



Ministry of Education & Scientific Research

**ENDING THE RAT RACE  
IN PRIMARY EDUCATION  
AND BREAKING THE  
ADMISSION BOTTLENECK  
AT SECONDARY LEVEL**

**THE WAY FORWARD**

May 2001



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# INTRODUCTION

It is generally acknowledged that the major dysfunction of the Mauritian educational system is to be found in the bottleneck situation constraining access from primary to secondary education.

In actual fact, for the 18,000 children who pass the CPE examination every year, and more especially for the 4,500 who obtain 4 A's, there is intense competition to secure a place in the small number of perceived 'star' secondary schools, where some 1,000 places are, in actual fact, available.

It has long been observed that such competition results in a 'rat race' beginning right from the lower primary years, exerting immense psychological pressure on both students and their parents and perverting the very function of the school within society. The whole educational process is thereby vitiated, CPE ranking emerging as the natural corollary of the star school system which imperatively requires an instrument of selection as precise as it is arbitrary and ruthless to distinguish the few hundred to be admitted to the star schools from the rest.

To do away with CPE ranking in the short term accordingly calls for a comprehensive strategy premised on the following:

- Introduction of a fair and objective grading system which eschews the excessive competition of the ranking system while providing an appropriate assessment mechanism and preserving an element of healthy competition conducive to academic achievement.
- An intensive programme of extension, renovation and construction of secondary schools so as to vastly increase the choice of State Secondary Schools given to students in all regions of the Republic.
- The conversion of high demand state secondary schools into Form VI colleges so as to ensure 'parity of esteem' between state secondary schools (Form I-V) and thereby eliminate the need for so extreme an instrument of selection as the CPE ranking.

- Regionalisation of admissions to Form I so as to guarantee a fair measure of parental choice but within a given geographical region. In so doing, another flaw of the CPE ranking, the arbitrary attribution of Form I places in total disregard of residence, is done away with.

The above proposals cannot be dissociated one from the other and together offer the sole realistic formula for the immediate abolition of the CPE ranking and all its related evils.

**This comprehensive strategy is based on massive investment of Government into education which will translate into the setting up, over the next 4½ years, of 49 new secondary schools as follows:**

#### THE STATE SECONDARY SECTOR

	2001	2006
<b>Total no. of secondary institutions*</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>90</b>
Secondary Schools	41	73
Form VI Colleges	-	17

<b>Form I seats**</b>	5,255	11,480
<b>Lower VI seats**</b>	3,240	6,220

*\* Includes the four schools of the Mauritius Educational Development Company (MEDCO) and the three schools of the Rodrigues Educational Development Company (REDCO).*

*\*\*MEDCO and REDCO schools included.*

# **ABOLITION OF CPE RANKING**

## **I - WHY DO WE NEED TO ABOLISH THE RANKING SYSTEM?**

There are three main reasons for the abolition of the CPE Ranking:

1. Ranking has become an instrument of selection in the context of a dramatic mismatch between demand and supply for Form I places in a few highly regarded secondary schools.
2. Ranking is blind to the residential factor as admission to secondary schools for ranked candidates is carried out on a national basis. A child may thus be admitted to a college very far from her/his place of residence and spend hours in daily travel.
3. Ranking of students at the end of the primary cycle perverts the role of the school which is forced to ensure that a maximum number of children are ranked in the top list and this becomes its primary objective.

The aims and objectives of primary education have thus been perverted by the rat race to make children obtain a place in one of the 'star' secondary schools in accordance with the marks obtained in four examinable academic subjects only. Worse, admission to such schools is determined by so narrow a margin as one decimal place, which is pedagogically unsound, totally arbitrary and unfair.

This lopsided 'education' leaves by the wayside such important aspects of education as physical development, aesthetic appreciation and creativity, and the importance of learning to live together in a multi-cultural society as responsible citizens.

With the abolition of ranking, schooling reclaims its primary function, which is the holistic development of the child. A measure of healthy competition will be maintained for the child to excel, for her/him to compete with herself/himself instead of engaging in a permanent stressful rivalry with other children on a national basis.

## **II - HOW DO WE ABOLISH RANKING?**

RANKING WILL BE ABOLISHED AND THE NEED FOR RANKING ELIMINATED THROUGH A FOUR-PRONGED APPROACH:

- 1. ADOPTION OF THE GRADE SYSTEM AS THE MEASURE OF ACHIEVEMENT.**
- 2. CONSTRUCTION OF NEW STATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS.**
- 3. TRANSFORMATION OF 'STAR' STATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS INTO FORM VI COLLEGES.**
- 4. REGIONALISATION OF ADMISSION TO FORM I.**

# **1. THE GRADE SYSTEM**

A new alphabetical Grade System will replace the Ranking System as follows:

<b>Range of Marks</b>	<b>Alphabetical Grading</b>
75 to 100	A
60 to 74	B
50 to 59	C
40 to 49	D
30 to 39	E
< 30	U (unclassified)

Up to 2005, all children obtaining the present minimum pass grades (Grade E in English, French and Mathematics and an overall 35%) will join the secondary mainstream. All those who do not achieve the pass grades at CPE after two attempts will join the secondary pre-vocational stream.

By 2006, the Grade System will have evolved into a record of achievement rather than an instrument of selection so that no child is classified as a 'failure'. With standard setting throughout the years of primary education and the timely introduction of remedial measures, all children would, by then, without having to repeat Std. VI, be entitled to entry in Form I either in the mainstream or in the pre-vocational stream.

## **THE IMPLICATIONS**

### **HOW DO WE GUARD AGAINST ANY RISK OF "NIVELLEMENT PAR LE BAS"?**

The school educational system will be made up of four Key Stages:

1. Lower Primary (3 levels – Std. I-III).
2. Upper Primary (3 levels – Std. IV-VI).
3. Lower Secondary (3 levels – Form I-III).
4. Upper Secondary (2 levels – Form IV-V).

Key Stages 3 and 4 will consist of two streams: the academic mainstream and the pre-vocational one.

Thereafter, students may opt to join Form VI Colleges or Training Centres or enter the world of work.

### PRIMARY

The democratisation of access to education and the doing away with the extreme and senseless competition generated by the CPE Ranking in no way implies that individual achievement will not be recognised and encouraged.

Schools will, in fact, be expected to identify the brightest students, in the same way as they are called upon to target those with special needs. A Gifted and Talented Programme will eventually be introduced to make the curriculum more challenging for the brightest and allow more time for what they do best.

The Grade A will range from 75-100 marks instead of the 70-100 present range so that, in the absence of ranking, an improved measure of achievement is available. The child will henceforth be challenged to achieve the best grades without having to compete against her/his classmates as rivals for ranking.

Exceptional achievement will be rewarded at all levels throughout the school system. The rewards will take the form of Certificates of Achievement and/or prizes. At the end of the primary cycle, exceptional achievement in any subject will be rewarded by awarding a Distinction to children obtaining 95 marks and above in that subject at the CPE examination - The Distinction will, however, not be taken into consideration for admission to Form I.

At present, a child is admitted to primary school after s/he has reached the age of 5 in the previous year. This implies that child A who was born at the end of December 1996 will be admitted to Standard I in January 2002 whereas child B born at the beginning of January 1997 (i.e. only a few days after child A) will be admitted only in January 2003.

Furthermore, all children do not develop at the same pace. Children who master concepts much faster than their peers as well as those who master them at a much slower rate can feel bored and become disruptive if their needs cannot be met in the class in which they are placed.

The possibility of allowing some children to either skip one year or take one more year in a particular key stage during the first two key stages will be considered in accordance with their aptitude and progress. Parents will be consulted before a decision is taken to allow a child to either skip or repeat a year. However, it will be the prerogative of the head of school to take the decision subject to the approval of the Ministry and of the Responsible Party. Furthermore, no child should skip or repeat a level more than once within the primary cycle.

Students will be assessed at all levels of their schooling to allow for the timely adoption of remedial measures. However, there will be no examination for promotion from one key stage to the next, except that up to 2005, the Std. VI examinations will be maintained in its present form to determine promotion to Form I in either the pre-vocational stream or the academic mainstream.

## SECONDARY

At the secondary cycle, each school will be allowed to consider the advisability of placing the students in different streams in order not to hold back some of them or make it difficult for others to follow a class. The school's management will be able to decide on this aspect of schooling in close consultation with the PTA.

With an eventual review of the group certificate principle in secondary schooling (School Certificate or equivalent), the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> key stages would also provide for a shorter or an extended period to study particular subjects as far as practicable.

The structural reforms presented in this document will be followed by a drive for Quality Assurance in schools through the definition and introduction of a Literacy and Numeracy Strategy, the rethinking of school pedagogy, standard setting at all levels, close monitoring of school performance, strengthening school management and upgrading of teachers' skills.

Within such a perspective, appropriate pedagogical measures will be introduced to encourage all children to strive for excellence and the performance of each school closely monitored.

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## **2. NEW STATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS (FORM I-V)**

With the construction of a large number of state secondary schools in the years to come and the extensions in existing State Secondary Schools together with conversions of SSS Vocational, the bottleneck situation will no longer exist to justify a selection instrument as pernicious as CPE ranking.

Consequent on the introduction of compulsory 11-year schooling and the enrolment of some 3,500 additional students each year in the pre-vocational classes within the secondary schools, the secondary education system will shortly face the challenge of having to offer an additional number of 3,500 places per year in Form I.

Government has therefore set itself the objective of widening the scope of parental choice through the provision of new schools with upgraded infrastructural facilities.

### **HOW MANY NEW STATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS (FORM I-V) AND WHERE LOCATED?**

Within the next five years, 43 new secondary schools (Form I-V) will be in operation in the Republic of Mauritius: 40 in the island of Mauritius and 3 in Rodrigues.

#### **ISLAND OF MAURITIUS**

The following infrastructural developments will be effected in the island of Mauritius:

- Setting up of 40 new state secondary schools comprising the construction of 33 new State Secondary Schools (Form I-V) and the conversion of six SSS Vocational and the former D. Ramphul SSS at Pamplémousses (present location of Regional Directorate No. 2 - North) into new secondary schools.
- Upgrading of three existing Form I-III SSS into full-fledged State Secondary Schools (Form I-V).
- Extension of four existing State Secondary Schools.

## CONSTRUCTION

The programme of construction of new secondary schools has been so worked out that all regions of the Republic are provided with an adequate number of secondary educational institutions.

Sixteen new SSS (Form I-V) will be built during 2001 and 2002. They will be located at:

1. Bell Village (Boys).
2. Ebène (Boys).
3. Ebène (Girls).
4. Ilot – Rabindranath Tagore Institute.
5. La Gaulette.
6. La Vigie (Boys).
7. Mapou (Boys).
8. Palma (Boys).
9. Phoenix (Boys).
10. Port Louis (Boys).
11. Port Louis (Girls).
12. Quartier Militaire (Girls).
13. Quatre Bornes (Girls).
14. Sodnac (Girls).
15. Solférino (Girls).
16. Vacoas (Girls).

[See Annexures I and II for existing SSS and new SSS in 2003]

The precise locations of the remaining 17 new State Secondary Schools to be operational in January 2004 (6), January 2005 (7) and January 2006 (4) are presently being determined in line with anticipated demand region wise.

## **CONVERSION**

With the decision to accommodate pre-vocational classes in secondary schools, the SSS Vocational (SSSV) will become redundant. Wherever and whenever possible, the buildings housing the SSSV will be converted into secondary schools.

As mentioned above, the former D. Ramphul SSS at Pamplemousses (Beau-Plan round-about), which houses the Regional Directorate No. 2-North, will also be converted into a State Secondary School (Form I-V).

The programme of conversions will be effected through the complete revamping of the buildings, the construction of additional blocks where necessary and the provision of all standard amenities (playground, laboratories, etc.).

The list of conversions is as follows:

- |                            |      |                                 |
|----------------------------|------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Bambous SSSV            | into | Bambous SSS (Boys).             |
| 2. Ex D. Ramphul SSS       | into | Pamplemousses SSS (Girls).      |
| 3. Goodlands SSSV          | into | Goodlands SSS (Boys).           |
| 4. Icery SSSV              | into | La Vigie SSS (Girls).           |
| 5. Rivière du Rempart SSSV | into | Rivière du Rempart SSS (Girls). |
| 6. St Aubin SSSV           | into | St Aubin SSS (Boys).            |
| 7. Triolet SSSV            | into | Triolet SSS (Boys).             |

## **UPGRADING**

The three Form I-III State Secondary Schools at Terre Rouge (Boys), Pailles (Girls) and Sébastopol (Boys) will be upgraded into full-fledged Form I-V State Secondary Schools.

## **EXTENSION**

New blocks of classrooms will be added to four existing State Secondary Schools to cater for two additional streams in each.

The four State Secondary Schools are:

1. Bel Air (Girls).
2. La Tour Koenig (Girls).
3. Marcel Cabon - Beau Bassin (Boys).
4. Swami Sivananda - Bambous (Girls).

## **PHASING OUT**

With the inclusion of a pre-vocational stream in all secondary schools by January 2003, four SSS Vocational at Mont Roches, Ferney, Ripailles and Rose-Belle will be phased out in as much as the existing buildings do not lend themselves for conversion into State Secondary Schools at present.

## **RODRIGUES ISLAND**

In line with Government Policy of offering a place in Form I to every pupil of the Republic completing the primary cycle, major infrastructural developments are scheduled for Rodrigues too.

The number of secondary institutions on the island will double as will the number of available places in Form I.

Provision for some 560 additional seats will be made to accommodate all students who will have completed the primary cycle as from 2003. This will be achieved by extending existing schools and by constructing new ones.

## **CONSTRUCTION**

Three new 4-stream secondary schools, each including one pre-vocational stream, will be constructed by 2003. These schools will be located at Mont Lubin, Terre Rouge and Songes and will further reinforce the concept of regionalisation.

## **EXTENSION**

In two existing REDCO colleges (Maréchal and Le Chou), new blocks of classrooms will be constructed by 2002 to accommodate one pre-vocational stream and one additional academic stream each.

## **PHASING OUT**

With the inclusion of a pre-vocational stream in all the secondary schools by 2003, the Basic Secondary School at Citronelle will be phased out.

### **INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

<b>ISLAND OF MAURITIUS</b>	<b>YEAR OF COMING INTO OPERATION</b>					
	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003*</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>
Construction of SSS	-	-	16	6	7	4
Extension in existing SSS	-	4	-	-	-	-
Conversion into SSS	-	7	-	-	-	-
Upgrading to SSS	-	3	-	-	-	-
<b>Total number of SSS**</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>67</b>

Additional seats in Form I in SSS	-	1,035	2,800	1,110	1,295	740
<b>Total number seats in Form I in SSS**</b>	<b>4,795</b>	<b>5,830</b>	<b>7,310</b>	<b>8,420</b>	<b>9,715</b>	<b>10,455</b>

\* Number of SSS in 2003 = 45 +16 -11 Form VI Colleges.

Number of seats in SSS in 2003 = 5,830 + 2,800 – 1,320 (Form VI Colleges).

\*\* MEDCO Colleges included.

ISLAND OF RODRIGUES	YEAR OF COMING INTO OPERATION					
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Construction of state-owned secondary schools	-	-	3	-	-	-
Extensions in existing REDCO colleges	-	2	-	-	-	-
<b>Total number of state-owned secondary schools***</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>
Additional seats in Form I in state-owned secondary schools	-	130	435	-	-	-
<b>Total number of seats in Form I in state-owned secondary schools***</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>590</b>	<b>1,025</b>	<b>1,025</b>	<b>1,025</b>	<b>1,025</b>

\*\*\* REDCO Colleges included.

REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
TOTAL NUMBER OF SSS*****	41	48	56	62	69	73
TOTAL NUMBER SEATS IN FORM I IN SSS*****	5,255	6,420	8,335	9,445	10,740	11,480

\*\*\*\*\* MEDCO and REDCO Colleges included.

## THE IMPLICATIONS

### **WILL PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS BE FORCED TO CLOSE DOWN?**

On the basis of projections of demand and supply figures for Form I places, it can safely be assumed that the above described infrastructural plan will not necessarily provoke the closure of private secondary schools.

**FORM I SEATS**  
**(STATE & PRIVATE SCHOOLS)**

	<b>2001</b>	<b>2006</b>
<b>DEMAND</b>	19,100	19,500
<b>SUPPLY</b>	23,200	24,700

As it can be seen in the figures above, the new State Secondary Schools which are to be operational between 2002 and 2006 should create a net additional capacity of 5,200 seats in Form I.

However, the latter figure should be set against the combined effect of the creation of pre-vocational classes in secondary schools and the planned introduction up to 2006 of the 11-year compulsory schooling system. In fact, such reforms should boost the number of students joining Form I by approximately 4,100 once secondary schooling becomes compulsory.

The apparent increase of seats in Form I will allow for a decrease in class size which presently stands at 40 students per class on average at secondary level.

Nevertheless, a small number of long identified 'sub standard' private secondary schools which do not lend themselves to upgrading, are likely to close down over the next few years. A joint committee of the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research and the Federation of Managers of Private Secondary Schools will therefore be set up to study the detailed implications of the present Reform Project, monitor its implementation and spell out the modalities of any eventual closure.

With respect to the personnel of private secondary schools, no redundancies should ensue from the reform proposals in the short to medium term. Should such an eventuality arise in the longer term, security of employment of existing staff will be guaranteed through redeployment. Here again, a joint committee of the Ministry and Employee Unions will be

established to ensure that the interests of the staff of the private secondary sector are adequately safeguarded in any circumstances.

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### **3. TRANSFORMATION OF ‘STAR’ STATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS INTO FORM VI COLLEGES**

#### **WHY DO WE NEED TO TRANSFORM THE ‘STAR SCHOOLS’?**

CPE Ranking exists for the sole purpose of selecting a few hundred out of the 18,000 successful candidates to be admitted to the perceived top star secondary schools. The very notion of a ‘star’ school is premised on such a selection.

Without ranking, there can be no ‘star’ school – A fortiori, there can be no abolition of CPE ranking as long as perceived star schools do exist.

However excellent the modern infrastructure and other amenities provided in other state secondary schools may be, it is noteworthy that the 143 seats available at the QEC in 2001 have been filled by candidates ranked between 1 and 150!

Today, abolition of ranking cannot therefore be envisaged if the Queen Elizabeth College (QEC) and the Royal Colleges are to continue admitting students at Form I level.

Accordingly, the ‘star’ state schools will be converted into Form VI Colleges.

For the 11-year schooling project to become a reality, the secondary education cycle will be divided in two phases:

- (a) Form I-V secondary schools whereat schooling will be compulsory up to the age of 16.
- (b) Form VI colleges whereat schooling will be optional.

All state secondary schools not transformed into Form VI Colleges will offer only Form I-V classes.

After the compulsory schooling of 11 years, students will have the option of either getting admitted to a Form VI College, pursuing vocational training or entering the world of work.

The Form VI Colleges will be national colleges as opposed to State Secondary Schools (Form I-V) which will be regional ones. Students will have a wider choice of schools as there will be, by 2003, 15 Form VI Colleges spread across the island of Mauritius and one in Rodrigues.

The present Form I-VI schools cannot offer a wide range of subjects because, in many cases, there are only a few students studying a particular subject. Form VI Colleges, by means of a certain degree of specialisation, will offer a wider choice of combination of subjects. Form VI Colleges will furthermore ensure a more efficient use of public funds than the Form I-VI schools in terms of cost-effectiveness.

In line with increasing demand for HSC classes and in order to offer more choice to parents, five new Form VI Colleges will be operational by 2003 (including one in Rodrigues) and one more will be operational by 2004.

As from 2003, existing State Secondary Schools being converted into Form VI Colleges will no longer have a Form I intake whereas the existing State Secondary Schools converted into Form I-V secondary schools will have no intake in Form VI.

### **WHICH SCHOOLS ARE CONCERNED?**

The following 11 high demand and 'star' state secondary schools will be transformed into Form VI Colleges:

1. Dr. Maurice Curé SSS – Vacoas (Girls).
2. Droopnath Ramphul SSS – Calebasses (Girls).
3. Gaetan Raynal SSS - Belle Rose (Girls).

4. John Kennedy College - Beau Bassin (Boys).
5. Mahatma Gandhi Institute - Moka.
6. Queen Elizabeth College - Rose Hill (Girls).
7. Royal College Curepipe (Boys).
8. Royal College Port Louis (Boys).
9. Sir A. Raman Osman SSS – Phoenix (Boys).
10. Sir Leckraz Teeluck SSS - Centre-de-Flacq (Boys).
11. Sookdeo Bissoondoyal SSS - Rose Belle (Boys).

The five new Form VI Colleges that will be operational in 2003 will be located at:

1. Bon Accueil (Girls).
2. Nouvelle France (Girls).
3. Piton (Boys)
4. Port Louis (Girls).
5. Citron Donis\* – Rodrigues.

[See Annex III for the Form VI Colleges in 2003]

*\* The SSS Vocational presently under construction at Citron Donis will be converted into a Form VI College.*

### INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

ISLAND OF MAURITIUS	YEAR OF COMING INTO OPERATION				
	2001 & 2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Construction of Form VI College	-	4	1	-	-
Transformation into Form VI College	-	11	-	-	-
<b>Total number of Form VI Colleges</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>
Net additional seats in Lower VI	-	800	1,180	880	-
<b>Total number of seats in Lower VI in Form VI Colleges</b>	<b>3,200*</b>	<b>4,000</b>	<b>5,180</b>	<b>6,060</b>	<b>6,060</b>

*\*For 2001 and 2002, the total number of seats is the total number of seats in Lower VI classes in all SSS offering HSC, including the MEDCO colleges.*

YEAR OF COMING INTO OPERATION

<b>ISLAND OF RODRIGUES</b>	<b>2001 &amp; 2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>
Construction of Form VI College	-	-	-	-	-
Transformation into Form VI College	-	1	-	-	-
<b>Total number of Form VI College</b>	-	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
Additional seats in Lower VI	-	120	-	-	-
<b>Total number seats in Form VI Colleges</b>	<b>40**</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>160</b>

*\*\*For 2001 and 2002, the total number of seats is the total number of seats in Lower VI classes in REDCO colleges.*

<b>REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS</b>	<b>2001 &amp; 2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>
TOTAL NUMBER OF FORM VI COLLEGES	-	16	17	17	17
TOTAL NUMBER OF SEATS IN FORM VI COLLEGES	3,240	4,160	5,340	6,220	6,220

## THE IMPLICATIONS

### **WILL THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE SECONDARY SYSTEM HAVE ADVERSE EFFECTS?**

In the Mauritian secondary school system, the 7-year cycle is already divided into two distinct phases: a 5-year phase leading to School Certificate followed by a 2-year phase leading to Higher School Certificate. There are, therefore, two distinct phases at present with different syllabi and different examinations at the end of each phase.

There is presently a substantial number of students from both private and state secondary schools offering Forms I-V only who, each year, join another school offering HSC classes after Form V. There are also hundreds of students changing school every year at HSC because of combination of subjects.

The experience of other countries such as the USA, France, Singapore and the UK shows that the Form VI college system has been tried and has proved its worth. In fact, in

Singapore, private schools, which did not initially favour the new Form VI College system, have, by now, joined the new system.

Students above 16 nowadays can no longer be considered as immature. There has been a drastic change in the attitude of and towards youngsters. They must be encouraged to evolve in a different environment with a greater degree of freedom coupled with a sense of responsibility.

To facilitate early admission of students into Form VI Colleges, the Cambridge Examinations Syndicate has been requested to communicate to the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate (MES) the School Certificate results by mid-January as from January 2003 instead of mid-February as at present. In addition, a system of computerised processing of application for places in Form VI Colleges will be established.

No effort will be spared in ensuring the efficient management and the adequate supervision of Form VI Colleges. Rectors of these colleges will benefit from specialised training and it is proposed to have two Deputy Rectors who will support each Rector. Boards of Governors will assist in the effective management of the Form VI Colleges.

In line with international experience, special training programmes will be set up for the management and teaching staff of the Form VI colleges.

All the Form VI Colleges will have comparable standard and similar facilities. The existing colleges that will be transformed into Form VI Colleges will be upgraded accordingly.

There will be a close monitoring of standards with clear lines of accountability so as to make the Form VI Colleges centres of excellence.

Provision will be made for extra classes to be run after normal school hours as and when necessary for students of Form VI colleges.

New regulations will be introduced to prescribe the minimum days of effective attendance in schools for any student to sit for the HSC examinations.

## **IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

With the conversion of 11 existing secondary institutions into Form VI colleges and the construction of five such colleges by 2003 and one additionally thereafter, State Form VI Colleges should number 17 by 2006.

Their coming into operation will no way affect private secondary schools.

<b>LOWER VI PLACES</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2006</b>
<b>Demand</b>	<b>7,400</b>	<b>10,300</b>
<b>Supply (Total)</b>	<b>7,440</b>	<b>10,420</b>
State	3,240	6,220
Private	4,200	4,200

Demand for places in Lower VI which presently stands at 7,400 is projected to rise to 10,300 in 2006 because of an increase of a number of children joining the secondary sector, improved performance at School Certificate level and changes in conditions of eligibility for HSC.

At present, State Secondary Schools cater for 3,240 students at Lower VI level and their intake will increase to approximately 6,220 by 2006. Such increase in capacity may allow for a gradual decrease in class size at Form VI level, as appropriate.

It therefore stands to reason that the private secondary schools will continue to be called upon to play a significant role in the provision of education at Form VI level.

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## **4. REGIONALISATION OF ADMISSION IN FORM I**

### **WHY A REGIONAL MODE OF ADMISSION?**

At present, attribution of places in secondary schools is largely determined by CPE ranking, causing students to travel long distances, over long hours and at considerable cost.

Regionalisation of admission is long overdue and should benefit both the schools and the students. As from 2003, admission to State Secondary Schools (Form I–V) will accordingly be effected on a regional basis.

However, to enhance parental choice while allowing for greater specialisation, Form VI colleges will recruit on a national level.

### **WHICH WILL BE THE NEW REGIONS?**

For the purpose of admission to and management of schools in the new system, the island of Mauritius will be divided into four regions while Rodrigues will be considered as a separate region as follows:

Region 1	Port Louis and North
Region 2	Beau Bassin-Rose Hill, Centre and East
Region 3	Curepipe and South
Region 4	Quatre-Bornes, Vacoas-Phoenix and West
Region 5	Rodrigues

Each region combines rural and urban areas so as to ensure effective parental choice in as much as within any particular region, parents may apply freely to any state secondary school.

[See Annexures II and III for the new regional demarcations]

## **WHAT WILL BE THE ADMISSION CRITERIA?**

Where any secondary school is over-subscribed, selection of students to be admitted by the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate (MES) in the academic mainstream will be effected on the basis of the following criteria in order of importance:

1. CPE Grade Aggregate.
2. Residence.

The CPE Grade Aggregate is the sum of the numerical grades - A=5, B=4, C=3, D=2, E=1, U=0 - obtained by a candidate in the examinable subjects.

In the case of Asian Languages/Arabic, these subjects will be conferred the same status as all other examinable subjects for the CPE examination of 2004. Accordingly, as from 2004, the CPE Aggregate of all pupils taking Asian Languages/Arabic will refer to the grades obtained in the eight best subjects.

All pupils will be encouraged to take an Asian Language/Arabic for CPE. To that end, as from this year, pupils not having studied Asian Languages/Arabic before will be offered the possibility of free coaching outside normal school hours as from this year.

The above proposal would allow for the inclusion of Asian Languages/Arabic for purposes of admission to secondary schools without prejudicing the interest of any child.

In the intervening period, the present arrangements in terms of reserved seats in State Secondary Schools for Asian Languages/Arabic will be maintained but on a regional basis.

Admission to Form VI Colleges will be on the basis of the grade aggregate at the School Certificate (SC) examination and combination of subjects offered.

## **THE IMPLICATIONS**

### **‘PARITY OF ESTEEM’**

The new system proposed will provide parents with a wider choice of schools in as much as within the next five years, 49 new secondary schools (Form I-V SSS and Form VI Colleges) will be operational in the Republic of Mauritius – all provided with standard facilities and necessary amenities.

Within each region, parents will be free to seek admission to any secondary school for their child as per grades obtained. To prevent the reappearance of a rigid hierarchy in the public perception of such schools and for ‘parity of esteem’ of schools, measures will be taken to encourage the upgrading of existing schools.

It is important that children who move on to secondary schools do not feel that there are different categories of schools and steps will be taken to correct this erroneous perception through provision of appropriate infrastructure and relevant resources in all schools.

It stands to reason that, in the perspective of the reforms, there will be specific measures to eventually standardise infrastructure and other facilities available in all state secondary schools as well as the MEDCO and REDCO schools. Furthermore, an incentive package for upgrading of private secondary schools will be discussed with the Federation of Managers of Private Secondary Schools.

The posting of teachers in state secondary schools will be rationalised so as to strengthen the regionalisation process and the relevant unions will be consulted to work out the details.

As from this year, those who have not passed the CPE after their second attempt have been given the opportunity to continue their secondary education through the pre-vocational classes. As from 2003, State Secondary Schools will generally have a pre-vocational stream and all private secondary schools will have the opportunity to run, at least, one pre-vocational class.

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### **III - PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

Mauritius is a democratic country that places a premium on the promotion of different cultures, religions and languages. Accordingly, the school system, which has to respond to the needs of everybody, cannot do so through a single state-managed system – Government is fundamentally against the “*école unique*” concept.

As is the case at present, private secondary schools, including the confessional schools, will continue to play an important role in providing an education responsive to the needs of the individual citizen as well as to those of the nation as a whole. They will be free to provide an alternative educational route to that provided by the State.

In the proposed scheme, private secondary schools will accordingly have the option of continuing to run classes from Form I to V or Form I to VI, as may be the case presently.

For admission to Form I, private secondary schools will be encouraged to adopt the regional set-up. The Ministry proposes to attribute half of the Form I seats in all of the private schools (whether confessional or not) on a regional basis, the other half being attributed by the management of these schools.

By guaranteeing the continued existence and development of different types of schools, Government reaffirms its belief in the right of parents to freely choose the institutions to be attended by their children.

10 May 2001