

ELIMINATION OF THE SHIFT SYSTEM

INTRODUCTION

The shift system was introduced in the mid-1970s as a short term measure to address the chronic shortage of school places at the primary and secondary levels. The shift system had a good and useful intention but its time has passed.

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE ELIMINATION OF THE SHIFT SYSTEM

Eliminating the shift system will redound to the overall improvement in educational outcomes as indicated below:

- **Safety and security of students and teachers will be enhanced.**
Students and teachers are susceptible to security risks associated with their mobility during abnormal commuting hours.
- **The disparity in instructional time will be removed and the fracturing of the school experience halted.**

In an academic year, students on shift lose approximately **one (1) hour** per day in instructional time, compared to their counterparts in whole day schools. Contact time may be further reduced in some schools, where the second shift is sometimes dismissed early to facilitate other school- related activities.

- **Students will be exposed to the same range of curriculum offerings and extra curricula activities as their whole day counterparts.** The shift system sometimes forces schools to reduce the curriculum so that students' choices are lessened, relative to whole day school.

- **Attendance rates should improve.**

Elimination of the shift system will allow for better supervision by parents as they will be at home to ensure that their children are prepared to leave for school prior to their departure for work. This will significantly reduce truancy on the part of the students.

- **Total development of the child should improve.** The shift system reduces time and facilities for extra- curricular activities such as sports, clubs, societies and uniformed groups required for the wholistic development of the child.

- **Cases of deviant behaviour will be reduced.** The shift system increases the probability for students to engage in anti-social or illegal activities as they have more time outside of the regular school hours.

- **Process of monitoring compulsory school attendance would become less challenging.** The shift system makes it difficult to readily determine whether students, who are seen outside of school, at various times throughout the day, are actually between shifts or hiding from school.

INITIATIVES/HIGHLIGHT OF ACHIEVEMENTS

Eliminating the shift system requires different strategies as the construction of new schools is often not viable due to fiscal constraints as well as the availability of land in the areas required. Among the strategies to be employed are:

- (1) Extensions of existing facilities
- (2) Implementing the extended day mode of operation
- (3) Rationalisation, deliberate placement and use of facilities in schools.

This may involve the conversion of Primary and Junior High and All-Age schools into stand-alone Primary and High schools.

In situations where the school requires additional facilities which are considered reasonable, these are provided so that the school can operate either the whole day or the extended day. The concept of the **extended day**

is used to increase a school's capacity by providing additional time for teaching learning through the staggering of the timetable.

In other situations, Primary and Junior High schools are upgraded to High Schools and these accommodate the excess students from neighbouring schools. Through the implementation of these various strategies, the number of shift schools has decreased from one hundred and six (106) in 2010/2011 to eighty two (82) in the 2014/2015 Academic Year and will decline to approximately sixty (60) this year, with projected elimination by 2018.

**Number of Schools on Shift by School Type
(2010-2014)**

School Type	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015*
Primary	25	25	25	25	22
All -Age	9	9	8	8	7
Primary & Junior High	32	31	30	26	19
Secondary High	40	41	40	39	34
Technical High	1	1			
Total	106	107	103	98	82

Source: *Annual Schools Census 2010-2014*

**Data for 2014/2015 are provisional and therefore subject to change*

PROJECTIONS

For the 2015/2016 Academic Year, it is projected that at least another 20 institutions will no longer operate the shift system. This will be achieved through a combination of strategies as previously outlined.



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