



# MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

## Q & A

### ON TEACHER SUPPLY IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

**Q. How many schoolteachers are there in the primary school sector in Trinidad and Tobago?**

A. Primary schools in Trinidad and Tobago are supported by 7,738 teachers of which 6,180 are Training College graduates or Teachers 1 and 1,558 are Assistant Teachers.

**Q. What is the size of the Primary School population?**

A. There are over 131,000 students in our primary schools

**Q. What is the average student-teacher ratio in the primary school?**

A. The agreed ratio with the Trinidad and Tobago Teachers' Union is as follows:

Infants 1 and 2	- 1:20
Standards 1 – 5	- 1:25

The current national average is - 1:17

**Q. Why does it seem that there is a teacher shortage in the primary schools?**

A. The issue is distribution. As a Church-State education system, placement takes into consideration, among other things, religious preferences of the Denominational School Boards; the location of the school with the vacancy to the residence of the applicant; teacher movement; transfers and replacement.

**Q. What is the total number of Government Primary and Denominational Primary Schools in Trinidad?**

- Government Primary Schools: 124
- Denominational Primary Schools 322
  
- In Tobago the 22 Primary Schools are administered by the Tobago House of Assembly

**Q. Is there an anomaly of overstaffing and understaffing existing side by side in the Primary School sector at this time?**

A. Yes, and this occurs where there exists either an increase or decrease in the school population. This results in a variance in the student teacher ratios that causes either a surplus or deficit in the teacher population.

**Q. How does the Ministry of Education identify a vacancy in the Primary School sector?**

A A vacancy in this sector refers to a position on the staff establishment of a school without a serving incumbent. Such a vacancy arises due to retirement, death, resignation and abandonment of position. A temporary vacancy occurs when an assigned teacher proceeds on approved leave of absence: i.e. Maternity, Sabbatical or Study Leave.

**Q. What is the Ministry of Education doing to fill the present deficit of teachers in the Primary School sector?**

- A. Currently the Ministry of Education conducts interviews to select suitable candidates for the Teaching Service.
- Maintains an approved Order of Merit listing of successful applicants for the position of Assistant Teachers. (An approved listing is one ratified by the Teaching Service Commission.)
  - Maintains a listing of Assistant Teachers who would have previously received temporary employment
  - Identifies vacancies in Primary Schools as they arise
  - Utilizes individuals on the listing of Assistant Teachers previously employed
  - Utilizes individuals on the Order of Merit listing

In the case of Government Assisted schools (Denominational schools) recommendations from the respective Boards of Management are sought for candidates to fill existing vacancies in keeping with the requirements of the Concordat.

Please send your further questions to the:

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