



**Summary of Proceedings
Public Hearing**

Joint Select Committee on Social Services and Public Administration
Held on Friday February 26th, 2016

Inquiry: An inquiry into the current level of violence among students in schools with particular focus on physical and cyberbullying.

Venue: The public hearing was held on Friday February 26th 2016 from 10:05 a.m. to 12:18 p.m. in the J. Hamilton Maurice Room, Mezzanine Floor, Office of the Parliament, Tower D, the Port of Spain International Waterfront Centre, 1A Wrightson Road, Port of Spain.

Committee members

The following committee members were present:

- i. Dr. Dhanayshar Mahabir – Chairman
- ii. Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Ancil Antoine, MP
- iii. Mrs. Christine Newallo-Hosein, MP
- iv. Ms. Nadine Stewart
- v. Mr. Hafeez Ali

Witnesses who appeared

The following officials of the Ministry of Education appeared before the Committee:

- Ms. Gillian Macintyre - Permanent Secretary
- Mr. Harrilal Seecharan - Chief Education Officer
- Ms. Natasha Barrow - Deputy Permanent Secretary
- Mr. Claudelle Mckellar - Deputy Permanent Secretary
- Mr. Ashram Deoraj - Director, School Supervisor
- Ms. Karen Cooper - Systems Analyst II

- Dr. Kathy Bharrathsingh - Manager, Students' Support Services

The following officials of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) also appeared before the Committee:

- Mrs. Enez Joseph - W/Assistant Commissioner (Ag.), Community Relations
- Mr. Curtis Paul - Superintendent, Community Relations
- Mr. Michael Pierre – Assistant Superintendent, Public Information Officer
- Ms. Ellen Lewis - Head Corporate Communications
- Mr. Dale Joseph - Sergeant (Ag.), Cyber-Crime Unit

Key Issues Discussed

The following are the key subject areas/issues discussed during the hearing:

- i. The quality of teaching as an inhibitor to successful schooling;
- ii. The important role of parents and guardians in the education of children;
- iii. The option of imposing certain mandatory responsibilities on parents with regards to the education and discipline of their children;
- iv. Whether it was the policy of the Ministry of Education that all schools should have a PTA;
- v. The effectiveness of Parenting-in-Action Workshops;
- vi. The number of participants in Police Youth Clubs;
- vii. The role of the Community Policing Secretariat in treating with video evidence of violence amongst female students;
- viii. The type of counselling provided by the Ministry of Education and the TTPS to students who perpetrated acts of violence;
- ix. The type of rehabilitative assistance provided by the Ministry and the TTPS to students suspended from school;
- x. The need to collect data on “high-risk” students;
- xi. Anti-bullying initiatives;
- xii. Whether the National School Code Of Conduct is applicable to both denominational and government schools;
- xiii. The procedure for providing redress to students who have been bullied;
- xiv. A recommendation from the Committee for the TTPS to increase the level of police presence in and around schools to deter violent behaviour among students;

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(Including Education, Health, Gender, Tourism, Public Administration, Labour, Culture,
Community Development and other Social Services)*

- xv. Whether Police Youth Clubs take follow-up action on students who have received counselling at the Clubs;
- xvi. The number of students who are re-offenders within the school system;
- xvii. Mechanisms to deal with students who were suspended and returned to school;
- xviii. School management Boards and the role of Principals in managing the schools;
- xix. The number of guidance counsellors within the education system and whether this is adequate;
- xx. The number of psychologists that provide support to schools;;
- xxi. Mechanisms to treat with teacher absenteeism and punctuality;
- xxii. Support available for students with psychological disorders and special needs;
- xxiii. How the Ministry of Education addresses the disparity of managing government schools versus denominational schools;
- xxiv. Distinguishing the role of the guidance officer, school social worker and psychologist in the education system;
- xxv. The possible use of Boot Camps to treat with delinquent students;
- xxvi. The separation of persistent offenders from those who can be rehabilitated;
- xxvii. The use of extracurricular activities such as Girl Guides, sports, Cadet Force to combat violence;
- xxviii. The process of collaborating with other sectors to treat with students displaying violent and deviant behaviour;
- xxix. The impact curriculum reform may have on the behavioral pattern of students;
- xxx. Whether Morals and Values are being taught at schools;
- xxxi. Mechanisms/opportunities available to Principals to exchange information and ideas; and
- xxxii. Utilisation of young national icons as role models.

You may contact the Committee's Secretary at jcsspa@tparliament.org or 624-7275 Ext. 2283

Committees Unit

Friday 26th February 2016