



REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS

EIGHTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY 17 DECEMBER 2024

STATE SECONDARY ACADEMIES & REGIONAL SCHOOLS GRADE 10 – INTAKE UP TO 2024

(No. I B/61) Mr R. Jhummun (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to State Secondary Academies and Regional Schools, he will state the yearly intake of boys and girls at Grade 10 level, respectively, since the implementation thereof to date, indicating if his Ministry proposes the phasing out thereof and, if not, why not.

Dr. Gungapersad: Madam Speaker, I am informed that in the wake of the implementation of the Nine-Year Continuous Basic Education reforms, provision was made for successful candidates at the National Certificate of Education (NCE) to be provided with the option of either pursuing their studies in Grade 10 in their respective regional schools or being admitted in one of the twelve designated academies.

The criteria for admission to academies are provided under regulation 18B of the Education (Amendment) Regulations 2018 which inter alia states that –

“(2) Priority of admission to Grade 10 in an Academy shall be determined on the basis of the grade aggregate and the relative performance of the eligible pupil in the best 8 core subjects, including English, French and Mathematics, at the NCE assessment and the choice of the responsible party (...)”

Madam Speaker, as is the case for each tier where admission is made on the basis of relative performance of students, candidates have to strive very hard to achieve the best results to secure a place in a good academy.

I am informed that those who have applied for a seat in an academy but have not been able to secure a seat in the school of their choice are also given the opportunity of applying for a transfer to another academy. In all the cases of allocation of seats that are carried out by the MES, Madam Speaker, the determining criteria remains the relative performance of the student in the eight best subjects.

Madam Speaker, I am informed that the yearly intake in Grade 10 in the 12 Academies for the academic years 2021-2022, 2023-2024 and 2025 for boys and girls are as follows –

- 2021-2022 – boys: 1,084, girls: 1,084;
- 2023 – boys: 1,018, girls: 1,056;
- 2024 – boys: 1,000, girls: 1,069, and
- 2025 – boys: 1,003, girls: 1,062.

As regards the Regional Schools, I am informed that the yearly intake in Grade 10 for the Republic of Mauritius for the academic years 2021-2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025 for boys and girls are as follows –

- 2021-2022 – boys: 3,548, girls: 4,335;
- 2023 – boys: 3,973, girls: 4,662;
- 2024 – boys: 3,966, girls: 4,997, and
- 2025 – boys: 3,381, girls: 3,973.

Madam Speaker, with your permission, I am tabling the Statistics for the yearly intake of boys and girls in Grade 10 for both academies and regional schools.

Madam Speaker, we espouse the philosophy that higher ability students should be provided with ample opportunities to unleash their full potential and develop their talents. However, no structured survey has been carried out over the years to assess the degree to which academies have been able to achieve the initial purpose of operating as centres of excellence.

In fact, it has been noted that there has been a number of problems, challenges, associated with a mixed school environment being offered in academies as well as with the disruption that is caused in the pedagogical pathway of the student when he or she frequently shifts to another school depriving him or her of a sense of belonging to a school and imbibing himself or herself with the school ethos.

Moreover, a vacuum is left behind in the regional school when the best students join academies resulting in the school environment and these regional schools being affected and

the morale and motivation of those left behind adversely impacted. In fact, these problems result in social, psychological and cultural factors that influence the student behaviour and interaction thus affecting the momentum and synergy at all levels due to the perception that there are better performing schools or even teachers who are posted in academies while in reality the facilities and the services offered are the same in all secondary schools.

Madam Speaker, those who joined academies are not in a better situation either. After joining a secondary school at Grade 7, they are again made to join an academy in Grade 10 and then they are provided with an additional opportunity to change school in Grade 12 where they get their SC results. Also they have to adapt to the co-educational environment. The staff of academies have also reported a decrease in academic performance of students mainly related to adaptability problems.

Moreover parents and staff have also raised concern about the security of children in the co-ed environment in these schools. All these elements will have to be looked into and an assessment carried out. On the basis of the findings of this exercise, a review of the orientation for academies will accordingly be carried out for implementation as from intake of 2026.

Madam Speaker, in this regard I wish to inform the House that my Ministry had on Monday 09 December 2024 and Monday 16 December 2024 organised the preparatory meetings with all concerns stakeholders in the Education Sector to receive their inputs which will culminate on the holding of the Assises de l'éducation scheduled to be held in April 2025. The outcome of this exercise will pave the way forward for a review of the present educational system and formulation of new policy direction as from the year 2026 including that of upper secondary education. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you very much, Minister! The hon. Second Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil!

You wanted to have a go? Okay?

Mr Jhummun: Madame la présidente,....

Madam Speaker: Catch my eye!

Mr Jhummun: Permettez-moi de faire une petite réflexion. Never in the history of this country so much harm has been done in so less time.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Member! You are putting a question or making a statement?

Mr Jhummun: Before putting my question, I just want to make a small statement being from the educational sector myself.

Madam Speaker: No! I am sorry, I will not be able to allow you because if I do this, I will be setting up precedent and everybody will want to make a statement. I can understand. I do not speak; I also listen because it is a very interesting subject of course. Please put a question! No statement!

Mr Jhummun: Thank you. So, after so much harm has been done to the school community, can the hon. Minister tell this House and the population at large whether, a proper study was carried out prior to the implementation of such a project by the so called pedagogue? Thank you.

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you hon. Member. Definitely, this Government is going to repair, to make amend for the harm the children of this Republic. Rest assured this Government will take into consideration the views, the opinions of all stakeholders before deciding the way forward.

Madam Speaker: There is Member who is very good at catching my eye. Hon. Mr François!

Mr François: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. With regard to the 'Assises de l'éducation, which is due for next year, will the hon. Minister extend consultation in Rodrigues with all stakeholders thereat?

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you hon. Member. There is a consensus that a delegation from the Ministry of Education moves to Rodrigues in order to listen to the stakeholders in Rodrigues because they have specific problems which are there for Rodrigues. Rest assured that this will be done hon. Member.