The Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research (Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun): Madam Speaker, with your permission, I propose to make a statement with regard to the new mode of assessment at the end of Grade 6 in 2017, that is, the Primary School Achievement Certificate (PSAC) assessment and admission to Grade 7 in 2018. As the House is aware, results for the first edition of the PSAC assessment have been proclaimed today, 12 December 2017.

Madam Speaker, the PSAC has now become a reality. It is to be recalled that the Nine Year Continuous Basic Education (NYCBE) reforms rest on six fundamental pillars, one of which is the Assessment of Learning. The reforms make space for a range of alternative modes of assessment compared to the high stake testing and examinations that characterized our education system and created undue stress on learners. To reduce the over-emphasis on examinations, while still allowing for the pupil’s level of knowledge, skills and achievement to be gauged, a system of modular and school based assessment has been introduced to complement the end of year assessment. All necessary amendments have been brought to the relevant legislations to provide for the implementation of this new mode of assessment.

Madam Speaker, stakeholders have, over the months, been continuously informed of the implementation of the reforms. Thus, consultations have been held, teachers have been trained and necessary documents/brochures have been published and issued to parents/pupils and teachers. Several workshops/briefing/sensitisation sessions have been conducted for the benefit of heads of schools to enable them to respond to the queries from parents.

The communication campaign has also been done using the media.

Madam Speaker, allow me now to briefly recall the few salient changes that have been brought to the mode of assessment at Grade 6 and the transition to Grade 7.

(A) The Primary School Achievement Certificate (PSAC) Assessment has been introduced as a new mode of assessment at the end of the primary cycle this year. More specifically, the PSAC assessment comprises –

(a) A Modular Assessment in two core subjects namely Science and History/Geography which were held on 29 and 30 August 2017, this with a view to reducing the excessive stress of taking all assessments at the end of Grade 6;

(b) A written assessment in the remaining core subjects namely
Mathematics, English, French and the Optional Languages (Asian Languages, Arabic, Kreol Morisien (KM)) which was conducted from 24 to 27 October 2017. I wish to point out here that it is for the first time that pupils who have opted for Kreol Morisien, sat for subject at the PSAC, and

(c) School-based assessment in the non-Core Learning area of Communication Skills. Assessment of non-core subjects aims at giving greater recognition to the talents and aptitudes and hence achieving the holistic development of the child. This assessment has been moderated by the MES. Here, the level of competencies attained has been defined as either Basic, Intermediate or Proficient.

(B) Regional mode of admission after Grade 6
Madam Speaker, the NYCBE advocates that all learners move on to Grade 7 through a regional mode of admission based on the following criteria –
- Parental choice;
- Grade aggregate at the PSAC, and
- Proximity of residence to the secondary school.

The criteria for regional admission have remained the same.
No admission post PSAC on a national basis
As for the former 15 ‘National Colleges’, 12 of them have been designated as Academies and will admit students only as from Grade 10 as from year 2021. Admission to these Academies will be done on a national basis. There will be no admission in Grade 7 as from January 2018 in these designated Academies.

However, a notable element to highlight is that with the reforms, all students of the primary schools having sat for the PSAC will move on to Grade 7 in a regional secondary school.

Extended Programme
Pupils not having attained the required level of competencies at the PSAC will be offered the possibility to complete Grades 7 to 9 over four years instead of three. This Extended Programme provides an adapted and flexible curriculum to respond to the special learning needs of the students. Remediation will be in-built and forms an integral part of the Extended Programme.

Every regional school will have, at least, one special class for such learners with around 20 pupils for facilitation of learning.

The Extended Programme adopts a whole school approach with the entire school
community offering a supportive school environment and facilitating the smooth adaptation, inclusion and well-being of the students.

Madam Speaker, I am tabling a copy of the Information Pack containing documents and brochures issued to schools, parents and pupils as part of the information and communication campaign.

Madam Speaker, as the House is aware, the results of the first edition of the PSAC Assessment have been proclaimed today. 15,994 school candidates from the Republic of Mauritius took part in the first edition of the PSAC assessment in 2017. It is to be highlighted that the grading for the PSAC assessment is now based on a sixpoint numerical system, with Grade 1 being the highest and 6 being the lowest. The level of competency in the non-core learning areas has been described along 3 point scale namely Proficient, Intermediate and Basic. The results slip indicates results of both core and non-core subjects.

Results of PSAC Assessment 2017
Madam Speaker, I have been informed by the MES that, with regard to the PSAC Assessment 2017, out of the 15,994 school candidates who took part in the PSAC Assessment for the first time in the Republic of Mauritius, 12,427 have met the requirements for the PSAC (that is, have attained the National Qualifications Framework Level 1 requirement), representing a percentage of 77.7%.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: There were 15,199 candidates who took part in the PSAC Assessment 2017 in the Island of Mauritius, out of whom 11,814 have met the PSAC requirements, that is, 77.73%.

As for Rodrigues, 795 candidates sat for the PSAC Assessment and 613 candidates have attained the PSAC requirements, that is, 77.11%.

It is to be noted that all pupils who taken part in the PSAC Assessment 2017 and requested for admission have been allocated a seat in a Regional School in Grade 7. One noteworthy element is that there is no ‘no school’ case this year.

With regard to the performance in the ZEP schools, out of 1085 candidates who sat for the PSAC in Mauritius and Rodrigues, 47.83%, that is, 519 candidates have attained the 87 PSAC requirements, that is, they attained the requirements of Natural Qualifications Framework Level 1.

I am further informed that 39.56% of school candidates have secured a grade aggregate of four units at PSAC Assessment 2017, that is, they have obtained the highest
grade – that is, one in at least four core subjects. It is to be highlighted that candidates have generally performed well in the non-core subjects, that is, Communication Skills with competence level reaching as high as 43.41%.

Madam Speaker, the registration exercise in secondary schools has been scheduled for 19 December 2017. It is important for parents to register their wards on that day at the school allocated to them in order to secure their seat. Arrangements will be made for the Zone Directorates to receive protest cases and any requests for transfer. In this connection, a Communiqué will be issued by the Ministry by 19 December 2017 to inform parents of modalities and formalities for the exercise which will be carried out on 20 and 21 December 2017 in the respective zones. All requests will be processes by the MES in line with the criteria for admission elaborated earlier and on the basis of vacancies. Hardship cases will also be examined on a case to case basis.

Some 1150 candidates, around 1018 Mauritius and 70 in Rodrigues, will have the option of a re-assessment in one subject on Thursday 21 December 2017. A remedial programme will be organised from 13 to 20 December 2017 for such candidates opting for re-assessment and results are expected by Friday 29 December 2017.

Madam Speaker, a flagship measure of the reforms remains the introduction of 16 Regional Scholarships exclusively for students attending the regional secondary schools, which are in addition to the National Scholarships. Students of Regional Secondary Schools will thus be eligible for both the regional scholarships and the national scholarships.

Madam Speaker, I am confident that the new cohort of students, who would be transiting to Grade 7 in 2018, will be provided with all the necessary support and resources for enhanced learning experiences and for their holistic development. I thank you, Madam Speaker.