



## **MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**

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NEWS RELEASE...

## **STATUS ON MUCURAPO SECONDARY & PALO SECO GOVERNMENT PRIMARY SCHOOL**

### **MUCURAPO SECONDARY**

Students of the Mucurapo (Junior) Secondary School are to report to the school on October 1, 2007 according to an agreement arrived at on September 17 in discussions with teachers, contractors and representatives of the Ministry of Education.

The Ministry's team has proposed that school continue at this site for one week beyond the end of the school term and until December 21. Teachers and students will make up for the lost contact time during the remaining two terms of this academic year.

The Mucurapo Secondary – formerly the Mucurapo Junior Secondary – is one of six secondary schools being Deshifted and Converted. The Deshifting and Conversion will produce an all-age single shift (Forms 1 –V/VI) secondary school that will facilitate equity and improved quality in the provision of secondary education. Simultaneous with the deshifting and conversion, the Ministry has put in place new arrangements for Curriculum adaptation and delivery, human resource management and Student Support Services. As a result, the Ministry engaged contractors to upgrade student classrooms, workshops and toilet facilities. The contractors have assured that the additional facilities at Mucurapo will be ready for occupation by the end of this month.

### **PALO SECO GOVERNMENT PRIMARY SCHOOL**

A Council that includes parent and community representatives, teachers, school supervisors and a PETROTRIN representative met at the Palo Seco Government Primary School today, September 18 and unanimously agreed to accept PETROTRIN's offer of continued accommodation for all students and teachers at the Petrotrin Beach Camp facilities at Palo Seco. It is expected that the school will be temporarily relocated by Tuesday, September 25.

The Council was established following discussions and visit to Palo Seco by a Ministry team on Monday, September 17 and September 6.

The Ministry's team was led by Permanent Secretary Mrs. Angella Jack and included the Deputy Permanent Secretary Mrs. Marlene Juman-Redhead, Chief Education Officer, Mr. Peter O'Neil and Director of School Supervision, Mr. Roland Maharaj. Permanent Secretary Jack, in a plea for consensus among teachers, parents and community activists, insisted that the Ministry's responsibility is for the health and welfare of the school children.

In August 2007 Cabinet agreed to the award of a contract amounting to over \$2.4 million for the refurbishment of buildings owned by Petroroleum Company of Trinidad and Tobago

Limited, Petrotrin, and the Palo Seco Agricultural Enterprises Limited, PSAEL, to temporarily accommodate the students and teachers of the Palo Seco Government Primary School.

This follows a ‘condition and defects survey’ conducted by Petrotrin that revealed that its Beach Camp facility which housed the students was no longer safe and presented risks to its occupants. Following that ‘condition and defects survey,’ the Ministry of Education held discussions with Petrotrin and PSAEL and it was agreed that arrangements be entered into with PSAEL for a lease arrangement for the transformation of an administration building and two adjacent warehouses at Palo Seco into temporary accommodation for the school’s 250 students and 19 teachers.

However, in discussions with Ministry representatives on September 3, a six-member delegation of parents and community activists indicated that they held separate discussions with PETROTRIN and by consensus agreed to alternative arrangements than that presented by the Ministry.

On September 6 a team from Ministry led by the Permanent Secretary visited the Palo Seco area where they met with about 150 persons from the community including parents, teachers, students and community activists. The parents and community representatives requested that, in addition to the two buildings on the Palo Seco Government Primary School compound, that tents be erected to accommodate the remaining students. Representatives of PETROTRIN including its Vice President for Exploration and Production Mr. Victor Mitchell and Community Relations Officer, Mr. Arthur Sanderson attended that meeting.

September 18, 2007