



SERVICE COMMISSIONS DEPARTMENT

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In replying, the above number and
date of this letter should be quoted.\

26th March, 2018

Keisha Peterkin
Secretary to the Committee
Parliament of the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago
G-7 Tower D
Port of Spain International Waterfront Centre
1A Wrightson Road, Port of Spain,
Trinidad

Dear Madam

**Sixth Report of the Joint Select Committee on Local Authorities, Service Commissions and
Statutory Authorities (including the THA) on an Inquiry into the Efficiency and
Effectiveness of the Teaching Service Commission (TSC)**

Reference is made to your correspondence of 19th February, 2018.

The following comments are submitted in response to the recommendations made in the Sixth Report:-

- i. ***Both the MoE and Service Commissions Department should publish a list of vacancies in the teaching service on their websites. This list should detail the following:***
 - a) ***Title of the position***
 - b) ***the subject area to be taught;***
 - c) ***the corresponding qualifications required; and***
 - d) ***the number of positions available for each subject area.***

The database should ideally be updated on a weekly or monthly basis. Social media platforms should be utilized where possible.

The Service Commissions Department will engage the Ministry of Education in discussion on this recommendation to examine the possibilities.

- ii. *The TSC should take all necessary action to exercise its disciplinary powers vested in it by Section 125 of the constitution. The exercise of such power must be moderated by the necessary legal advice so as to avoid frequent judicial reviews and other forms of legal action on the part of aggrieved teachers.*

The Teaching Service Commission agrees with this recommendation and wishes to reiterate that all decisions made on matters of in the exercise of its disciplinary powers are done based on legal advice.

- iii. *The establishment of a structured and reliable one-person tribunal system. Screening and selecting appropriate persons to serve on these tribunals should be done methodically and in collaboration with the Ministry of Education.*

The introduction of a one-man tribunal has been under the consideration of the Commission for some time.

In this regard, in its draft Delegation Order, the Commission intends to delegate some disciplinary powers, to the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education and the Administrator, with the responsibility for Education in the Tobago House of Assembly. As part of the delegated powers delegated, the Permanent Secretary and the Administrator will be given the authority and will have jurisdiction to hear and determine the undermentioned acts of misconduct or indiscipline being breaches of the Education (Teaching Service) Regulations in respect of offices in the Teaching Service:

- Failure to perform required lawful duties in a proper manner.
- Contravention of the Regulations.
- Wilful disobedience or disregard of a lawful order.
- Performs the required duties in a negligent manner.
- Absence without leave.
- Habitually Irregular in arrival/departure from office.
- Use of property or facilities without authority.

- iv. *The MoE should consider implementing an electronic swipe system in all schools as more efficient means of recording the arrival and departure times of school officials. Even more feasible will be the implementation of a time recorder with the technology to flag teachers who have crossed the 180 minutes late trigger immediately.*

The Commission will support any system, technological or otherwise, that is likely to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of education delivery in Trinidad and Tobago.

- v. *That the TSC collaborate with the MoE to identify cost effective strategies for providing Primary and Secondary School Principals training in the areas of Leadership and Risk Management.*

The Commission will engage the Ministry of Education in discussion on this recommendation.

- vi. *The MoE provide mandatory training for Principals to be able to effectively perform the procedures outlined in the Progressive Discipline Model. This would ensure that they can be held accountable for their action/inaction.*

The Commission agrees with this recommendation.

- vii. *Arguably, the Concordat should not discriminate against qualified persons who are not being hired as a result of not being of a school's religious persuasion.*

The Commission agrees with this recommendation and acknowledges that a review of the existing framework of the Concordat will have be addressed in this regard.

- viii. *The TSC and the DPA must focus on boosting internal efficiencies with a view to optimizing the output of existing staff.*

The Service Commissions Department continues to work closely with the Ministry of Public Administration (Public Management Consulting Division) towards improving its internal systems and procedures.

Notwithstanding this however, for the year 2017 the Commission and its Secretariat adopted new approaches and in some instances, strengthened its processes with respect to its internal efficiencies. These included; greater accountabilities, setting achievable targets, employee engagement, recognition and reward initiatives.

Based on these initiatives, overall output in the functional areas of the Commission's decision-making was increased. To illustrate, the following Table shows the number of fillings of vacant offices (appointments and promotions) approved by the Commission in 2017, as compared to the previous years starting with year 2007.

2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
1703	934	844	482	502	729	831	572	349	321	1048

The Commission will strive to continue to build on these achievement in 2018 and beyond.

- ix. ***The establishment of a designated quarterly meeting date for meetings between the TSC and MoE. Robust and efficient inter-agency collaboration and communication is essential for the operational efficiency of both parties.***

The senior Human Resource staff of the Commission's Secretariat and the Ministry's Human Resource Unit will regularly meet to discuss issues and find solution to existing problems. The Commission also has identified other senior technical officers of the Ministry of Education, for example, the Chief Education Officer and Director of Schools Supervision, to meet with the Commission on an ongoing basis. The Commission therefore, agrees with this recommendation.

- x. ***The Ministry and the Commission should approach the amendment of the legislation as a special project and should adopt the commensurate project management strategies to ensure that the process is efficiently managed.***

The Commission will examine this recommendation. The Commission notes that the Ministry of Education has started the process of examining the Education Act with a view to amending it.

- xi. ***The TSC should focus on effectively executing its existing mandate before seeking to assume additional responsibilities.***

The Commission notes the Committee's recommendation and will re-examine its previous submission in this regard.

- xii. ***The delegation of powers and the decentralization of operations must be undertaken subject to a comprehensive feasibility analysis. Such an analysis must involve the assessment of the monitoring capacity of the TSC on one hand and the implementation capacity of the Ministry of Education on the other.***

The Service Commissions Department established its Monitoring and Oversight Unit in 2006 to monitor, audit and have general oversight of the powers which have been delegated by the Public Service Commission to Ministries and Departments. In this regard, the expansion of delegation to include the Teaching Service Commission will utilise the procedures, practices of the existing structures and the expertise of the Human Resource Advisers of the Service Commissions Department.

Additionally, the Teaching Service Commission has been working with the Ministry of Education to obtain the data necessary for the implementation of the delegated functions.

- xiii. ***The relevant stakeholders should jointly examine the feasibility of having the members of all Service Commissions serve on a full-time basis, as the current work arrangement for Commissioners is impractical and inefficient. Advancing this recommendation may require:***

- ☐ **an amendment to Section 126 of the Constitution;**
- ☐ **additional financial allocations for the compensation of commissioners for full-time duties.**

The Commission agrees with this recommendation. Further, it should be noted that the Personnel Department is currently conducting a Job Evaluation Exercise and Compensation Survey for offices within the purview of the Salaries Review Commission. The offices of Chairman and Member of the Teaching Service Commission are part of this exercise. Moreover, the Chairman, Teaching Service Commission was nominated by the Service Commissions Department to participate as a member of the Job Evaluation Committee to examine the preliminary evaluation of the benchmark offices.

The Commission awaits the outcome of this exercise.

- xiv. *Technical support and/or grant funding from international organisations should be fully explored as a means of improving the current state of ICT in the Service Commission's Department.*

The Commission notes that there are administrative and procedural steps that must be in place to receive such funding. In this regard, the Service Commissions Department Electronic Data Management System (EDMS) Project was initiated based on funding from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), through the Ministry of Public Administration's Public Sector Modernisation mandate. Funding is now provided under the Public Sector Investment Programme.

The Service Commissions Department will continue explore opportunities with the various agencies to improve and strengthen the current state of the organisation through all available mechanisms for same.

Yours sincerely



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Director of Personnel Administration (ay)