

PRIMARY

SPECIAL SUPPORT SCHOOL/ZEP

YEAR 2023

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ZEP SCHOOLS – SUPPLEMENTARY SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMME (16.05.2023)

(No. B/528) **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 Supplementary School Feeding Programme in Zone d'Education Prioritaire (ZEP) Schools, she will state the names of the suppliers therefor, indicating the terms and conditions of their respective contract.

The Vice Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology (Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun): Mr Speaker, Sir, the School Supplementary Feeding Project is currently being implemented in 27 ZEP schools. Two types of meals are being provided under the project namely, enhanced meal and hot meals.

The enhanced meals are distributed on a daily basis to around 6,000 students in 24 ZEP schools and the hot meals are provided to some 670 students in three ZEP schools.

The procurement exercise is carried out at the level of the educational zones through a competitive bidding exercise based on specifications. I am tabling a list of suppliers for the School Supplementary Feeding Project in the ZEP schools as well as the terms and conditions of the contract.

Mr Speaker, Sir, a new bidding exercise for the provision of enhanced meals in ZEP schools has been launched. Bids are currently being evaluated and it is expected that contracts will be awarded by the end of 2023.

Dr. Gungapersad: Will the hon. Minister inform the House what mechanisms have been set up to ensure the quality of meals served to the children strictly adheres to whatever stipulated in the contracts of these food suppliers?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, as per the terms of reference, there are certain inspections that are carried out and I have noted that the heads of schools are supposed to monitor the situation and there are responsibilities attributed to the food caterers as well. I am tabling the whole set of documents, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Dr. Gungapersad: Hon. Minister, will you inform the House whether we have had noncompliant food suppliers in recent times and if yes, what actions have been taken against them?

Mr Speaker: Before you reply to this question, let me remind the hon. Member that you do not address a question directly to the Minister, you address the question to the Chair. It is through the Chair that you talk in this Parliament.

Dr. Gungapersad: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister of Education whether non-compliant suppliers of food have been noted in recent times and if yes, what measures have been taken against them?

Mr Speaker: Very good!

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have noted that in a correspondence dated 10 April 2023, the Principal Public Health and Food Safety Inspector of Bambous Health Office informed that during a routine collection of food samples, the enhanced meal comprising of bread and roasted chicken with vegetables in one school revealed the presence of E. coli. The caterer also provided meals to two other ZEP schools and according to the reports obtained from the schools, there were no complains about any problem that cropped up.

However, actions were taken and the company had been requested to have health clearance certificates from Health and Sanitary Office for the resumption of distribution of enhanced meals.

Mr Speaker: Next question!