

Covid-19

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS UPGRADING STUDENTS FROM GRADE 1 TO GRADE 2 (19.04.2022)

(No. B/371) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology whether, in regard to primary schools, she will state if consideration will be given for the advisability of upgrading all the students thereof born in the same calendar year from grade 1 to grade 2.

Reply: You will recall schools were closed over a continuous period of 4 months from March to June 2020 due to the COVID Pandemic. The school calendar was accordingly extended to compensate for the loss of teaching time. However, the volatility of the times led to a second national lockdown in March 2021 at a time when the schools had programmed their end of year assessments.

In these circumstances, only national and international examinations were held (PSAC, NCE, SC/HSC) and no end of year assessments could be conducted in the year 2021 for the pupils of all other grades who were allowed to move on to the next grade. I must insist that was an exceptional measure. Such a measure, if replicated for a consecutive year in the Academic Year 2021-2022, will have pedagogical implications.

As I have informed in my reply to PQ B/39, the age difference between the youngest and the oldest pupils with regard to Grade 1 for the cohort of 2020-2021 is around one and a half years. By the end of the Academic Year, the youngest pupils in the grade would reach around 6 ½ years and the oldest nearly 8 years.

We believe that it would be pedagogically sound to group the older students in Grade 1 (born between 01 January 2015 and 31 May 2015) and offer them a dedicated curriculum that will allow them to move to Grade 2 in May 2022. Two conditionalities prevail, namely, parental consent and pupils meeting the readiness criterion further to a school based assessment. I reiterate that the pupils in that category are among the oldest of their class group.

Pupils born from 01 June to 31 December 2015 will pursue their studies at Grade 1 level and will transit to Grade 2 in January 2023. It is not envisaged to allow all pupils in Grade 1 to transit to Grade 2 this year.