

# Table of Contents

	<b>Page No.</b>
<b>1.0 MEMBERSHIP</b>	2
<b>2.0 MEETINGS</b>	2
<b>3.0 OVERVIEW</b>	2
<b>3.1 Appointment to Administrative Offices</b>	2-3
<b>3.2 Strategic Plan</b>	4
<b>3.3 Selection Centre</b>	5
<b>3.4 Teaching Service Regulations</b>	5
<b>3.5 Relationships with Stakeholders</b>	6
<b>3.6 Other Initiatives</b>	6
<b>4.0 JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE OF PARLIAMENT</b>	7
<b>5.0 APPOINTMENTS</b>	8
<b>5.1 Administrative Offices</b>	8
<b>5.2 Secondary School Teachers</b>	8
<b>5.3 Primary School Teachers</b>	9
<b>5.4 Confirmation of Appointments</b>	9
<b>6.0 DISCIPLINE</b>	10-11
<b>7.0 OTHER MATTERS</b>	12
<b>8.0 IMPETUS FOR CHANGE</b>	12-13

## **1.0 MEMBERSHIP**

The following persons formed the Teaching Service Commission in the year 2005:

Mr. Leonard Birmingham	-	Chairman (up to August)
Ms. Hyacinth Guy	-	Chairman (from August)
Mr. Murtuza Baksh	-	Member (up to August)
Professor Barbara Ann Lalla	-	Member (up to August)
Dr. Dorrell Philip	-	Member
Dr. Anna Mahase	-	Member
Mr. Oliver Flax	-	Member (from August)
Mr. Zaffar Ali	-	Member (from August)

Dr. Dorrell Philip acted as Chairman to the Commission from June 12 to August 18 in the absence on leave of the Chairman. Mrs. Anna Karamsingh, Executive Director, Human Resource Management, Service Commissions Department, attended meetings as advisor to the Commission. Ms. Jennifer Mark, Mrs. Leslyn Ellis and Mrs. Everis De Freitas served as Secretary.

## **2.0 MEETINGS**

During the year 2005 the Commission held **35** statutory and special meetings and also met on **6** occasions with the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, and representatives of the Tobago House of Assembly, the Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers Association, the Association of Denominational School Boards and the National Parent Teachers Association. At its statutory meetings the Commission considered **1,132** Notes which were prepared by its Secretariat. Members of the Commission also participated in **162** promotional interviews for offices of Principal and Vice Principal in Primary and Secondary Schools.

## **3.0 OVERVIEW**

### **3.1 Appointment to Administrative Offices**

At the end of 2004 the most critical issue facing the Teaching Service Commission was the need to clear the backlog of administrative offices to be filled in the school system – Principal, Vice Principal, Dean, Head of Department and Senior Teacher – some **2,200** positions.

The Commission had recognized earlier that the existing arrangements were inadequate to deal with this matter. Moreover, as noted in the 2004 Report, there were further complications arising from the Memorandum of Understanding (Transitional Arrangements) between the Chief Personnel Officer (CPO) and the Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers Association (TTUTA). This Memorandum comprised provisions for granting retroactive waivers, in defined circumstances, for eligibility to the positions of Principal and Vice Principal. The transitional arrangements applied retroactively for a period of six years from 2000 January 01 to 2005 December 31. As a result, several advertised offices which were under consideration, had to be re-advertised in order to allow officers, who enjoyed the benefit of the waivers, the opportunity to apply. The administrative challenges inherent in managing the transitional arrangements were considerable. These challenges were further aggravated on receipt by the Commission of information that the CPO and TUTTA were engaged in negotiations for extending the life of the Transitional Arrangements, thereby frustrating the Commission from taking action on the filling of a number of offices of Principal and Vice Principal.

During the course of the year the Commission had found it necessary to hold a series of meetings with representatives of the Ministry of Education, the Chief Personnel Officer and the Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers Association to clarify the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding and its possible extension, and to prepare implementation guidelines to ensure consistency in the application of the waivers. Some of these matters remained unresolved by year's end.

In the meantime the Commission:

- Continued its interviews for the offices of Principal and Vice Principal, where possible, except when there were more than ten applicants for an office, in which case there was a short-listing stage conducted by a senior member of the Services Commission Department and a representative of the Ministry of Education. However, this short-listing stage was soon abandoned, following representations by the Association of Denominational Boards, and replaced by an interviewing panel comprising two members of the Teaching Service Commission and a representative of the Ministry of Education, with the final decision remaining with the full Commission.

- Established Selection Boards, comprising suitably qualified, experienced, recently retired and specifically trained professionals, commenced the interview of candidates for the offices of Dean, Head of Department and Senior Teacher, for report to the Commission.

The Commission had also given further consideration to outsourcing the entire interview process for administrative offices to a local consultancy firm but decided that this approach was not feasible at the time, given the need to ensure full transparency and accountability, as well as the inherent bureaucratic impediments to proceeding in the matter in a timely manner. This matter was revisited towards the end of the year during deliberations on the Strategic Plan.

### **3.2 Strategic Plan**

Following a settling-in period by its new members (which included the Chairman), the Commission and senior staff members of the Secretariat met in retreat in November when they reviewed their *raison d'être*, and formulated a Strategic Plan (2006 – 2008) for effective functioning of the Commission and for meeting its objectives in the light of its perceived vision, mission, philosophy and values.

The Commission identified the following areas of priority for 2006:

- Timely selection and appointment of persons to administrative offices in the Teaching Service
- Increased efficiency and productivity of the Secretariat to the Commission and in the office of the Director of Personnel Administration to better serve the needs of the Commission
- *Ab initio* involvement of the Commission in all disciplinary matters
- Regular meetings with all stakeholders to discuss and gain support for contemplated plans and programmes
- Development of a communication strategy aimed at all parties having an interest in the Teaching Service and the public at large
- Consultation with the other Service Commissions on matters of mutual concern aimed at improving ongoing administrative services.

### **3.3 Selection Centre**

With regard to the selection and appointment of persons to administrative offices, the Strategic Plan envisages that a project would be undertaken which would see the **2200** outstanding positions filled within twelve months. While it is necessary to undertake this activity on a project basis, it is expected that the Selection Centre would continue to function on a permanent basis and that, in future, similar functions performed by other Service Commissions might be undertaken there. Consideration would also be given to extending the scope of the Selection Centre to include psychological testing of candidates for all offices.

By the end of 2005 the Commission was engaged in an exercise to identify the resource requirements for the establishment of the Selection Centre, with a view to securing the necessary funding.

### **3.4 Teaching Service Regulations**

Some five years ago the Commission had decided that it would prepare its own set of Regulations to replace the Public Service Regulations under which its affairs have been regulated since its inception. A draft for the Administrative part of the regulations (i.e. excluding the Discipline aspect) was developed towards the end of 2004 with the following broad objectives:

- Take into account the current needs of the education system
- Simplify the regulations
- Promote decision making at the level of the school since we are in an era of school based management.

The draft was forwarded to the Chief Parliamentary Counsel in January 2005, and was discussed with the acting Deputy Chief Parliamentary Counsel in April 2005, following which further discussions on the draft were held in June 2005 with representatives of the following stakeholders:

- The Ministry of Education
- The Tobago House of Assembly
- The Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers Association

- The Association of Denominational Boards
- The National Parent Teachers' Association

Subsequently, following receipt of comments from stakeholders, these were collated and circulated to all parties. At this stage the membership of the Commission was reconstituted and the matter was revisited, with a view to finalization in 2006.

### **3.5 Relationships with Stakeholders**

The Commission also held ongoing meetings with its stakeholders on matters, not already referred to above, in order to exchange information, clarify issues, solicit support for contemplated actions and explore avenues for resolution of conflicts of a general and specific nature. These matters related to:

- The selection process and eligibility criteria for appointment to administrative positions
- Timely submission of probationary reports, annual staff reports and special reports
- The introduction of teachers' portfolios to assist in the selection of candidates for appointment to administrative positions
- Criteria for the establishment of Seniority Lists
- Disciplinary action.

### **3.6 Other Initiatives**

Other initiatives which the Commission took during the year included:

- The development of a Media Plan, including in particular
  - A quarterly publication, to be distributed to all schools, stakeholders and other interested parties; and
  - The development and production of outreach programmes, in partnership with the Ministry of Education, aimed at major stakeholders including Associations of Primary and Secondary School Principals.

However these initiatives were not pursued because of resource limitations in the Office of the Director of Personnel Administration.

- Examination of the internal operations of the TSC Secretariat, in the context of the agenda of TSC meetings, aimed at improving overall efficiency and productivity. This has so far resulted in a rationalization of agenda items through re-numbering of papers and streamlining the format of minutes to reduce bulk.
- The extent to which email service could be utilized within the TSC Secretariat to facilitate communication with members of the Commission and its various stakeholders, and so promote timely information flow and decision making. Some progress was made in this regard but more needs to be done.
- Pending satisfactory implementation of the Government's Integrated Human Resource Information System, and its ready availability to staff in the Secretariat, the extent to which in-house IT services could be developed to meet basic information needs to inform decision making. Discussions on this matter were ongoing at the end of 2005.

#### **4.0 JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE OF PARLIAMENT**

The Joint Select Committee (JSC) was appointed by Parliament under Section 66A of the Constitution “to consider and report on the operations of Municipal Corporations and Service Commissions, with the exception of the Judicial and Legal Service Commission” for the year 2002-2003.

The JSC held its first meeting in November 2002, and its first Report was presented to Parliament in June 2005. This report dealt with the composition of the JSC, its terms of reference, powers, working arrangements, discussions with the Statutory Authorities' Service Commission, and finally, the Teaching Service Commission, which was the main subject of the Report.

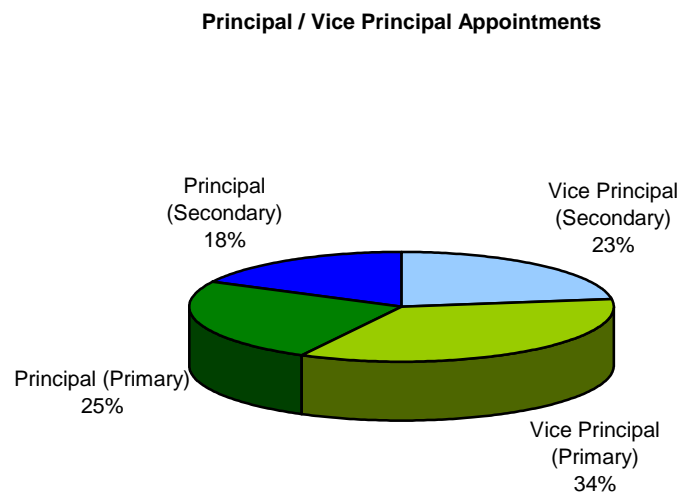
The Report of the JSC was discussed at a Special Meeting of the Commission in August 2005, and by the reconstituted Commission at its retreat in November 2005, during which all the findings, comments and recommendations of the Report were taken into account in the preparation of its Strategic Plan (2006 – 2008). By the end of the year the Commission had formulated a response for submission to the JSC.

## 5.0 APPOINTMENTS

### 5.1 Administrative Offices

A total of **57** appointments were made to the offices of Principal and Vice Principal (*see Figure 1 below*), and only **7** to the offices of Dean and Head of Department. The insignificance of this latter figure was a consequence of the need for the Commission to await resolution of an issue relating to eligibility for appointment.

*Figure 1*

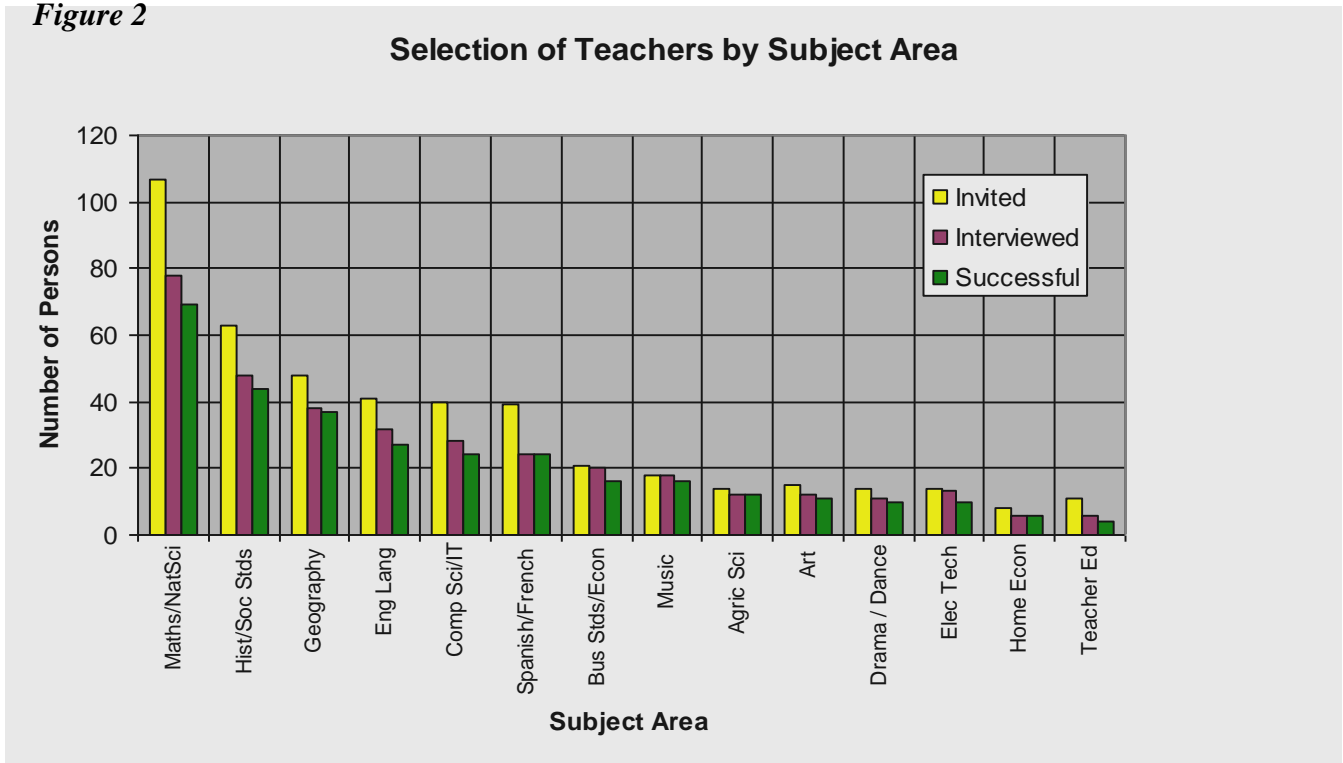


### 5.2 Secondary School Teachers

In 2005, a total of **453** persons were invited for interviews, by panels appointed by the Commission, to assess their suitability for appointment in the various subject areas; **352** attended the interviews and **310** were recommended by the panels, and approved by the Commission. Of the approved persons, **69 (22.3%)** were in Mathematics/Natural Sciences, **44 (14.2%)** in History/Social Studies, **37 (11.9%)** in Geography, **27 (8.7%)** in English Language, **24 (7.7%)** in Computer Science/Information Technology, **24 (7.7%)** in Spanish/French, **16 (5.2%)** in Business Studies/Accounts/Economics, **16 (5.2%)** in Music and **53 (17.1%)** in all the other areas. *Figure 2* below illustrates the detail



**Figure 2**



On the basis of the reports of the interviewing panels the Commission approved, and forwarded to the Ministry of Education, priority lists for appointment of subject specialists from which lists the Permanent Secretary had been delegated the authority to make temporary appointments not exceeding three months. Any further periods of temporary appointment are approved by the Chairman of the Commission under delegated authority.

### **5.3 Primary School Teachers**

Interviews for filling temporary appointments in primary schools are conducted by the Ministry of Education with the consent of the Commission. Orders of Merit Lists prepared by the Ministry are referred to the Commission for approval, and initial temporary appointments are made by the Ministry on the basis of these lists. Subject to availability of places at the Teachers Training Colleges, teachers holding temporary appointments must pursue a course of training and obtain the Teachers Diploma before they qualify for permanent appointment.

## **5.4 Confirmation of Appointment**

Permanent appointment of teachers is made by the Commission on the advice of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education. New appointees are required to serve a probationary periods of one year in addition to being medically fit. In 2005, the Commission confirmed the appointment of **561** teachers. Of continuing concern are the late submission of medical and probationary reports, and at times the absence of such reports, resulting in the tardy confirmation of appointments.

## **6.0 DISCIPLINE**

Disciplinary action against officers of the Teaching Service can be initiated by the Commission under two circumstances:

- On receipt by the Commission of a report from an investigating officer, appointed by the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education, that a prima facie case had been made out against the officer, in which case the Commission may decide to charge the officer and proceed to appoint a tribunal to hear the evidence and find the facts. The tribunal prepares a report for the Commission which then determines the matter and imposes such penalty as it sees fit
- When the Commission becomes aware of court charges against officers under its purview.

The concerns of the Commission at the inordinate delay in investigating allegations of disciplinary breach were highlighted in the 2004 Report. While continuing to address these concerns during the course of 2005, with some success, the Commission is of the view that the time has come for a complete review of the Disciplinary Regulations under which it currently operates, together with the establishment of new policies and procedures, to ensure that matters are concluded in a timely manner. In this regard the Commission is committed to drafting the instruments, in consultation with the relevant parties, in 2006.

The table below summarizes the status of disciplinary matters at the end of 2005. The following points are noteworthy:

- **18** charges were under consideration in 2005, comprising **11** brought forward from 2004 and **7** laid in 2005
- **8** charges were ongoing at the end of the year
- Of the **10** matters concluded, **5** resulted in dismissal of the charges, **2** in discharge under Section 71(1)(A) of the Summary Courts Act and **3** in guilty verdicts
- Of the **5** cases where the charges were not dismissed, the Commission dismissed **2** officers and reprimanded **3**.

**Status of Disciplinary Matters at end of 2005**

		<b>Disciplinary Tribunals (DT)</b>	<b>Court Charges (CC)</b>	<b>Total (DT+CC)</b>
<b>Number of Charges</b>				
Charges brought forward from 2004		6	5	11
New charges laid in 2005		6	1	7
Total		12	6	18
<b>Status at end of 2005</b>				
DT/CC	Exonerated / Not Guilty	4	0	4
CC	Discontinued	1		1
DT/CC	Discharged under Sec. 71.1.a		2	2
DT/CC	Guilty	3		3
	Ongoing	4	4	8
<b>Penalties imposed by TSC</b>				
	Dismissal	2	0	2
	Reprimand	1	2	3

## 7.0 OTHER MATTERS

Other matters addressed by the Commission in 2005 included

- **22** requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act
- **49** cases of separation on grounds of ill-health (**15**), marriage (**8**) or abandonment of office (**26**)
- **58** applications for permission to retire.

## 8.0 IMPETUS FOR CHANGE

In the last two decades, structural change in public sector institutions has become a central concern of governments around the world. The role of the State and issues of governance have become increasing areas of priority for many governments for the following reasons:

- Several international bodies (World Bank, WTO, UN, etc.) have played significant roles in shaping the world economy and there has been increasing pressure on developing nations to modernize their economies to reduce government involvement in economic activity and to create institutions that are more responsive to public needs and that can manage public programmes more effectively;
- An enlightened and more educated public is demanding better services from governments. This necessitates a shift from the traditional bureaucratic command-and-control mechanism to market strategies to foster behavioral changes that put the recipient of the service at the top of the line;
- Citizens require governments' programmes to be effectively implemented and to be more responsive to and in line with their needs. This has spawned the decentralization debate and a shifting power within the system. It also requires governments to be more competent in devising and tracking policy issues;
- Governments need to improve their ability to deliver on their promises.

There are several examples around the world of countries that have undertaken reform of the public sector and there are varying degrees of success. Public Sector management is part of the greater issue of

governance and governments' relationship with civil society. The extent to which reform is successful indicates the capacity of governments to meet the needs and hopes of their citizens.

Reform of the public sector in Trinidad and Tobago has been underway for several years. A review of this process shows that, while there have been significant changes in some areas, the majority of the public sector is still not meeting the needs of its citizenry.

The Report of the Joint Select Committee (2005) stated of the Teaching Service Commission in paragraph 19.2:

“There are extremely serious problems facing the education system, especially in respect of the role and functions of the Teaching Service Commission. The inefficiencies in handling teacher indiscipline, staff vacancies, promotions and school management as a whole can no longer be tolerated. The Committee was of the opinion that there must be greater discipline and efficiency especially in those who require it from others”.

Education of the people of Trinidad and Tobago is at the core of the development goals of the country and, if the education system is to be effective, it must have the right people in the right positions at the right time. Thus the Teaching Service Commission has to ensure that it carries out its role and function in this process.

The Teaching Service Commission accepts the challenge to review its policies and procedures and become more aligned with the realities of today's environment, in particular modern human resource management practices, consistent with its constitutional mandate.