



TABLE OF CONTENTS
<b>Changing of the Guard at TSC Secretariat</b> Page 2
<b>Regularity and Punctuality in the Teaching Service</b> Page 3
<b>Testing the Promotion System</b> Page 4
<b>Student Discipline: The Role of Parents</b> Page 5
<b>The Performance Management Process</b> Page 6
<b>Pursuing Excellence: Spotlight on Santa Rosa Government Primary School</b> Page 8

## A NATIONAL WATCHWORD THAT DESERVES MORE ATTENTION

Having recently celebrated both our nation’s 51st anniversary of independence and our 37th anniversary as a Republic, our nation’s watchwords “Discipline, Tolerance and Production” are at the forefront of many minds. It is fitting, therefore, for the Teaching Service Commission to highlight the issue of discipline within the education sector.

Discipline is the first watchword in our national motto and should assume pride of place in our education system, which is arguably the crucible within which our national culture is formed and reformed.

Unfortunately, the evidence is growing that indiscipline at many levels of the education system is gradually, but persistently eroding the ability of the schools to deliver on the Ministry of Education’s promise of “Excellence in Education”.

In this issue, the Chairman of the Teaching Service Commission, Dr. Hyacinth Guy, reports on recent findings on regularity and punctuality among the teaching corps, while Professor Ramesh Deosaran share insights into his research on student indiscipline at home and at school.

Commissioner Alwyn Daniel focuses on system approaches to improving employee performance with an in-depth discussion of the Ministry of Education’s Performance Management and Appraisal Programme (PMAP) and TSCSpeaks debuts a new column entitled “Pursuing Excellence” in which we highlight the achievements of individuals and schools across the nation who are making strides in the pursuit of excellence in education.

We trust that all our readers enjoyed a Happy Independence and Republic Day.



Dr. Anna Mahase, member of the Teaching Service Commission presents a bouquet of flowers to outgoing TSC Secretariat Executive Director, Ms. Yvette Phillip.

## Changing of the Guard at the TSC Secretariat

On May 29th, 2013, the Teaching Service Commission bade farewell to Ms. Yvette Phillip, Executive Director of the Teaching Service Commission Secretariat.

Ms Phillip joined the public service as a Clerk I on December 2nd, 1970 and through hard work and discipline, she progressed steadily through the ranks of the Public Service until she was appointed as Executive Director, Human Resource Management on August 15th, 2006.

Ms. Phillip proved herself to be an excellent administrator and team leader, spearheading many improvements in the processes at the Secretariat which benefitted her key

stakeholders, namely, the teachers and administrators in the education system. She is also credited with developing a motivated and productive workforce within the Secretariat, having created an ambiance in which the staff was always willing to "go the extra mile" to ensure that the Commission operated smoothly and effectively.

On May 8th 2013, Ms. Phillip proceeded on a well-deserved retirement, leaving the TSC Secretariat more efficient and effective than when she first took up her appointment as Executive Director. The Commission commends her for a sterling contribution to national and educational development in Trinidad and Tobago.



Mrs. Marva Blackman, Ag. Executive Director, Human Resource Management at the TSC Secretariat

The Teaching Service Commission welcomes Mrs. Marva Blackman who assumed duty in the Teaching Service as Acting Executive Director, Human Resource Management on May 20, 2013.

Mrs. Blackman entered the Public Service in 1974 and joined the Service Commissions Department in April 1993.

During her thirty nine (39) years of service, Mrs Blackman has held appointments at the Ministries of Agriculture, Local Government, Public Administration, Planning and Development and National Security (Fire Service Division).

Mrs. Blackman is the holder of a Bachelor of Science Degree in Government with a Minor in Human Resource Management and a Certificate in Public Administration. She previously served in the Teaching Service Commission Secretariat for approximately twelve (12) years.



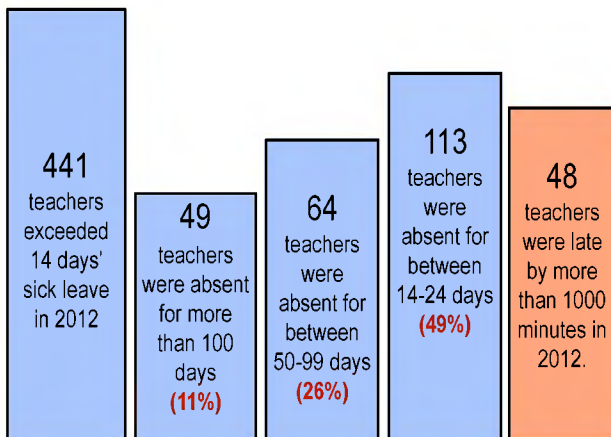
# Regularity and Punctuality in the Teaching Service

It is well known that the majority of our teachers are committed, dedicated professionals who are focused on shaping well-rounded individuals who can contribute to the continued development of this country.

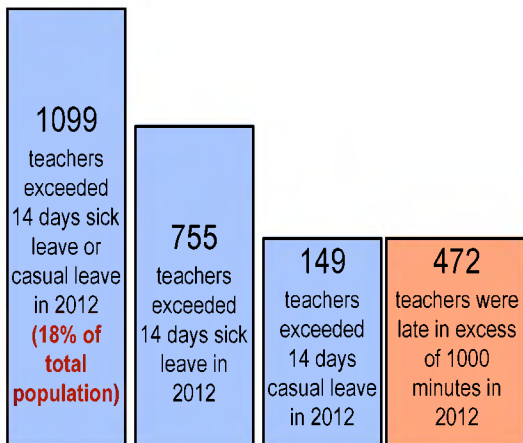
We acknowledge that there are some delinquent individuals whose regularity and punctuality unfairly define the whole Teaching Service. The Teaching Service Commission therefore, with cooperation from the Ministry of Education, has taken the initiative to deal with the high incidence of irregularity and unpunctuality among those delinquent teachers. The main purpose is to ensure that all teachers arrive at school in time, report to their work stations as scheduled, and refrain from absenting themselves from school or work for no good reason.

Information obtained from the Ministry of Education for the years 2011 and 2012 shows that more than 10 percent of the teachers in the service have exceeded their sick leave entitlement for those years.

Analysis of the data on absenteeism and punctuality at the primary school level in 2012 shows the following:



The data for secondary level showed similar patterns of absenteeism and unpunctuality.



In spite of this, only five referrals for disciplinary action have been made to the TSC over the period in question. It is the view of the TSC that the Ministry of Education should implement a policy on regularity and punctuality to deal with this situation. This policy should have the following elements:

1. Every teacher must report for duty **before** the commencement of the scheduled start of the work day.
2. Every teacher must record his/her time of arrival for the morning session, the afternoon session and time of departure at the end of the day by signing the attendance register.
3. It should be the responsibility of a teacher who is unable to report for work for any reason to so notify the Principal of the school--or any other school official as delegated by the Principal for this purpose--at least one hour before the commencement of the school work day. The absent teacher must provide a reason for his/her absence and indicate when he/she expects to return to work. Communication on this matter from relatives will be acceptable only if the absent teacher is unable to make the call.
4. When a teacher requires time off from his/her normal duties for personal or business reasons, he/she must obtain prior approval from the Principal before the teacher proceeds to take such time off. Such time off must be kept to a minimum, and as far as possible, should be limited to no more than four (4) hours per month and taken during non-teaching working hours.

The TSC is of the view that if the issue of punctuality and regularity of teachers is to be addressed in a meaningful way, there must be closer monitoring and recording of time and attendance. As a consequence, the current systems should be significantly upgraded through the use of computer technology, where appropriate. In addition, principals and school supervisors should play a key role in coaching errant teachers, recording the information, taking initial information to improve the situation and reporting those instances where excessive absenteeism and late coming adversely affect the delivery of the curriculum in the school.

The Teaching Service Commission considers that any unauthorized absence and any late coming/early leaving will affect the delivery of the curriculum. Unauthorized absence is absence without prior permission or notification. Late coming is reporting for duty any time after the established start time of the school day without

prior permission. Leaving early is leaving one's assigned duties before the official end of the established school day without permission.

The Ministry of Education has been requested to bring to the attention of the TSC the record of any teacher who has exceeded the limits of paid absences established for the position within two (2) weeks of the end of the school term. Late coming and early leaving in excess of sixty (60) minutes per term or six (6) times per term should be brought to the attention of the Teaching Service Commission within two (2) weeks of the end of the school term.

The TSC will continue to monitor the implementation of a system which ensures that teaching time for each teacher is not negatively affected by latecoming and excessive absences.

## TESTING THE PROMOTION SYSTEM

An article written in the Catholic News on June 21, 2013, titled, 'Testing the Teacher Promotion System' described a teacher's experience at two interviews for the same position. One interview was done with the denominational board and the other with the Teaching Service Commission. The teacher said that even though he/she was not interested in an administrative position, an application was sent in order to make personal observations of both processes. The teacher recalled, quote:

"My interview with the Catholic Education Board of Management was wonderful. I wish to commend my board for the choice of people on the interviewing panel. There I saw democracy, equity and a panel of people who had experience for the job. I was made to feel comfortable as we moved from one question to another.

I was, however, very disappointed with the panel at the Teaching Service Commission.

As they made their observations, I also made mine. The questions were relatively simple and from my studies and experience I was able to answer. However, I remain doubtful about their marking and decision making."

The teacher also indicated that the goal "was not to be promoted but to do my own investigation. I have achieved my goal."

Selecting the most suitable candidate for a position starts with a good profile of the position and then using an effective assessment tool to assess the candidate. The TSC has designed and implemented assessment instruments/tools for each position for which it interviews. This instrument must be aligned with the roles and responsibilities required of the position and, of course, the attributes the potential candidate should possess.

The primary selection process used by the TSC is the semi-structured interview. This is accompanied by a written assessment (multiple choice, true/false) assessment of the candidate's knowledge of regulations and guidelines and a situational judgment test using an on-the-spot case

analysis. In a semi-structured interview, the interview panel asks a specific set of questions that are designed to assess critical knowledge, skills and abilities that are required for the position. There is also the flexibility for panellists to ask any question that they wish, if they believe it would help in evaluating an applicant's performance. The semi-structured interview is also used to assess interpersonal skills, communication skills, leadership, planning, organizing and conflict resolution skills. An important characteristic of an effective semi-structured interview is that it provides standardized rating criteria to help interviewers judge the quality and effectiveness of the responses provided by the interviewee. Panelists who conduct interviews on behalf of the TSC are experienced in the public service and have been trained in how to administer the semi-structured interview properly, probe for additional information and apply the rating criteria accurately.

All candidates who apply for positions and who meet the minimum requirements would be interviewed by the TSC. Candidates should be able to answer any of the questions asked by the TSC panellists. The idea is to get the candidate relaxed and comfortable so that he/she would have no anxiety when faced with the questions. The TSC looks for depth in experience, the ability to apply knowledge, skills and abilities to situations, and the most appropriate attribute (managerial, leadership styles, communication styles, etc) which fit the particular school and position being considered. There are no easy or hard questions; there are just questions that are answered to a certain degree of satisfaction of the panellists.

The TSC expects that all teachers would take seriously the issue of promotion to a higher position. An application for a promotion assumes that the individual is willing to contribute at a higher level and has the passion and desire to develop high performing schools. Passion, purpose and desire can be easily discerned at an interview process and panellists know when a candidate does not believe that he/she is ready for a position. The TSC trusts that this provides some clarification on how the selection process is conducted.



## STUDENT DISCIPLINE It Helps When Parents Cooperate

Professor Ramesh Deosaran (Emeritus)

I must admit I was quite surprised at the results when, in 2006, we asked 2800 secondary school students from twenty secondary schools across the country the extent to which they were punished and, precisely, for what types of behaviour. We used 20 different acts of delinquency for their responses. The surprise came with the difference between what happened at home compared to what happened at school.

There was more punishment at home than at school for the same type of offences. Further, with some forms of delinquency, for example, drinking alcohol or fighting, students committed more offences at home than at school. With some others, for example, cursing or gang membership, students committed more of these at school.

I was surprised, mainly because the impression in the public domain is that children's behaviour is worse at school than at home and they are more punished at school than at home. Such an impression, no doubt, helped reinforce the Ministry's policy of banning corporal punishment at schools. Now this article is not about corporal punishment *per se*. It is more about the ways in which acts of

delinquency differ from home to school and how they are treated by parents or guardians on one hand, and by teachers on the other hand.

Let us take disobedience or "answering back", a relatively mild but irritating offence. While three percent (3%) of the students surveyed said their teacher struck them, that is, hurt them physically, twelve percent (12%) said their parent or guardian hit them for this same offence.

This "hitting" took place very much more at home than at school. Take another example, the use of obscene language, cursing. For this offence, cursing, twenty seven percent (27%) said the teacher made them apologise while six (6) percent of their parents or guardians made them apologise.

The point here is that teachers are more inclined to use a conciliatory intervention than parents. It may also be that since corporal punishment has been banned in schools, teachers are now less inclined to use this form of punishment.

There are three implications from the findings of this research which bear consideration. Firstly, whatever disciplinary measures teachers take at school cannot be in isolation from what parents or guardians do at home. It is the same child who is at school and at home. The teacher-parent partnership in student discipline should be nurtured and sustained in this regard. A second look should therefore be taken at the Ministry's guidelines on the subject of delinquency and progressive sanctions.

Secondly, while such acts as unruly behaviour, shouting and answering back may appear as "minor" forms of delinquency, these do irritate and upset teachers very much in their teaching. As such, these incidences cannot be taken lightly. Our research showed that Form I students are the worst offenders in this regard, due no doubt to their stage of physical and

psycho-social development, and the restlessness which this stage usually brings.

Thirdly, many teachers have complained that when they send complaints to the parents or guardians about students' delinquent behaviours, there is no cooperation. The parents or guardians give no helpful response. This has been a very common complaint of teachers. It is therefore time to develop a regulation or at least a code of conduct for parents and guardians in relation to their obligations to the school, in particular, to teachers' concerns about their children's behaviour.

There must be some concern over the significant amount of delinquency which, as admitted by the students themselves, goes unnoticed or ignored by teachers and parents. Take fighting, for example. Seven percent (7%) of the students said that when they fought someone else in school, the teacher saw or heard about it but did nothing. For the parents, it was seventeen (17%) percent who said that their parents or guardians did nothing. If so many acts of delinquency are committed without being treated by teachers and more so, by parents, delinquent acts will be viewed by children as easy to commit and without consequences, and would most likely increase.

According to the students, when they actually do complain about being bullied, cursed or even insulted by another student, the teacher "does not take them on." Of course, teachers today face increased challenges of many kinds, which may be impacting on their ability to treat with student indiscipline. Nonetheless, given the serious implications and consequences of student violence and delinquency, it is worth making the extra effort to respond and treat with students' complaints in the best possible way.

# The Performance Management and Appraisal Process

Mr Alwyn Daniel

Historically, teachers have been appraised by an instrument known as the Confidential Staff Report. While progressive organisations, especially in the private sector, have implemented an objective and effective appraisal system, the Teaching Service remains anchored in an archaic system which is subjective, lacks transparency and does not provide an evidential basis for the rating given. The rating 'satisfactory' is linked to a teacher's annual increment. The Confidential Staff Report does not provide an analysis which could be used in making decisions about a teacher's confirmation, development, potential or current performance. A more effective system is needed.

Recently, the Ministry of Education (MOE) and TTUTA reached agreement on the introduction of a potentially robust performance management system which is due to be implemented by January 01, 2014. This system, known as the Performance Management and Appraisal Process (PMAP) is described in this article.

This article presents PMAP as an objective and effective appraisal system with a transparent and collaborative process. It was developed in 2005 but for reasons unknown, there was no sustained drive to secure its implementation.

Consequently the Confidential Staff Report is still in place. PMAP embraces the main positions in the school system – Principal, Vice Principal, Senior Teacher, Head of Department, Dean and Teacher. The focus will be on the Principal since minimal changes are required to the form.

The structure of the system consists of five major components: the concept of performance appraisal, job objectives, performance standards, job behaviour assessment and human resource development initiatives. Details are provided hereunder in respect of the final four of the major components as these represent a radical departure from the present system.

The concept of performance appraisal focuses on, inter alia, the purpose of appraisal, the weaknesses of the Confidential Staff Report and the attributes of an effective PMAP. Objectives are written as output performance areas derived from the job description. For the position of Principal, they are as follows:

1. **To lead and manage the performance of staff in the school** (Example of performance standard: Staff meetings are held to discuss matters impacting the school are held at least once per month)
2. **To implement the approved school curriculum in compliance with all policies, guidelines and instructions issued by Ministry of Education.** (Example of performance standard - Report books are reviewed and approved each term)
3. **To prepare and submit reports on the performance of the school and on any other matters impacting the functioning of the school.** (Example of performance standard: An Assessment Report reviewing the school's overall performance and its success in achieving its goals is prepared and submitted to MOE through the District Office by the fourth week in the first term of the following year)
4. **To provide efficient and effective management of the day- to day operations of the school, including the use of existing resources, and the development and maintenance of a safe and disciplined work environment.** (Example of performance standard: Arrangements are made by Administration for staff involved in co-curricular activities within the first month of the new school term)
5. **To promote the interests of the school and its members, through collaboration with**



**families and community members.** (Example of performance standard: Meetings held at least once per term with parents / guardians to discuss the school's strategic and curriculum issues and provide the opportunity for dialogue)

Objectives are derived from the job description and the performance standards outline qualitatively and quantitatively how the objectives are to be accomplished. There are some twenty eight standards associated with the five objectives described above.

The next component deals with job behaviour assessment which comprises six competency areas. These are:

- Leadership
- Adaptability
- Teamship
- Communication
- Professionalism
- Employee Relations

These are detailed hereunder:

**Leadership** - Appraiser's ability to craft vision, formulate and implement effective plans, lead and motivate staff and students to buy into the vision, and give of their best; emotional sensitivity to the needs of team members; the effective use of existing resources and team approach.

**Adaptability** - Appraiser's capacity to act promptly within a given environment, to accept responsibility and to take independent action where required, demonstrated ability to adjust to changes in job stress,

deadlines, personnel, or surroundings with little difficulty.

**Teamship** - Appraiser's demonstrated ability to work as a member of the team, consistent with the school/Ministry's goals and objectives.

**Communication** - Strategies developed by appraiser that are consistent with established policies of the Ministry of Education, for communication outside and within the school; demonstrated willingness to actively listen and accept ideas of others/feedback; clear concise expression of ideas.

**Professionalism** - Appraiser's demonstrated ability to learn from successes, failures, and experiences; a willingness and openness to learn from others; interest and support given for professional advancement.

**Employee Relations** - Demonstrated knowledge, understanding and application of relevant rules regulations, policies and procedures; understanding of the extent/limits of his/ her authority.

The final component focuses on human resource development which includes career planning initiatives, recommended training and development, potential assessment rating and a summary of appraisal ratings. The appraiser's review of the appraiser's comments is also included here.

PMAP is based on a collaborative process with standards that are based on effectiveness, quality, quantity and efficiency. Further, it is a well documented system that provides the evidence for the ratings which are given. The process requires periodic discussions between the Appraiser and Appraiser at which time strengths and weaknesses are

identified and measures instituted to address weaknesses. There is also an appeal process that involves the intervention of the Principal (as appropriate), the Supervisor III, a Director (as appropriate) and the Permanent Secretary or a representative.

In the past, implementation has been a challenge in the Public Service. The TSC is committed to collaborating with the Ministry of Education to ensure that PMAP becomes a reality by January 1st, 2014. In demonstrating the attributes of PMAP, the focus has been on the Principal who occupies a professional leadership role in the school and a strategic position in the educational system. The job objectives of the Principal and at least one performance standard for each objective have been identified in order to reinforce the previous statement. Six competency areas have also been determined.

An effective principal is the key to a successful school. PMAP, once it becomes rooted in the culture of the educational system, will identify potential candidates for upward mobility to the office of Principal. PMAP will play a key role in separating effective principals from those who have "retired" on the job. As such, it will have a beneficial effect on all schools. To summarise, a robust performance appraisal such as PMAP, complemented by a proper interview process, will enhance the validity and reliability of the promotion process.

# PURSUING EXCELLENCE...

## SPOTLIGHT ON SANTA ROSA GOVERNMENT PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Santa Rosa Government Primary School wins National Story Telling Competition

Tayrn Murphy, a Standard Four student of the Santa Rosa Government Primary School, at just ten years of age, has made a name for herself by placing first in the 10 – 13 category of NALIS' bi-annual story telling competition. Throughout the preliminaries up to the finals, Tayrn Murphy mesmerised judges and audiences alike with her rendition of *Shansa Motungo Shima: A cautionary tale from the Democratic Republic of the Congo*. Tayrn's captivating stage presence and unique "gift for imitating voices", particularly that of the African continent, made her a favorite at every performance. Her uncanny ability to improvise and embellish the story to meet the needs of her audience has opened many doors for this young talented student.

Tayrn's journey to stardom began in May 2013 when she was selected by her class teacher to participate in the NALIS bi-annual story telling competition. With just a mere 3 weeks of training, Tayrn went on to captivate and enthrall the judges at the preliminary stage. At the semi-finals, she also topped all competitors in all zones of Trinidad and Tobago by coming away with one point less than the total score. Motivated by this win, Tayrn worked assiduously towards the finals which were held at the Port of Spain Library on June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2013. It was at this forum that Tayrn shone and was once again selected as the overall winner in her category.



As a result, Tayrn was invited and participated in two story telling shows which were held at The Trinidad Theater Workshop on June 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>. Following this, she performed live on I.95's story hour on the 7th July, 2013

Tayrn Murhpy is truly a bright star who has helped to make her school Santa Rosa Government Primary a beacon of hope for other students who may feel disadvantaged by their circumstances, since she believes that it does not matter where you originate, you can become a symbol of success by using your God-given abilities.