilities required of the positions and the attributes the potential candidate should possess. Once a candidate is successfully assessed and interviewed he/she is placed on an Order-of-Merit List from which he/she can be appointed or promoted.

The following Table show the total number of Teachers interviewed for appointments/promotions to Administrative offices in secondary and primary schools during the period 2020.

Table 5

Summary of Promotional Interviews for Administrative Offices in Secondary and Primary Schools during the year 2020

Office	No. of candidates interviewed	No. of offices filled
Principal (Primary)	8	7

The Administrative offices in the Teaching Service are as follows: -

Secondary Schools:

- ✚ Principal (Secondary); Vice Principal (Secondary); Head of Department (Secondary) and Dean (Secondary).

Primary Schools

- ✚ Principal (Primary); Vice Principal (Primary); Head of Department (Primary); Senior Teacher (Primary).

De-linked offices in the Teaching/Education Sector

The delinked offices in the Teaching/Education sector are as follows

- | | |
|---|---|
| ✚ Chief Education Officer | ✚ Curriculum Coordinator |
| ✚ Director of Curriculum Development | ✚ Curriculum Officer |
| ✚ Director, Educational Planning | ✚ Guidance Supervisor |
| ✚ Director of School Supervision | ✚ Guidance Officer II |
| ✚ Director Educational Research and Evaluation | ✚ Guidance Officer I |
| ✚ Director of Educational Services | ✚ Technical/ Vocational Education Supervisor I-II |
| ✚ Director Operations | ✚ School Supervisor III |
| ✚ Chief Examiner | ✚ School Supervisor II |
| ✚ Assistant Director, Educational Research and Evaluation | ✚ School Supervisor I |
| ✚ Education Facilities Planner | ✚ School Supervisor I (Technical) |
| ✚ Educational Testing Officer II | ✚ Supervisor Technical Teacher Training |
| ✚ Educational Testing Officer I | ✚ Supervisor of School Publications |
| ✚ Education Research Officer | ✚ Supervisor School Broadcasting |
| ✚ Evaluation Officer | ✚ School Publication Assistant |
| ✚ Education Broadcasting Officer II | ✚ Education Extension Officer I - II |
| ✚ Education Broadcasting Officer I | ✚ Education Liaison Officer I - II |

Table 6

Promotions/Appointments made to offices in the Teaching Service and De-Linked Offices

Office	Offices filled in 2020
Principal (Secondary)	1
Vice Principal (Secondary)	5
Principal (Primary)	52
Dean (Secondary)	1
Head of Department (Secondary)	2
Head of Department (Primary)	11
Senior Teacher (Primary)	19
Teacher III (Secondary)	212
Teacher II (Secondary)	37
Teacher I (Secondary)	5
Teacher I (Primary)	116
Technical Vocational Teacher I	5
Technical Vocational Teacher II	52
Technical Vocational Teacher III	3
Technical Vocational Teacher IV	7
Senior Special Education Teacher	2
Special Education Teacher II	1
Special Education Teacher I	1
Sub Total	532
DE-LINKED OFFICES	
Director of Curriculum Development	1
Curriculum Officer	2
Total	535

Other Activities Related to Appointments

During the reporting period, the Commission also considered and approved acting and temporary appointments, confirmation of appointments and transfers of other positions which impact on the efficiency of the Teaching Service. See details below.

Table 7
Other Activities Related to Appointments

Other Activities Related to Appointments	2020
Acting	1057
Temporary	2004
Confirmation	403
Transfers	207

DISCIPLINE

The disciplinary process in the Teaching Service is guided by Regulations 84 - 114 of the Public Service Commission Regulations as adopted by the Teaching Service Commission and the Education (Teaching Service) Regulations: Part VIII, Code of Conduct. Additionally, the Commission is cognizant of the constitutional provisions **“to remove and exercise disciplinary control over persons holding or acting in such offices and to enforce standards of conduct of such officers...”**.

During the reporting period, the total number of disciplinary matters which were referred to the Commission for its attention are as follows:

Table 8
Total numbers of Disciplinary Matters

Year	No. of Matters
2020	148

The Commission notes that there are numerous issues in effectively disposing of disciplinary matters such as the length of time it takes for court charges to be determined, the length of time it takes for matters to reach the stage of hearing before the Disciplinary Tribunals and the non-appearance of witnesses before Disciplinary Tribunals. Notwithstanding these issues, the Commission continues to work on improving the standards of discipline within our nation’s schools. Indeed, the Commission transitioned to virtual tribunals in order to manage the hearing of all disciplinary matters.

Further, the Commission is giving increased attention to those disciplinary matters involving the abuse of children including sexual abuse such as sexual grooming, touching and the sharing of pornographic material. The Commission is equally attentive to the regularity and punctuality records of teachers especially in cases where officers accumulate more than 4000 minutes late annually.

See Table 09 for a breakdown of disciplinary matters for the period 2020

Table 09
Breakdown of Disciplinary Matters

CATEGORY	NO. OF MATTERS BEFORE THE COMMISSION 2020
Court Charges	13
Disciplinary Tribunals	37
Abandonments	25
Allegations of Misconduct	70
High Court Matters	03
Total	148



STAKEHOLDERS

The Commission (TSC) continued its close relationships with all major stakeholders. The Commission is of the view that all stakeholders in the education system should be given an audience to find areas of commonality in approaches, ideas, policies and practices to foster better working relationships and also to attain effective solutions to the existing problems.

During the year 2020, the Commission met with the undermentioned stakeholders to discuss various issues via MS Teams: -

- Minister of Education and staff of the Ministry. The Commission shared its Strategic goals with the Ministry and undertook to work collaboratively with the MOE on matters of staffing, transfers, a moratorium on unsolicited applications and discipline.
- Staff of the Division of Education, Innovation and Energy, Tobago House of Assembly. The Commission discussed with the THA the need to reconcile the secondary schools establishments in Tobago.
- Catholic Education Board of Management. The Commission discussed staffing and promotion issues being experienced by the Board and in particular the issue of Regulation 26 as it affects promotions.



CHALLENGES

During the period under review, the Commission was faced with the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. While the pandemic touched nearly every industry, the teaching sector experienced some unique challenges from COVID-19, which will likely continue well into 2021 and beyond. With technology playing such a pivotal role in most sectors, the crisis helped the acceleration of digital transformation, as the Teaching Service had to find digital solutions to cope with its remote working and business operations. The pandemic has made clear that the more technologically advanced we are as an organization, the easier it will be to stay on course. Now that the world is more uncertain, it is evident that what is required is a Teaching Service that effectively navigates the challenges posed by uncertainty and partners with its stakeholders to work towards a common goal.

i. Issues affecting Staff

The Secretariat staff having to rotate for months caused a decline in workdays which presented some challenges. However, the staff was able to produce substantially despite the climate.

ii. Budgetary Allocation

The Commission’s budgetary allocation has been significantly reduced over the past years. As a result of the reduced allocations, the Commission has had to review its plans and programmes.

Table 10
Budgetary Allocation

Year	<u>Fees:</u> (used for Legal fees, Stipend for Interview Panels)	<u>Other Contracted Services:</u> (used for assessments or psychometric testing and other services)	<u>Promotion Publicity and Printing</u> (used for press releases, advertisements, Annual Reports)	<u>Hosting of Conferences, Seminars and other Functions:</u> (used for hosting conferences, retreats and workshops)
2019-2020	\$115,000	\$3,000	\$10,000	\$5,000

RESPONSES TO THE CHALLENGES

1. The Commission collaborated closely with the Ministry of Education in order to achieve its goal of beginning the interview process for Heads of Department and Deans in the secondary sector. The Commission worked with the Ministry on an online application process, and subsequent to screening 827 applications, continued to work with the Ministry to engage for the very first time, school principals as part of the interviewing process. This collaboration enabled the Commission to meet the challenge brought about by the severe budgetary constraints of 2020.
2. The Commission transitioned to virtual tribunals in order to meet the demands of the protocols of physical distancing associated with the COVID pandemic.
3. The Commission revitalized the digitalization of the establishment books which had fallen into abeyance since 2015. A process of training and retraining of officers began in the teaching application process.
4. The Commission developed a communications policy in order to better communicate with its stakeholders at the time of global pandemic when physical distancing prevented meetings and visits. The goal included the production of a quarterly e-newsletter.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In conclusion, for their valuable assistance during the year under review, the Commission wishes to express its gratitude to:

- The former members of the Commission
- The Director of Personnel Administration, Mrs. Debra Parkinson (retired) and Mr Corey Harrison (current)
- The staff of the Teaching Service Commission Secretariat
- The stakeholders who continue to contribute to the development of education in Trinidad and Tobago.

