

**REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD
AND TOBAGO**



**ANNUAL REPORT
OF
TEACHING SERVICE
COMMISSION
2006**

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**THE TEACHING SERVICE
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TEACHING SERVICE COMMISSION 2006



From Left to Right:

Mr. Zaffar Ali (Member), Dr. Dorrell Philip (Member), Ms. Yvette Phillip (Ag. Executive Director, HRM), Ms. Hyacinth Guy (Chairman), Mrs. Murreen Lezama (Secretary), Dr. Anna Mahase (Member), Mr. Oliver Flax (Member).

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1.0 TSC MEMBERS

The following persons formed the Teaching Service Commission in the year 2006:

Ms. Hyacinth Guy	-	Chairman
Dr. Dorrell Philip	-	Member
Dr. Anna Mahase	-	Member
Mr. Oliver Flax	-	Member
Mr. Zaffar Ali	-	Member

Mrs. Anna Karamsingh, Executive Director, Human Resource Management, Service Commissions Department, attended meetings as advisor to the Commission up to March 2006, and upon her retirement was replaced by Ms Yvette Phillip, former Secretary to the Commission. Mrs. Murreen Lezama served as Secretary from March 2006.

2.0 MEETINGS

During the year 2006 the Commission held 26 statutory and special meetings. The Commission also held meetings with representatives of various stakeholders, including the Ministry of Education, the Division of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports of the Tobago House Assembly, the Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers Association, Schools Principals Associations, the Association of Denominational Boards of Education and individual denominational school boards.

At its statutory meetings the Commission considered 1,614 Notes which were prepared by its Secretariat. Members of the Commission also participated in 453 promotional interviews for offices of Principal and Vice Principal in primary and secondary schools, compared with 162 such interviews in 2005.

3.0 MAJOR CHALLENGES

The Commission was reconstituted in August 2005, so that 2006 was its first full year of operation. At the beginning of the year the Commission was faced with two major challenges, namely:

- o filling the huge backlog of over two thousand (2000) vacancies in administrative positions, and establishing a system for the timely filling of all future vacancies in the Teaching Service;
- treating with teacher indiscipline.

3.1 Vacancies

Having met in retreat towards the end of 2005, the Commission formulated a plan for dealing with the two major challenges that it faced. In January 2006 a proposal, with detailed capital and recurrent cost estimates, for the establishment of a Selection Centre was prepared together with a draft Cabinet Note, and submitted through the appropriate channels for onward transmission. This proposal envisaged the establishment of a centre for the conduct of all the selection processes for the filling of vacant positions in the Teaching Service. The expectation was that this centre would operate full time and fill 50 positions per week instead of the 8 that were currently being filled. After consultation, the Note was revised and approved by Cabinet in July 2006. However by the end of 2006 the Property Development Division of the Ministry of Public Administration and Information had not been successful in finding suitable accommodation for the Selection Centre.

Throughout the year 2006 the Commission continued to grapple with the backlog of vacancies in administrative offices – Principal, Vice Principal, Dean, Head of Department and Senior Teacher. It was envisaged that this backlog would have been filled within twelve months of the establishment of the Selection Centre, by an increased number of Selection Boards.

In the meantime the Commission was able to significantly increase the rate of filling of vacancies by:

- o doubling the number of interview panels for positions of Principal and Vice Principal, with a member of the Commission chairing each panel;
- o increasing the frequency of meetings of interview panels and Selection Boards for positions of Dean, Head of Department and Senior Teacher by using, in addition to rooms in the Service Commissions Department building, two rooms in NALIS which were made available to the Commission on certain days of the week;

- o using classrooms at Hillview College for meetings of Selection Boards on a full-time basis during the month of August 2006.

At the end of the year, the Commission had made great inroads into reducing the backlog of vacancies and completed 141 of the 393 vacancies of Principals and Vice Principals. It also made some progress towards putting a system in place for the ongoing filling of vacant positions. To this end it met with all the stakeholders in the process, and devised new procedures for the timely filling of all vacancies in the Teaching Service. In particular, in cases of vacancies resulting from retirement, which are normally predictable, these would be filled prior to their occurrence, thereby substantially reducing the need for acting appointments. With respect to Principal and Vice Principal vacancies, members of the Commission held seven meetings with key stakeholders over the period May – November 2006, resulting in agreement by all parties on new procedures and time lines. These stakeholders included representatives of the Ministry of Education, the Department of Education, Tobago House of Assembly and the Association of Denominational Boards of Education. A copy of these new procedures is attached at Appendix 1.

3.2 Discipline

The concerns of the Commission at the inordinate delays in treating with teacher indiscipline were mentioned in the 2005 Report. Particularly noteworthy in this regard is that, while the Commission is accountable for teacher discipline in schools, it is not provided with timely information on allegations of teacher misconduct to enable it to discharge its constitutional responsibility. Often, the Commission only becomes aware of a serious incident in a school through media reports, or months after the alleged incident has occurred when an Investigating Officer's report is submitted. The Commission finds this unacceptable. Accordingly, discussions were held during 2006 with relevant officers in the Ministry of Education to address the matter. Following these discussions, the Commission examined the extent to which the existing Regulations could be enforced to achieve the desired objectives in the short term. By year's end, the Commission had identified an approach to treating with the issue through the drafting of guidelines for the handling of discipline in schools, and this will be articulated and implemented in 2007.

At the same time the Commission has kept on its agenda the complete review of the Disciplinary Regulations under which it currently operates - an exercise on which considerable work has already been done over the last few years.

4.0 APPOINTMENTS

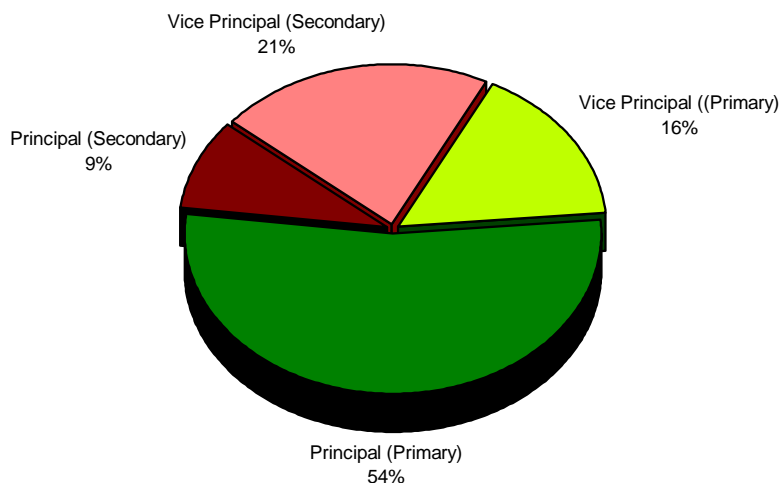
4.1 Principals and Vice Principals

In 2006, 141 appointments were made to the offices of Principal and Vice Principal, compared with a corresponding figure of 57 in 2005. Over seventy per cent of this increase was related to the office of Principal (Primary), where 75 appointments were made in 2006 as opposed to 14 in 2005. A breakdown of the appointments made in 2006 is given in Table 1 and illustrated in Figure 1.

Table 1
Principal / Vice Principal Appointments

	<i>Principal</i>	<i>Vice Principal</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Secondary</i>	13	30	43
<i>Primary</i>	75	23	98
<i>Total</i>	88	53	141

Figure 1 - Principal/Vice Principal Appointments



4.2 Deans, Heads of Department and Senior Teachers

Virtually no progress was made in appointment to these offices in 2006 as the Commission sought to focus on filling the positions of Principals and Vice Principals using the resources available to it. The filling of these offices was placed on the agenda for 2007.

4.3 Secondary School Teachers

In 2006, a total of 719 persons were invited to be interviewed by panels, appointed by the Commission, to assess their suitability for appointment in 24 subject areas. In 98 interviewing sessions, 597 persons were interviewed and 548 were approved by the Commission on the recommendation of the panels. The performance of candidates by subject cluster is summarized in Table 2 and illustrated in Figure 2, while the percentage of successful candidates by subject cluster is given in Table 3 and illustrated in Figure 3.

Table 2
Performance of Candidates by Subject Cluster

Subject Cluster	Number of Candidates		
	Invited	Interviewed	Successful
Mathematics/Natural Science	169	144	131
English	97	87	85
History/Social Studies/Geography	76	65	64
Business Studies/Accounts/Economics	95	85	62
Art & Craft/Music/Drama	80	60	58
Computer Science/IT	65	47	46
Spanish/French	49	39	38
All other areas	88	70	64
All Subject Clusters	719	597	548

Figure 2
Performance of Candidates by Subject Cluster

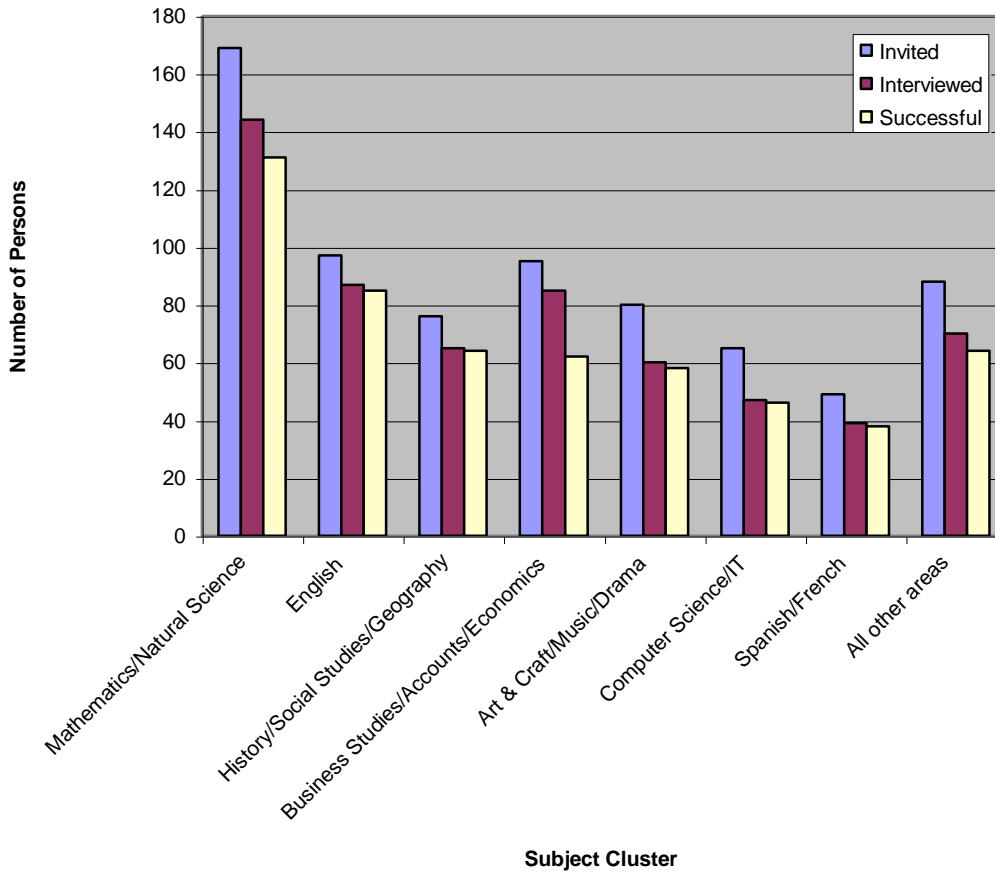
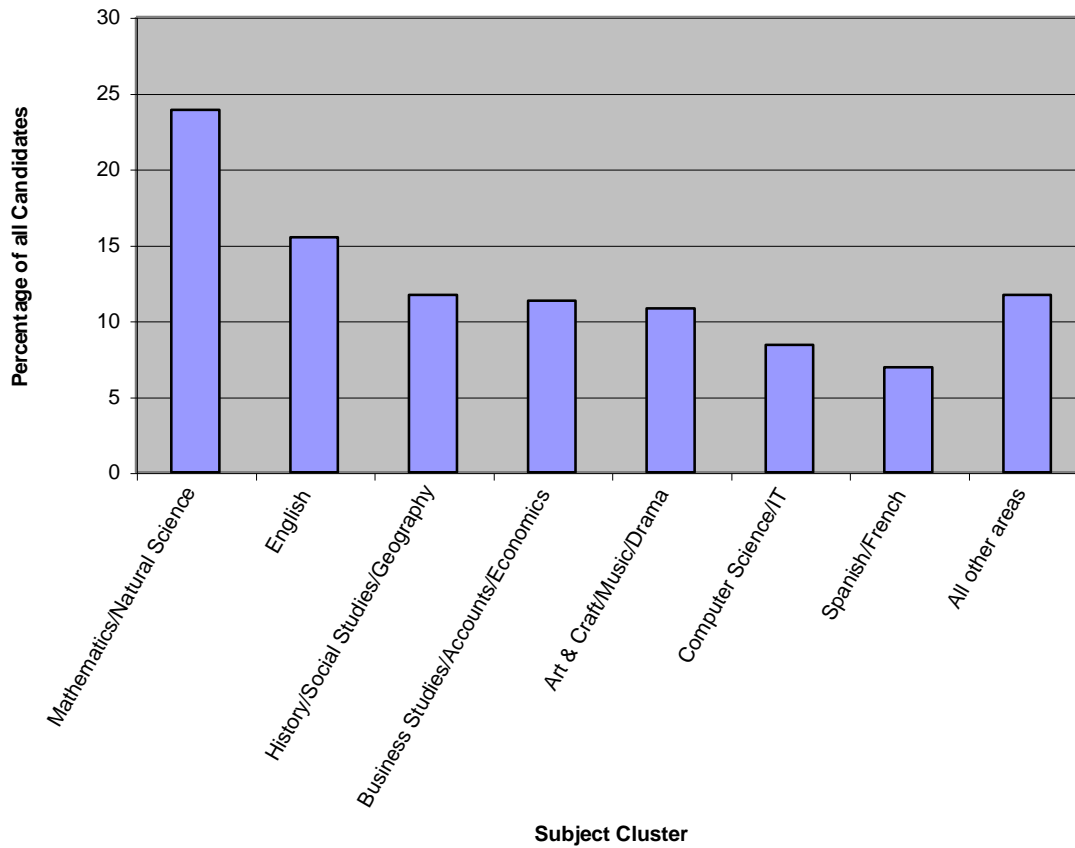


Table 3
Successful Candidates by Subject Cluster

<i>Subject Cluster</i>	<i>Successful Candidates</i>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Mathematics/Natural Science	131	23.9
English	85	15.5
History/Social Studies/Geography	64	11.7
Business Studies/Accounts/Economics	62	11.3
Art & Craft/Music/Drama	58	10.8
Computer Science/IT	46	8.4
Spanish/French	38	6.9
All other areas	64	11.7
All Subject Clusters	548	100

Figure 3
Percentage Distribution of Successful Candidates by Subject Cluster



4.4 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. During 2006, 208 teachers were placed on the order of merit lists for appointments to the Primary School system.

5.0 DELINKED OFFICES

On 10th August 2005 the Parliament enacted the Education (Amendment) Act, 2005 whereby certain positions were delinked from the Public Service and transferred to the Teaching Service to create a unified arm of the Education Sector consisting of-

- o teaching (already delinked);
- o educational administration;
- o educational management;
- o curriculum planning, development and implementation; and
- o supervision.

As a result responsibility for 305 professional, administrative and technical offices in the Ministry of Education was transferred from the Public Service Commission to the Teaching Service Commission. These offices include 106 Guidance Officers, 91 Schools Supervisors, 45 Curriculum Officers and 63 others. This transfer added another 136 vacant positions to be filled by the Teaching Service Commission, including 59 positions of Schools Supervisor from an establishment of 91.

6.0 SCHOOLS SUPERVISORS

The Commission held two workshops in 2006 on the role of Schools Supervisors and the characteristics of high performing schools. This is perceived as an ongoing exercise requiring sustained joint effort of all stakeholders to assist school practitioners in creating and maintaining the necessary conditions to facilitate student learning.

7.0 DISCIPLINE

Disciplinary action against officers of the Teaching Service can be initiated by the Commission on receipt of a report from an investigating officer, appointed by the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education, that a prima facie case has been made out against the officer. If the Commission decides to proceed in the matter, it appoints 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, if any, as it sees fit.

Disciplinary action can also be initiated when the Commission becomes aware of court charges against officers under its purview. Here again, timely information on the progress of matters in the courts often frustrates the work of the Commission.

Table 4 summarizes the status of disciplinary matters at the end of 2006. The following points are noteworthy:

- o 18 charges were under consideration in 2006, comprising 8 brought forward from 2005 and 10 laid in 2006;
- o 13 charges were ongoing at the end of the year;
- o of the 5 matters concluded, 1 resulted in dismissal of the charges and 4 in guilty verdicts;
- o of the 4 cases where the charges were not dismissed, the Commission dismissed 1 officer, reprimanded 2 and was considering the penalty to be imposed in 1 case.

Table 4
Status of Disciplinary Matters at end of 2006

	Disciplinary Tribunals	Court Charges	Total
Charges brought forward from 2005	4	4	8
New charges laid in 2006	5	5	10
Total	9	9	18
Status at end of 2006			
Not Guilty	0	1	1
Guilty	2	2	4
Ongoing	7	6	13
Total	9	9	18
Penalties imposed by TSC			
Under consideration	1	0	1
Reprimand	0	2	2
Dismissal	1	0	1
Total	2	2	4

The administration of the disciplinary process was reviewed in 2006 and the Commission decided that the system of information gathering, and enquiry was not allowing the Commission to fulfill its mandate under the Constitution. As a result it met and formulated new guidelines for the administration of this process. It also took a decision that the Director of Personnel Administration would be asked to implement a system using available technology for tracking and monitoring disciplinary cases.

8.0 COMMUNICATION

In the 2005 Annual Report mention was made of the need for the Commission to develop a communication strategy aimed at all parties having an interest in the Teaching Service and the public at large. As a first step in this direction the Commission launched a quarterly newsletter entitled “TSC Speaks” as from September 2006. This publication seeks to inform all stakeholders of current initiatives of the Commission in addressing key issues facing the education system, and to ensure that misinformation on these issues would disappear. It is hoped that these newsletters would be widely distributed to all Parliamentarians, key officials in the Ministry of Education and the Department of Education (THA), Schools Supervisors, Principals (and through them to all teachers), Associations of Schools Principals, Association of Denominational Boards of Education and the Media, so that all parties concerned could be kept abreast of the activities of the Commission.

9.0 OTHER MATTERS

Other matters addressed by the Commission in 2006 included

- o approval of 710 acting/temporary/permanent appointment of teachers;
- o promotion of 104 officers under the purview of the Commission;
- o 735 confirmation of appointments
- o 257 transfers;
- o 35 applications for information under the Freedom of Information Act;
- o 58 applications for retirement on various grounds; and
- o several other miscellaneous items.

10.0 THE WAY FORWARD

The Teaching Service Commission is mandated to ensure that the nation's schools are adequately staffed and that appropriate disciplinary measures are meted out to errant officers in a timely manner. The discharge of this responsibility requires the Commission to build and sustain effective partnerships with other stakeholders in the process - the Ministry of Education, the Chief Personnel Officer, the Service Commissions Department, the Ministry of Public Administration and Information, the Pensions Division of the Ministry of Finance and the Denominational School Boards.

This fragmented structure of the Human Resource Management (HRM) system in the Teaching Service has been perceived over the years, with some justification, as lacking the ability to give effective service delivery. Moreover, the attainment of organizational goals must be rooted in people performance at the level of Line Management and organizational efficiency through good processes. In this regard it should be noted that there exists a well-established field of knowledge and experience in HRM, which seeks to improve the effectiveness of people in the context of the organization's goals.

The Teaching Service Commission has been examining the efficacy of application of a new approach to Human Resource Management in the Public Sector to model to its own operations, noting that there are wider implications in relation to the entire Public Service. The Commission will continue this examination in 2007, recognizing that the way forward may involve radical reform.

APPENDIX I

POLICY, PROCEDURES AND TIME LINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF A SYSTEM OF APPOINTMENTS FOR POSITIONS IN THE TEACHING SERVICE

A. Policy Statement

I. The Teaching Service Commission (TSC) will fill all vacant positions within the Teaching Service normally at least thirty (30) days in advance of such vacancies arising. In the case of unplanned vacancies, the TSC will make appointments to these positions within two months of such vacant positions arising.

II. The TSC will establish a Selection Center in a suitable location, with trained and competent personnel, and conduct assessment and selection activities on a full time basis for positions within the Teaching Service.

III. Selection activities will be conducted at the Selection Centre, or elsewhere as determined by the TSC, for all positions within the teaching service; initially priority will be given to the positions of Principal and Vice Principals.

IV. For the time being the selection and appointment procedure will involve the use of a pre-selection instrument to evaluate candidates' knowledge of relevant regulations and curriculum in keeping with section 18 of the Public Service Commission Regulations Chapter 1:01 of the Laws of Trinidad and Tobago, as adopted by the Teaching Service Commission (hereinafter referred to as the "Regulations"), followed by interviews to assess other aspects of the Regulations.

V. In future, the TSC will implement other pre selection and assessment procedures, under the Regulations, which will ensure the selection of the most suitable candidates for appointments to positions within the Teaching Service.

VI. The TSC will work with other stakeholders in education to ensure that these procedures are implemented in the most effective and efficient manner. All appointments will be made by reference to a pre-determined eligibility list in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.

B. Procedures for the appointment of Principals and Vice Principals

1. The TSC will establish, and revise on an annual basis, a register of persons deemed suitable for appointment.

2. Following public advertisement for expressions of interest from persons desirous of serving as Principal or Vice Principal in schools as advertised by the Ministry of Education or in any other school in Trinidad and Tobago, the register will be compiled on the basis of the response to the advertisement, the results of a selection test administered to all qualified applicants to test knowledge of the relevant Regulations, the outcome of interviews of all suitably qualified candidates and any other selection tool in keeping with Regulation 18.

3. Following the selection process, candidates will be classified, on the basis of overall performance, according to the following categories:

A – Excellent, B – Very Good, C – Good, D – Fair, E – Not ready

4. Within each category candidates will be considered to be equally suitable for appointment to a particular vacancy, with final decision in relation to an appointment to a particular school reserved for the judgment of the TSC.

5. In making an appointment the TSC will be guided by the outcome of the selection test, the interview process and the school's profile which will be prepared by the Ministry of Education, after consultation with the relevant school board in the case of a denominational school, and updated on an annual basis. The profile will describe and analyze the school, its requirements and the leadership competencies required for the school to be effectively run.

6. When a vacancy arises, candidates in category A as described at 3 above will be given first consideration for appointment in the light of the school's profile. In the event that no suitable candidate is identified, or in the event that all candidates in that category decline appointment, consideration will be given to candidates in category B and so on. No candidate in category E will be considered for appointment.

7. In the case of a denominational school the TSC will submit to the relevant school board for comment and recommendation, the names of its nominees from category A. In the event that the Board objects to all such names, on the basis of the Teaching Service Regulations or the

Concordat, the TSC will submit in accordance with its classified list other nominees from category B and so on until a mutually acceptable candidate is identified, failing which the particular vacancy will be advertised.

8. In the case of a state school, the TSC will make the decision to appoint in keeping with all aspects of the Regulations.