



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

## MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

## MEDIA RELEASE

July 19, 2022

Dear Editor / Head of Department,

### **Cabinet Approves Framework for Revised Operations of Selected Secondary Schools (2022-2027)**

Cabinet has approved the Ministry of Education's Framework for Revised Operations in selected Secondary Schools during the period 2022-2027, aimed at increasing student achievement and equity of educational opportunity.

There is a critical need to address matters of student achievement and equity in educational opportunity at our nation's schools. Based on data collected over the past 10-15 years at the Ministry of Education, an average of 47% of students leave the Education System annually without achieving certification in at least five CSEC subjects, inclusive of Math and English. This greatly limits their ability to continue to tertiary education and find jobs above minimum wage.

Studies done over many years in Trinidad and Tobago have explored the undeniable link that exists between educational achievement, reliance on the government's support network, and crime. The impact of the low levels of educational achievement at the Secondary level resonates within the budgetary allocations of the Ministries with responsibility for Social Development, National Security and Youth Development, to name a few. This has serious economic, social and security implications, and places the upward trajectory of this nation, and the realisation of Vision 2030, in jeopardy.

Data collected by the Ministry of Education has pointed to less than optimal school climates in some of our Secondary Schools, attributable to the existing circumstances under which these schools operate. Issues such as the availability of resources, student motivation, student confidence, teacher motivation, family circumstances, parental involvement, perceived interest in the school, school leadership, school environment, historical and expected school output have, throughout many years, had an impact on the performance of the students at these schools.

An analysis of the characteristics which are found to be common among Secondary Schools with low levels of success in student achievement include:

- Greater than 60% SEA intake with scores under 50%
- Parents with low socioeconomic circumstances
- Many students from single parent homes
- Absent or inactive school support networks such as PTA and Alumni Associations
- High absenteeism of students
- Significant student attrition
- High levels of student indiscipline
- Critical school infrastructure in need of repair

While the MOE's Vacation Revision Program (VRP) will play a role in providing additional academic and psychosocial support to students who need it, an organized, sustained and sustainable systemic approach to school operation is required in some schools to change their current trajectory with respect to student output. This calls for actions which go beyond the scope of the VRP.

The Principals of selected Secondary Schools, as well as wider education stakeholders such as the recognized majority union for teachers, the Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers' Association (TTUTA), the National Parent-Teachers' Association (NPTA), Principals' Associations (including public, private and special schools) and Denominational Boards have been consulted with by the executive team of the Ministry of Education. They have shared their experiences in areas such as mitigating school indiscipline, parent and student engagement, increasing student achievement, generating a positive school culture, and differentiating curricular approaches to cater for cohorts comprising students at various levels of academic achievement. They have made recommendations encompassing the following general areas:

- Efficient provision of standard resources such as funding, teaching and non-teaching staff;
- Adjustment to curricular offerings and sequencing;
- Adjustments to examination schedules and available certification;
- Improvement of access to, and broadening of the services available through the Student Support Services Division;
- Increase in schools' support staff;
- Sustained programme of training for teaching staff and school administration;
- Increased level of monitoring of schools' operation and that of their School-Based Management Teams; and

- Focus on the upgrade and maintenance of the school environment, labs and infrastructure.

Based on these discussions, Cabinet has approved the Ministry of Education's framework for the implementation of several operational recommendations in selected Secondary Schools for Academic Years 2022-2027, with the goal of improving equity in educational opportunity, and increasing student achievement.

The specific recommendations are to be implemented on a phased basis and will be aligned with the unique characteristics of selected Secondary Schools. The realization of the objectives will involve reallocation of resources, as well as partnership and collaboration of the Ministry of Education with other Ministries and agencies, and are intended to adjust and improve schools' operations during the period 2022-2027. They are as follows:

### **Leadership**

- Close monitoring of and support for the operations of School-Based Management Teams and the implementation of the annual School Development Plan

### **Teacher & Teacher Development**

- Efficient appointment of Heads of Departments, Deans, Principals and Vice Principals to provide and maintain a strong Management Team to deal with student discipline
- Efficient filling of teaching, non-teaching and clerical staff vacancies
- Assignment of staff to each school to provide supervisory and teaching support
- Ongoing training of Principals, Heads of Departments, Deans and Teachers in areas such as Curriculum Delivery, Conflict Resolution, Remedial Teaching Methods, Positive Behaviour Management, Addressing Varying Academic Needs, Team Building, Chairing Successful Meetings, Using Data to Achieve Positive Learning Outcomes, School Development Plan formulation and Implementation, Project Management, Educational Technology, Recognizing Learning Disabilities

### **Student Services**

- Dedicated assignment of School Social Workers, Special Education Instructors and Guidance Counsellors to each school
- Implementation of the Parenting in Education Programme
- Completion of Student Needs Assessment for all students, including vision and auditory screening
- Involvement of NGOs, CBOs, and members of the Defence Force in schools as a part of the Guidance Counselling team

## **Security**

- Full strength of Safety Officers
- Full complement of Security Officers
- Increased school patrols
- Community Police assignment

## **Curriculum**

- Introduction of online solutions to assist students in self-directed learning inside and outside of the classroom.
- Establishment of e-classrooms for teachers to provide modern educational resources for students and promote engaging, self-directed learning opportunities
- Preparation of students to sit the Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination (PSLC) between Forms 1-3
- Provision of a clear pathway for students to acquire, at minimum, the PSLC, CXC Math and English Language, and at least 3 skills-based CXC/CVQ subjects in 5 years of secondary schooling, and where required, 6 years, based on individual student circumstances as determined by the school Principal in collaboration with the student and parents/ guardians
- Introduction of skills training at the Form 1 level and a modular approach to the completion of CVQ examinations

## **Discipline**

- Peer Mediation Training for students
- Implementation of a revised School Discipline Matrix, with a focus on the principles of restorative justice
- Focus on Positive Behaviour encouragement strategies by Teachers and Administrators, including the establishment of non-academic clubs, reinforcement of expected behaviors by way of signage and frequent repetition, use of positive role models and mentorship programmes
- Establishment of an MOU between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Youth Development and National Service for the seamless transfer of selected students from Secondary Schools to the MILAT
- Implementation of a robust Life Skills programme

## **Resources & Infrastructure**

- Provision of devices to students (where necessary) and teachers for online and digital engagement
- Provision of internet access throughout the school compound
- Focus on the upgrade and maintenance of labs and equipment for skills-based subjects, as well as sporting and visual/theatre arts facilities

Some of these initiatives are already ongoing in schools, and the detailed implementation of others will require further discussions with education stakeholders, TTUTA, and the Principals of the selected schools. These discussions will take place over the next few weeks, in anticipation of the submission of the schools' revised Development Plans. Each school will set individual performance targets, in collaboration with their District Leadership Teams, and the achievement of these will be the focus of close monitoring and reporting to Cabinet over the period in question.

The Ministry of Education considers these operational changes, and their intended outcome, to be of highest priority, and welcomes the support of all stakeholders as we strive to create the citizen that will drive the positive development of Trinidad and Tobago to 2030 and beyond. The selection of Secondary Schools for academic year 2022/23 will be on the basis of the school climate factors described above. The public will be further apprised in subsequent media interactions of the selection, as well as the Ministry's plans for focusing on the performance of Primary Schools.

Corporate Communications

Ministry of Education

[Corporate.communication@moe.gov.tt](mailto:Corporate.communication@moe.gov.tt)

622-2181 Ext 1355, 1427