

PRIMARY

SCHOOLS/TEACHERS

YEAR 2023

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

PRIMARY SCHOOLS – STAFF SHORTAGE – JANUARY 2023 TO DATE

(28.03.2023)

(No. B/26) **Dr. M. Gungapersad (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology whether, in regard to the primary, State secondary and private secondary schools respectively, she will state the present shortages of teaching and non-teaching staff in each category since the resumption of school in January 2023 to date.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology (Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun): Mr Speaker, Sir, at the beginning of the school year, there were some shortages in teaching and non-teaching staff in some schools. This situation arose due to a panoply of reasons including, retirement of staff, promotion exercises as well as the availing of vacation leave. To palliate the shortages, the Ministry has had recourse to the services of supply teachers for both primary and secondary schools. Furthermore, the Ministry, through the Public Service Commission, is in the process of recruiting Educators for primary and secondary schools. As regards private secondary schools, each has its own recruitment process and as per their respective entitlements.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as at date, we have noted that there are a few areas, a few subjects where teachers are lacking but necessary measures are being taken at the level of the Ministry.

Dr. Gungapersad: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether recruitment of Educators in secondary school was affected because of the Education (Amendment No. III) Regulations 2022 which barred graduates who did not have PGCE or alternative qualification from joining the teaching profession and ultimately, in the Cabinet meeting of

Friday 24 February, this decision was reviewed and moratorium was given for degree holders.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Not at all, Mr Speaker, Sir, because the measure was taken on 21 December 2022 and normally schools recruit their teachers prior to the entry of school in January and we expect that the recruitment process occurs before that but nevertheless, the measure taken, the regulation proposes that teachers that are recruited should be bearers of a PGCE. Now, the amendment that we have brought was simply to allow teachers who are already following PGCE courses or enrolled for such courses to be allowed to be taken as Educators by schools.

Dr. Gungapersad: As at 07 March, a shortage of around 400 Educators was being deplored and until last Wednesday, 22 March 2023, there was an interview process going on for supply teachers and in spite of that, 400 teachers are missing, only 200 eligible persons turned up for interview. What measures will be taken to ensure that the second semester is not affected like the first semester?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, we have already recruited the supply teachers. As I have just stated, there are a few areas where it seems that there are no candidates who have applied for the post of supply teacher but we are still looking at the possibilities of having teachers who have just retired to join the system but as at date, we have already filled in the posts.

Dr. Gungapersad: Hon. Minister, the semester is coming to an end. For subjects like Biology, Design and Communication, Maths, Business and Technology, students have missed a whole term. What measures will be taken so that the studies of these students are not affected?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: I am sure the Rectors of the schools will work with the staff and see how they can remedy the situation, Mr Speaker, Sir.