



PSEA – GRANTS ALLOCATION – PRIVATE GRANT-AIDED SECONDARY SCHOOLS

(No. B/106) Mrs A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to complaints made against the Private Secondary Education Authority for the allocation of grants to Private grant-aided Secondary Schools, he will state if his Ministry will initiate an inquiry thereon.

Dr. Gungapersad: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue for this question.

With regard to complaints made by Private grant-aided Secondary Schools against the Authority, the main concerns raised by managers relate to various operational and financial matters. In recent times, the key issues brought forward include the need to review the comprehensive grant formula, shortage of educators in private secondary schools, the status of a secondary school boys and girls located in the eastern region, and complaints against another college.

The last review of the comprehensive grant formula was conducted in September 2023 for the 2024-2026 period. Two legal cases were filed against the Private Secondary Education Authority concerning the comprehensive grant formula. One challenging the 2020-2023 formula which was overturned by the Supreme Court, and another against the 2024-2026 formula which is still under review. An application for conditional leave to appeal to the Supreme Court's judgment of 25 July 2024 to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council made on 19 August 2024. The Supreme Court granted leave on 04 February 2025 but on 18 February 2025, the appeal was withdrawn at the request of the applicant's counsel.

Madam Speaker, with a view to addressing concerns regarding the comprehensive grant formula, Government has approved the introduction of a new formula for the period 2025-2027. When I say Government, it is this Government, the present Government. A technical working group chaired by the Senior Chief Executive of my Ministry and including key stakeholders has been set up to –

- (i) Review the grant formula;
- (ii) Address any shortcomings in validation and disbursement, and
- (iii) Make recommendations.

A first meeting was held on 17 January 2025. Pending this review, the Private Education Secondary Authority has disbursed grants on an interim basis to facilitate the running and upkeep of the private secondary schools.

Regarding the shortage of educators in private secondary schools, managers have raised concerns following the implementation of the Education (Amendment. No. 4) Regulations 2023 – this is the legacy we have from the previous Government. Alright? They messed up with everything and we are trying to sort out things now – which introduced new qualification requirements for educators including the requirement to hold a degree in the subject to be taught and a Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE).

This amendment led to a shortage of educators in 2024 in private secondary schools as many potential candidates did not meet these stringent criteria though they were graduates, some of University of Mauritius. In response to these concerns, the Education (Amendment) Regulations 2025 has been introduced, whereby the requirement for a PGCE prior to

recruitment has been waived. Furthermore, educators will no longer be required to hold a degree in the subject to be taught but rather a degree related to the subject to be taught. However, they will be encouraged to have their PGCE within a reasonable timeframe after being recruited.

As regards to a school found to the eastern region, a case has been lodged before the Supreme Court by Mr V.C.J. in his capacity as trustee against the Authority. The case seeks among others, the disbursement of grants to the schools and the appointment of new managers in compliance with instructions from the trustee. Legal advice is presently being sought on these matters.

Madam Speaker, I also wish to inform the House that my Ministry remains committed to addressing concerns raised by stakeholders in the private secondary education sector and ensuring that all matters are handled in a fair and transparent manner. This is changement. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Yes?

Mrs Savabaddy: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Je remercie l'honorable ministre pour sa réponse.

Il y a eu ce cas d'un collège dans l'est, M. le ministre, contre lequel leur psy réclame une enquête pour divers abus. Par exemple, les parents doivent payer R 2 600 – je cite bien – pour la PTA sinon leurs enfants n'auront pas accès aux manuels scolaires distribués gratuitement par le gouvernement aux salles d'examens. En sus des autres maldonnes, l'honorable ministre peut-il demander à ses officiers d'enquêter sur ces abus afin de mettre fin à de telles pratiques ? Je cite : 'À noter que ce collège précis reçoit une compensation du gouvernement, R 350 000 mensuellement pour les dépenses administratives et pour la maintenance de l'école, sachant qu'annuellement ils reçoivent R 140 millions.' Merci.

Dr. Gungapersad: Madam Speaker, I would reassure the hon. Member that we are being proactive; we did not wait for the PQ in order to initiate, in order to create an independent committee which is reviewing the mechanism in which this secondary school, which we are not naming; neither you nor me, is managing funds. Rest assured everything is being done in all transparency and accountability is definitely at the top of the agenda. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Mr Ramkalawon: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Is the Minister aware that last year, it was during the month of August and September that a massive recruitment was done by the ex-government? This created a great problem within private secondary schools. What are some of the measures that the Minister can propose so that in this coming year, we do not face the same problem? Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Minister!

Dr. Gungapersad: This is something which is ongoing. I understand the sector, just like the hon. Member. Very often, when PSC advertise for posts in Secondary Schools, there is an influx as Educators who work in private secondary schools move from private and go to state secondary

schools, creating a void in the private secondary schools. So, that is why we have waived that PGCE thing and we have enlarged this spectrum of recruitment for Educators. That is why for the subject to be taught, they need a degree related to that subject. This is going to ease the situation. And fortunately, the public is aware that this year, we did not have shortage of staff thanks to this government.