



PRESS RELEASE

September 25, 2020

WIDESPREAD COMPLAINTS OF INCONSISTENCIES IN THE MARKING OF CXC CAPE AND CSEC EXAMINATIONS JUNE 2020

The Presbyterian Secondary Schools Board of Education of the Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Tobago (PCTT) has taken note of the widespread complaints of apparent anomalies and discrepancies in the results of CXC CAPE and CSEC Examinations June/ July 2020. As the denominational body which is responsible for the education and well-being of thousands of students through its several Secondary Schools across Trinidad, we are very concerned with the plight of the many students who are affected by this year's results.

Our Principals, teachers, parents and students are extremely perturbed over this year's curiously inconsistent results. It is noted that while there may be unforeseeable individual mishaps, which will inevitably occur every year during examination conditions, the magnitude and prevalence of these anomalies and discrepancies are too broad-based to ignore. It would appear, that the grading of examination scripts and the scrutiny or supervision of same by the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) lacks the requisite level of transparency, accountability, and safeguards to ensure the results are beyond question. Such circumstances are evidently not unique to either our Schools or Trinidad and Tobago, but are Regional and demand the attention and intervention of the various authorities concerned, such as CXC and the Ministry of Education of Trinidad and Tobago.

In our country, Trinidad and Tobago, we place the results of the various CXC Examinations at the heart of our Education System and the Presbyterian Schools have taken great pride in the accomplishments of students under this system for decades. Despite still being able to celebrate the success of some, we cannot ignore and tacitly support the trivialising of the grave concerns of those who have been aggrieved. In fact, the results over the years will show that our Principals and Teachers are well-poised to analyse the results and identify anomalies and discrepancies. We also hold our Teachers' integrity and professionalism in high esteem to be in a position to professionally evaluate and adhere to the rubric of CXC's SBA's and IA's while maintaining impartiality.

We have always staunchly supported the institution and aims of the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC). However, if Tertiary Institutions lose faith in the systems of CXC, the impact on our future generation will be devastating. It goes without saying given the widespread

regional discontent this year and the number of statements by respective Ministries of Education around the Caribbean, these complaints will no doubt be brought to the attention of these Tertiary Institutions locally and internationally, to the detriment of our Caribbean students. The integrity of the entire Education System in the region is at stake and the situation therefore demands a commensurate level of engagement, transparent re-assessment and review.

As at the date of this release the Ministries of Education in several jurisdictions including Trinidad and Tobago have gone on public record registering their concerns. We join with the Principals, students, teachers, and parents within our educational institutions in expressing our disappointment by the lack of empathy, transparency and compassion shown by CXC at the news conference held on September 25, 2020 in Barbados. The panel addressed the Caribbean's wide dissatisfaction and numerous press releases, letters and social media complaints from Member States and individuals in a dismissive manner by saying that they received 'no formal complaints.' We are disturbed and disheartened by such a response and pray that there can be a complete change of heart in the approach being adopted by CXC officials in this matter.

We wish to remind CXC and those in authority that when there is a loss of trust and confidence in the system, a sense of hopelessness can emerge and the emotional toll of this can be disastrous in the already strained conditions of a pandemic.

We therefore, support the Minister of Education Dr. Nyan Gadsby-Dolly in the use of her goodly office to effectively bring the complaints to the CXC Officials, hold the body accountable and demand answers in the interest of justice, fairness and truth. Furthermore, given the widespread discrepancies, we are of the considered view that CXC cannot adopt the same approach for queries by demanding the payment of the standard USD\$30 fee; a waiver should be given this year, particularly given the present economic climate.

While it is understood that these may seem like unprecedented times, we also note that this is not the first year that there have been discrepancy issues. CXC had assured that measures would be put in place to alleviate the resultant distress that such issues caused amongst the student population.

To the students affected, we encourage you to look beyond the deep disappointment of this moment, keep your faith in Almighty God and through His grace you will find peace and still succeed.

In these already trying and difficult times in our world, now exacerbated by these circumstances, we ask the national community to keep the affected students and parents in your prayers and ask God to give these students the strength, wisdom, courage and fortitude to overcome this adversity, grow in character and never lose faith and hope.

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” Jeremiah 29:11