

13. EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION AUTHORITY

- 13.1 The Early Childhood Care and Education Authority (ECCEA) operates under the *aegis* of the Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology and its objects, as spelt out in the ECCEA Act No. 21 of 2007, are to harmonise and promote integrated early childhood care and education policies, strategies and programmes in line with recommendations of international and national institutions; ensure that all programmes and policies for the education, care and development of the young child in the Republic of Mauritius are in conformity with the Convention on the Rights of the Child; and to help to ensure a smooth transition of the young child from preschool to lower primary school.
- 13.2 Its functions are, among others, to advise relevant Ministries on the formulation of policy relating to early childhood care and education; implement policies of Government with regard to early childhood care and education in the Republic of Mauritius; carry out the registration and supervision of educational institutions, their managers, educators and other staff engaged in early childhood care and education; advise on the development of training programmes on early childhood care and education for educators and other staff in educational institutions; and administer payment of any form of grants to registered educational institutions and manage grants in collaboration with the relevant Ministries.
- 13.3 To date, the ECCEA is responsible to run 189 Pre-Primary schools and to oversee and regulate 600 private Pre-Primary schools and 47 pre-schools managed by the Local Authorities. It is headed by a Director who is responsible to the Board for the attainment of the corporate objectives of the Authority and for the control and management of the day-to-day business of the board and is assisted by an array of technical and supporting staff.
- 13.4 In the context of this Report, consultative meetings were held with the different Unions and the Management of the ECCEA. A few Unions chose to submit common representations while the remaining chose to depone separately. The main representations of Unions pertain, *inter alia*, to: the creation and restyling of grades; taking into consideration the number of years of service during contractual agreement with ECCEA while determining salary; alignment of salaries with grades in the Primary Education Sector; and extension of specific conditions of service such as refund of unutilised casual leave in the primary sector to the pre-primary sector.
- 13.5 During consultations, parties were apprised that salaries would be looked into by the Bureau; any upgrading would be considered following re-assessment of the grade; and creation of additional level is entertained whenever there is a dire functional need in the organisation. Stakeholders have been informed that it is against the philosophy of the Bureau to create levels without functional/operational needs.
- 13.6 Management and Unions have unanimously highlighted the importance of the pre-primary sector and pointed out that, as per the National Curriculum Framework Pre-Primary, the aim of early childhood education is the development of the child socially,

behaviourally and pedagogically. All the aspects of development of the child have to be addressed, namely physical, cognitive and language, personal, social and emotional. The interrelationship between cognitive development and language is critical as children begin to express their thoughts through language and they begin to think in terms of words. Therefore, the language of the environment should be used as facilitator and support language for improving children's learning and understanding.

- 13.7 On this basis and upon requests of the Union, the Bureau carried out a site visit at the Ortiz Patino Pre-Primary School. The main objective of the visit was to have a first-hand experience of the working conditions and difficulties attached to the job in the pre-primary teaching field.
- 13.8 Considering the crucial role being played by the ECCEA in moulding the character of children and imbibing the alphabetical culture for education knowledge expansion and also taking into account the observations made during the site visit, we are, in the ensuing paragraphs, making specific provisions to enable the Authority to better deliver on its mandate.

PEDAGOGICAL SECTION

- 13.9 The Management of the ECCEA averred that it has been encountering difficulties in the recruitment of Teachers. The average age of teachers at the ECCEA is above 50 and many are on the eve of retirement. To overcome this problem, Management requested for the creation of a grade of Trainee Teacher. Upon examining the issue, the Bureau could not accede to the request for technical reasons.
- 13.10 However, as teaching is a core function, the Bureau has carefully examined the grades in the cadre at the ECCEA and is making appropriate recommendations to facilitate the recruitment process. We are also streamlining the current structure in order to ensure a smooth running of the organisation and enhancing its service delivery.

Teacher/Senior Teacher formerly Teacher Senior Teacher

- 13.11 With a view to improving efficiency and effectiveness, both Management and staff side have submitted that the grades of Teacher and Senior Teacher be merged and restyled to Teacher/Senior Teacher as incumbents in both grades are performing almost identical duties and have the same reporting line. A perusal of Job Description Questionnaires filled in by incumbents in both grades indicates that they are in fact performing the same duties. Moreover, there is no supervisory element included in the duties of Senior Teacher. In view thereof and also considering the limited career prospects of the incumbents, we are recommending accordingly.

Recommendation 1

13.12 We recommend that:

- (i) the grades of Teacher and Senior Teacher be merged and restyled Teacher/Senior Teacher; and
- (ii) appointment to the grade of Teacher/Senior Teacher *formerly Teacher and Senior Teacher* should henceforth be made by selection from among candidates possessing the Cambridge School Certificate and a Certificate in Pre-School Education; and reckoning at least three years' teaching experience in a Pre-School Institution.

13.13 We also recommend that officers in the grade of Teacher/Senior Teacher *formerly Teacher and Senior Teacher* possessing the Certificate in Pre-School Education should be allowed to progress beyond the Qualification Bar (QB) inserted in the salary scale of the grade.

SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS SECTION

Child Psychologist (ECCEA) (New Grade)

Social Worker (ECCEA) (New Grade)

13.14 Mauritius has subscribed to the UNESCO goals to recognise the rights to education of persons with disabilities. The Director of the ECCEA pointed out during consultations that to be able to cater for learners with special needs, early screening and intervention is crucial. It has been reported that many children show developmental delays, disabilities and learning difficulties that may cause barriers to their participation at school. On this basis, Management requested for the creation of the grades of Child Psychologist (ECCEA) and Social Worker (ECCEA). The Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology has also supported both requests. We are, therefore, making appropriate recommendations.

Recommendation 2

13.15 We recommend the creation of a grade of Child Psychologist (ECCEA). Appointment thereto should be made by selection from among candidates possessing a Degree in Psychology or an equivalent qualification and having undergone post-qualification practice under the supervision of a practising Psychologist or related professional either in a recognised health or educational institution locally or abroad, over a period of one year or for an aggregate of 1500 hours, with children with learning difficulties or social or emotional/behavioural problems.

13.16 Incumbent would be required, *inter alia*, to provide psychological assessment and treatment services for pre-school children referred by the teachers by utilising a variety of evidence-based practices, established principles and techniques; provide evaluation that addresses particular psychological and developmental needs of pre-school children; assist in developing an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) for pre-school children with learning difficulties and disabilities and to evaluate its effectiveness;

conduct regular workshops for parental education and training of educators; promote mental health programmes at pre-primary level; and assist in the design of Developmental Learner Profile.

Recommendation 3

13.17 We also recommend the creation of a grade of Social Worker (ECCEA). Appointment thereto should be made by selection from among candidates possessing a Diploma in Social Work or an equivalent qualification.

13.18 Incumbent would be required, among others, to: assist, support and collaborate with Child Psychologist (ECCEA) in the day-to-day activities and to deal with minor recurrent issues; establish links between home, school and the community or other relevant institutions in respect of children suffering from social, emotional and behavioural problems; provide group/individual counselling in school premises; visit families and report on any change in socio-economic situation as well as the impact of interventions, keeping in view the indicators or progress set for monitoring and evaluation; and collect, update and record data regarding cases of children needing special attention.

FINANCE SECTION

Financial Operations Officer/Senior Financial Operations Officer (New Grade)

13.19 During consultations, Management informed that there is a high turnover rate in the post of Accountant/Senior Accountant and that same is still vacant. The Director of the ECCEA explained that this situation is impeding on the proper functioning of the Finance Section and the Assistant Financial Operations Officer, very often is called upon to perform the duties without any form of supervision. Management has, therefore, made a request to create an additional level for supervision, check and balances. We are making provision for a grade of Financial Operations Officer/Senior Financial Operations Officer.

Recommendation 4

13.20 We recommend the creation of a grade of Financial Operations Officer/Senior Financial Operations Officer. Appointment thereto should be made by promotion, on the basis of experience and merit, of Assistant Financial Operations Officers who reckon at least four years' service in a substantive capacity in the grade.

13.21 Incumbent would be required to assist in the supervision of all fields of financial duties at the ECCEA; advise on issues related to financial matters, management and transactions; ensure that financial, procurement and other relevant legislations/regulations are correctly applied and fully complied with; supervise the work of subordinate staff; ensure that financial duties are carried out in accordance with the instructions and regulations contained in the Financial Management Kit and other applicable legislations and regulations and to flag non-compliance and misinterpretation of existing rules and regulations to the Director; investigate into

cases of complaints, fraud and irregularities and propose corrective measures to the Director; ensure that accounting arrangements of the ECCEA Zones are properly done and collection of revenue is effected promptly; and attend to audit queries on financial issues, provide material for the proper reply and take corrective measures.

IT SECTION

Statistical Clerk (New Grade)

13.22 The Management of the ECCEA has submitted that there is need for the setting up of a digitalised database system that will facilitate the input/retrieval of information/children's data in a timely manner and enable the organisation to provide more comprehensive services. The database will ensure an optimum use and management of information by the ECCEA and its stakeholders. Such information will be compiled for further research work in the pre-primary education field; early intervention during admission in primary sector; management of government grants and projects; and use in the day-to-day administration. We are, therefore, making provision for a grade of Statistical Clerk.

Recommendation 5

13.23 We recommend the creation of a grade of Statistical Clerk. Appointment thereto should be made by selection from among serving officers of the ECCEA possessing a Cambridge Higher School Certificate with a pass at Principal Level in Mathematics or passes in at least two subjects including Mathematics obtained on one Certificate at the General Certificate of Education 'Advanced Level'.

13.24 Incumbent would be required, *inter alia*, to perform validation and tabulation applications using statistical packages; collect statistical data to produce statistics to enable the Authority and other institutions concerned to take informed decisions; check source data and survey responses to ensure completeness, accuracy and consistency; collect data from establishments including private and public schools; classify and code data according to established standards; make use of computer software for computer processing and presentation in particular to capture a specialised statistical package; and perform tasks in connection with the conduct of censuses and surveys.

Allowance for working with children in ZEP Schools

13.25 Presently, Teachers posted in the pre-primary branch of a "Zone d'Education Prioritaire" (ZEP) school are being paid a monthly allowance of Rs 2100 in view of the extra effort put in for the education of the children. However, the Bureau has noted that there are also officers in the grade of Attendant working in the Pre-Primary branch of those ZEP schools and are not being remunerated in contrast to ancillary staff in the primary education sector. Considering that the nature of the working environment and tasks performed are similar, we are extending the payment of the allowance to the Attendants posted in pre-primary branch of ZEP schools.

Recommendation 6

- 13.26 We recommend that the monthly ZEP Allowance payable to staff of the ECCEA posted in the pre-primary branch of the ZEP schools should be paid a monthly ZEP Allowance as hereunder:

Grade	Monthly ZEP Allowance (Rs)
Teacher/Senior Teacher <i>formerly Teacher</i> <i>Senior Teacher</i>	2100
Attendant	765

Allowance for working in Specialised Schools

- 13.27 Teacher/Senior Teacher *formerly Teacher and Senior Teacher*, seconded for duty at the Lois Lagesse Trust Fund as well as those posted to other specialised schools, who are called upon to give specialised care and attention to children with special needs, are presently paid a monthly allowance of Rs 900. We are revising the quantum of the allowance.

Recommendation 7

- 13.28 We recommend that the monthly allowance payable to Teacher/Senior Teacher *formerly Teacher and Senior Teacher*, seconded to the Lois Lagesse Trust Fund and those posted to other specialised schools who are called upon to give specialised care and attention to children with special needs be revised to Rs 945.

Request for refund of unutilised casual leave

- 13.29 A request was made for the refund of unutilised casual leave to officers in the grades of Teacher/Senior Teacher *formerly Teacher and Senior Teacher* at the ECCEA on the same basis as for the teaching personnel in the Primary and Secondary Sector. During consultative meetings for this review exercise, all Unions of the ECCEA were apprised of the specific provisions governing the Primary and Secondary Sectors and that the refund of unutilised casual leave was introduced with the philosophy that teaching personnel would be available at schools, thus creating least disturbance in the proper running of institutions during term time. Unions were also informed that refund of unutilised casual leave is complementary to specific provisions on vacation leave in the Primary and Secondary Sectors. Hence, if extended in the pre-primary sector, the whole set of specific condition of service would be applied. All Unions were requested to inform their members and revert to the Bureau accordingly.
- 13.30 Upon examining the whole issue holistically, the Bureau has noted that presently, incumbents in the grade of Teacher/Senior Teacher *formerly Teacher and Senior Teacher* do not have any restrictions on vacation leave during term time as compared to counterparts in the Primary and Secondary sectors. Officers are able to benefit from

their vacation leave even during third term. Therefore, extending the specific provisions on vacation leave to the pre-primary sector would worsen off conditions of work of these officers. Moreover, no consensus has been reached among incumbents as some Union members expressed, during consultations, that they prefer taking advantage of their vacation leave rather than being refunded unutilised casual leave. The Bureau is, therefore, refraining from making any recommendation on this issue.

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SALARY SCHEDULE

- ECCEA 1 : Rs 13745 x 230 - 13975 x 250 - 15225 x 260 - 17825 x 275 - 18925 x 300 - 19525 x 325 - 21475**
Attendant
- ECCEA 2 : Rs 13745 x 230 - 13975 x 250 - 15225 x 260 - 17825 x 275 - 18925 x 300 - 19525 x 325 - 21475 x 375 - 22225**
Handy Worker
- ECCEA 3 : Rs 13975 x 250 - 15225 x 260 - 17825 x 275 - 18925 x 300 - 19525 x 325 - 21475 x 375 - 22225 x 400 - 23025**
Stores Attendant
Stores Attendant (Ex SMEDA) (Personal)
- ECCEA 4 : Rs 14725 x 250 - 15225 x 260 - 17825 x 275 - 18925 x 300 - 19525 x 325 - 21475 x 375 - 22225 x 400 - 23425 x 525 - 23950**
Office Care Attendant
- ECCEA 5 : Rs 15225 x 260 - 17825 x 275 - 18925 x 300 - 19525 x 325 - 21475 x 375 - 22225 x 400 - 23425 x 525 - 24475**
Caretaker (Personal to employees in post as at 30.06.93)
- ECCEA 6 : Rs 15485 x 260 - 17825 x 275 - 18925 x 300 - 19525 x 325 - 21475 x 375 - 22225 x 400 - 23425 x 525 - 26050 x 675 - 27400**
Driver/Office Attendant
- ECCEA 7 : Rs 15225 x 260 - 17825 x 275 - 18925 x 300 - 19525 x 325 - 21475 x 375 - 22225 x 400 - 23425 x 525 - 26050 x 675 - 27400 x 825 - 29875**
Receptionist/Telephone Operator

13. EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION AUTHORITY (Contd)

**ECCEA 8 : Rs 16785 x 260 - 17825 x 275 - 18925 x 300 - 19525 x 325 - 21475 x 375
- 22225 x 400 - 23425 x 525 - 26050 x 675 - 27400 x 825 - 34825**

Clerk/Word Processing Operator
Statistical Clerk (New Grade)

**ECCEA 9 : Rs 16785 x 260 - 17825 x 275 - 18925 x 300 - 19525 x 325 - 21475 x 375
- 22225 x 400 - 23425 x 525 - 26050 x 675 - 27400 x 825 - 31525 QB
32350 x 825 - 35650 x 900 - 36550**

Teacher/Senior Teacher
formerly Teacher
Senior Teacher

**ECCEA 10 : Rs 18925 x 300 - 19525 x 325 - 21475 x 375 - 22225 x 400 - 23425 x 525
- 26050 x 675 - 27400 x 825 - 35650 x 900 - 37450**

Management Support Officer

**ECCEA 11 : Rs 19850 x 325 - 21475 x 375 - 22225 x 400 - 23425 x 525 - 26050 x 675
- 27400 x 825 - 35650 x 900 - 37450**

Assistant Financial Operations Officer
Assistant Procurement and Supply Officer
Executive Officer (Personal)
Purchasing and Supply Officer (Personal)

**ECCEA 12 : Rs 20500 x 325 - 21475 x 375 - 22225 x 400 - 23425 x 525 - 26050 x 675
- 27400 x 825 - 35650 x 900 - 37450 x 950 - 39350**

Assistant Coordinator (ECCEA)

**ECCEA 13 : Rs 21475 x 375 - 22225 x 400 - 23425 x 525 - 26050 x 675 - 27400 x 825
- 35650 x 900 - 37450 x 950 - 42200 x 1300 - 43500**

Confidential Secretary

**ECCEA 14 : Rs 24475 x 525 - 26050 x 675 - 27400 x 825 - 35650 x 900 - 37450 x 950
- 42200 x 1300 - 43500**

Procurement and Supply Officer

**ECCEA 15 : Rs 18650 x 275 - 18925 x 300 - 19525 x 325 - 21475 x 375 - 22225 x 400
- 23425 x 525 - 26050 x 675 - 27400 x 825 - 35650 x 900 - 37450 x 950 -
42200 x 1300 - 44800**

Social Worker (ECCEA) (New Grade)

13. EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION AUTHORITY (Contd)

**ECCEA 16 : Rs 24475 x 525 - 26050 x 675 - 27400 x 825 - 35650 x 900 - 37450 x 950
- 42200 x 1300 - 46100**

Financial Operations Officer/Senior Financial Operations Officer (New Grade)

Human Resource Officer (Ex-MSIRI) (Personal)

**ECCEA 17 : Rs 21850 x 375 - 22225 x 400 - 23425 x 525 - 26050 x 675 - 27400 x 825
- 35650 x 900 - 37450 x 950 - 42200 x 1300 - 46100 x 1575 - 47675**

ICT Technician

formerly IT Support Officer

Resource Centre/Documentation Officer

**ECCEA 18 : Rs 21850 x 375 - 22225 x 400 - 23425 x 525 - 26050 x 675 - 27400 x 825
- 35650 x 900 - 37450 x 950 - 42200 x 1300 - 46100 x 1575 - 49250 x
1650 - 50900**

Safety and Health Officer/Senior Safety and Health Officer

**ECCEA 19 : Rs 27400 x 825 - 35650 x 900 - 37450 x 950 - 42200 x 1300 - 44800 QB
46100 x 1575 - 49250 x 1650 - 54200 x 1700 - 55900**

Coordinator (ECCEA)

**ECCEA 20 : Rs 28225 x 825 - 35650 x 900 - 37450 x 950 - 42200 x 1300 - 46100 x
1575 - 49250 x 1650 - 54200 x 1700 - 62700**

Child Psychologist (ECCEA) (New Grade)

Human Resource Management Officer

IT Officer

**ECCEA 21 : Rs 30700 x 825 - 35650 x 900 - 37450 x 950 - 42200 x 1300 - 46100 x
1575 - 49250 x 1650 - 54200 x 1700 - 64400 x 1800 - 69800**

Accountant/Senior Accountant

Internal Auditor/Senior Internal Auditor

**ECCEA 22 : Rs 31525 x 825 - 35650 x 900 - 37450 x 950 - 42200 x 1300 - 46100 x
1575 - 49250 x 1650 - 54200 x 1700 - 64400 x 1800 - 69800**

Administrative Secretary

ECCEA 23 : Rs 103875

Director



