

BELIZE:

EDUCATION ACT, 2026

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No. 18 of 2026

I assent,

(H.E. DAME FROYLA TZALAM)
Governor-General

16th September, 2026

AN ACT to repeal the Education and Training Act, Chapter 36 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2020; to reform the basic education system of government schools and selected government-aided schools to make it free, accessible, compulsory, relevant, all-inclusive and right-based; to provide for a regulatory system for the delivery of educational services; to improve the governance structure of the school system; to improve licensing regime of teachers by requiring a rigorous evaluation process which include subject matter testing certification; to establish a process for secondary school teachers to obtain certification to teach a subject for which they do not have a degree; to provide for a national student assessment system that will enable accurate measurement of students learning in a transparent and accountable manner allowing for evidence-based decision making; and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

(Gazetted 16th September, 2026.)

BE IT ENACTED, by and with the advice and consent of the House of Representatives and Senate of Belize and by the authority of the same, as follows:

PART I

Preliminary

Short title. 1. This Act may be cited as the

EDUCATION ACT, 2026.

Interpretation. 2. In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires—

CAP. 39:01. “Accreditation Council” means the National Accreditation Council established under section 3 of the National Accreditation Council of Belize Act;

“Administrator” means the head teacher, principal or dean of an institution, as the case may be, who is responsible for the administration and efficient operation of that institution;

“BBTE” means the Belize Board of Teacher Education established under section 15;

CAP. 304. “BNTU” means the Belize National Teachers’ Union registered in accordance with section 13 of the Trade Unions and Employers’ Organisations (Registration, Recognition and Status) Act;

“BEMIS” means the Belize Educational Management Information System established under section 90 to be used by the Ministry for the purpose of data management;

“central districts” means the Belize and Cayo Districts;

“Chief Education Officer” means the public officer appointed under section 5(1);

“child” means a person under the age of eighteen years;

“child of compulsory school age” means any child who is between five years and sixteen years of age inclusive of ages five and sixteen;

“Commission” means the Belize Teaching Service Commission established under section 11;

“community school” means an institution not owned by a specific person, organisation or group of organisations and which is managed by a Board of Management composed mainly of representatives of parents and staff of the school, or other appropriate entity;

“continuing education” means a programme of study–

- (a) in a specific area for professional or employment or job related skill, development and knowledge enhancement;
- (b) that may be award-bearing or non-award bearing; and
- (c) that is vocational or non-vocational;

“corporal punishment” means any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort;

“cycle” means a period of time during the school year when teaching and learning are assessed at the pre-primary and primary level;

“denominational school” means a school which is owned and managed by a religious denomination;

“District Council” means a District Council appointed pursuant to section 4(5);

“Education Council” means the National Council for Education established under section 8;

CAP. 4.

“government school” means a school established or retained and maintained by the Government wholly from funds allocated out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund established under section 114(1) of the Belize Constitution and to which the general public has access without any condition other than those authorised by or under this Act;

“government-aided school” means a school in receipt of grant-in-aid from the Government in accordance with section 53(1);

“higher education” means a programme of study leading to the award of an associate degree, a bachelor’s degree, a graduate certificate, a graduate diploma, a master’s degree, a doctoral degree or any other equivalent qualification;

“institution” means an educational institution, school or other entity providing some organised form of educational service at any level;

“managing authority” includes a proprietor, manager, board of management, board of governors, trustees, committee or other person with ultimate authority for a school;

“Minister” means the Minister responsible for education and “Ministry” shall be construed accordingly;

“northern districts” means the Corozal and Orange Walk Districts;

“parent” in relation to any child, means a mother, father, stepmother or stepfather, guardian or other person who has custody of a child;

“partners in education” refers to individuals, organisations, or entities that have a formal or collaborative relationship

with an educational institution, and directly contribute to achieving educational goals such as the BNTU, churches, communities, voluntary organisations or other similar entity;

“pre-primary” means the level of schooling suitable for a child between the ages of three and five years;

“preschool” means an institution or programme for a child between the ages of three and five years;

“primary” means the level of schooling suitable for a child between the ages of five and twelve years;

“primary school” means an institution offering an eight-year programme of studies approved by the Ministry as providing instruction and training suited to the age, ability and aptitudes of a child between the ages of five years and sixteen years, inclusive of the age of five years and sixteen years;

“principal” means the teacher in charge of providing educational leadership, assuring and improving the quality of education services and managing the day-to-day affairs of a school;

“private school” means a school which is licensed by the Ministry to operate and is not a government school nor in receipt of government-aid;

“proprietor” means–

- (a) in relation to an institution, the person or body of persons duly recorded on a licence to operate a school, as the owner, manager, managing authority or other person responsible for the management of the school;
- (b) in relation to an application for a licence to operate a private school, the person or body of persons proposing to be the owner, manager or financier of

the school for which a licence or approval is being sought;

“PTA” means the Parent-Teachers’ Association;

“Register of Appointed Teachers” means the register established by the Commission in accordance with section 14(2)(b);

“registered student” means a student enrolled and duly entered in the school’s admissions register for on-going school attendance;

“release” means a process that allows a teacher, on his request, to leave employment in one management, school or institution so as to take up employment in another management, school or institution;

“school” means an institution that provides pre-primary, primary, or secondary level of education;

“School Community Liaison Officer” means a person appointed under section 38;

“school counsellor” means a trained professional who is employed at a school to offer counselling and care support service to a student in support of his academic, career, and social-emotional development;

“school year” means such period–

(a) commencing August in each year and ending June of the following year; or

(b) as are otherwise prescribed by the Minister by Order published in the *Gazette*;

“secondary” means the level of formal education, typically spanning from ages 12 to 18, which bridges primary level education and higher learning;

“secondary school” means an institution approved by the Ministry as providing education and training suited to the ages, abilities, and aptitudes of a student between the ages of twelve years and eighteen years;

“Secretariat” means the Belize Teaching Service Commission Secretariat established under section 13;

“semester” means a period of time during the school year when teaching and learning are assessed at the secondary or tertiary level;

“southern districts” means the Stann Creek and Toledo Districts;

“specially-assisted school” means a government-aided school that does not have the full government-aided status but receives financial support through the Ministry under a special agreement with the Minister;

“staff” means a person or group of persons who works as academic or support to an institution such as a person who, whether in connection with the provision of education or the provision of support services to the institution or its students, otherwise provides his services at the institution, whether for payment or not for payment, and has control or charge of the institution or a component thereof;

“stakeholder” refers to those individuals or groups who have an interest or concern in the educational system and its outcomes;

“teacher” means a person employed full-time or part-time in a school or other institution for the purpose of guiding and directing the instructional experience of and for a student;

“teacher education institution” means the institution accredited or approved to prepare a teacher, prospective teacher and in-service educator for the academic and practical skills required to earn a teaching certificate, licence or other degree;

“teacher educator” means a person employed full-time or part-time in an institution for the purpose of preparing, training, or supporting pre-service and in-service teachers in pedagogy, curriculum or classroom practices;

“temporary employment” means employment for a period of time under conditions stipulated in a contract formulated in accordance with this Act;

“term” means a period of time when teaching and learning are assessed during the school year primarily at the primary or secondary levels of schooling;

“tertiary” means the level of schooling which encompasses any formal learning that takes place after the completion of secondary level schooling;

“tertiary institution” means a school or other institution of which normal matriculation requirements entails the completion of a secondary school education;

“Tribunal” means the Teaching Service Appeals Tribunal established under section 96; and

“walking distance” in relation to a child, means–

- (a) where the child has not attained the age of eight years, a distance of two miles; or
- (b) where the child has attained age of eight years, a distance of three miles,

measured by the nearest available and accessible route.

3.–(1) The Ministry may, subject to available resources, establish and pursue for the education system general and specific goals and objectives as provided for in this section.

(2) The general goals and objectives of the Ministry are—

- (a) to establish a relevant and comprehensive educational system that is characterised by excellence, inclusivity, accessibility, equitability, of high quality, technologically-driven and capable of fostering the development of good, productive citizens; and
- (b) the promotion of education by the establishment of schools and other institutions for the purpose of fostering the spiritual, linguistic, cultural, moral, intellectual, physical, social and economic development of the community.

(3) The power of the Minister conferred by this Act shall be exercised so as to ensure that every person in Belize is given an opportunity to acquire those knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for his own personal development and for full and active participation in the development of the nation through the system of education in Belize.

(4) The Minister is responsible for the overall administration of this Act and, in the exercise of the powers conferred upon the Minister, may do all things necessary or convenient for the purpose of carrying out the Minister's responsibilities.

PART II

Administration of the Education System

Sub-Part 1

The Ministry of Education

4.-(1) The Ministry, under the general direction of the Minister, shall work in partnership, consultation and

General
functions of the
Ministry.

cooperation with churches, communities, voluntary and private organisations, and such other organisations which the Ministry may identify and recognise as partners and stakeholders for the sufficient and efficient provision of education in Belize,

provided that the Ministry, in the performance of its functions under sub-section (2) shall have due regard to the ownership and ethos of its partners and stakeholders.

(2) In discharging its functions under sub-section (1), the Ministry may—

- (a) establish national education goals;
- (b) set policies and standards for the education system;
- (c) issue licences to schools and other institutions, or proprietors provided that prerequisites to licensing as required are met;
- (d) issue licences to teachers based on eligibility criteria and fulfilment of prescribed requirements;
- (e) approve secondment and posting as Itinerant Resource Officer;
- (f) provide support systems for the effective delivery of appropriate and equitable educational services at all levels of the education system;
- (g) monitor the quality and effectiveness of education in the pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary levels of the education system; and
- (h) perform any other duties stipulated under this Act.

(3) For the purpose of the performance of the functions under this Act, the Ministry shall have power to—

- (a) require attendance of a child of compulsory school age at schools if the child is either not enrolled at a school or is enrolled but not attending classes;
- (b) regulate the operation of a government school, government-aided school, specially-assisted school, or other institutions;
- (c) provide for the professional learning of teachers for the system of education, and set standards which are applicable to the recruitment of a teacher, the relevant training, professional development and conditions of service; and
- (d) provide for any other matter or do all other things as may be necessary or expedient for the carrying out of the Minister's responsibility for education.

(4) In the exercise of the powers conferred by subsection (3)(c), the Ministry shall consult such partners, stakeholders, institutions or organisations representing the teaching profession as the Ministry considers appropriate.

(5) The Minister shall appoint District Councils to assist the Ministry in planning, managing, monitoring the delivery of educational services in each district in Belize and to hear appeals from registered students against decisions in respect of disciplinary measures including expulsion.

(6) The composition and terms of reference of a District Council shall be as specified in Rules made under section 105.

5.—(1) There shall be a Chief Education Officer who shall be a public officer appointed by the Public Services Commission in accordance with section 106 of the Belize Constitution.

Appointment
of Chief
Education
Officer.
CAP. 4.

CAP. 4.

(2) The power to exercise disciplinary control over a person holding or acting in the office of Chief Education Officer and the power to remove such person from office shall likewise vest in the Public Services Commission in accordance with section 106 of the Belize Constitution.

(3) The Chief Education Officer shall be responsible for apprising the Minister and the Education Council on recommendations and proposals for improvement in education and training and for the discharge of the functions under this Act.

(4) Where this Act assigns a duty or a function of the Chief Education Officer, the Chief Education Officer may designate a deputy chief education officer or other competent public officer to provide assistance so that matters relating to licensing of teachers may be conducted in a timely manner.

Appointment
of other
officers and
employees.

6.—(1) There shall be appointed such other public officers and employees as are required to administer this Act or to enforce any rules or regulations made under this Act.

CAP. 4.

(2) The power to appoint the officers and employees under sub-section (1), including the power to transfer and confirm appointments and to exercise disciplinary control over such officers and employees, including the power to remove such officers and employees from office, shall vest in the Public Services Commission pursuant to section 106 of the Belize Constitution.

Annual
Report.

7.—(1) At the end of each school year, the Chief Education Officer shall prepare a report in the prescribed format on the state of education and training in Belize in respect of the school year just ended.

(2) A copy of the report prepared pursuant to sub-section (1) shall be submitted, annually, to the Minister and the Education Council.

(3) As soon as may be after receiving the report, the Minister shall cause a copy thereof to be published on the website of the Ministry or such other site as the Minister so chooses.

Sub-Part 2

National Council for Education

8.—(1) There is established for Belize an education council to be known as the National Council for Education, embodying the partnership between the State and its partners in education.

Establishment
of Education
Council.

(2) The constitution of the Education Council shall be as set out in Schedule I.

Schedule I.

(3) The Education Council shall conduct its meetings in accordance with the procedures specified in the constitution.

9. The Education Council shall consist of sixteen members appointed as follows—

Composition of
the Education
Council.

- (a) a person appointed by the Minister as the Chairperson;
- (b) the Chief Education Officer who shall be an *ex-officio* member;
- (c) a representative of the managing authorities of primary schools nominated by the General Managers of primary schools and appointed by the Minister;
- (d) a representative of managing authorities of government secondary schools nominated by the managing authorities of government secondary schools and appointed by the Minister;

- (e) a representative of the managing authorities of government-aided secondary schools nominated by the managing authorities of government-aided secondary schools and appointed by the Minister;
- (f) a representative of the BNTU nominated by the BNTU and appointed by the Minister;
- (g) five representatives of the different levels and sectors of the educational system and appointed by the Minister namely—
 - (i) one person selected by the Ministry from amongst the head teachers of preschools who is serving on a District Council;
 - (ii) one representative of principals of primary schools selected by the Ministry from amongst the principals of primary schools and who is serving on a District Council;
 - (iii) one representative from the Belize Association of Principals of Secondary Schools who is serving on a District Council;
 - (iv) one representative from the Association of Tertiary Level Institutions of Belize who is serving on a District Council; and
 - (v) one representative of the Association of Adult and Continuing Education Programmes, elected by the members of the Association of Adult and Continuing Education;
- (h) three representatives of parents, one each from the northern districts, central districts, and southern districts, none of whom are represented under any other category of representation under this

section, nominated in accordance with section 24(6) and appointed by the Minister;

- (i) one representative of the Accreditation Council nominated by the Accreditation Council and appointed by the Minister; and
- (j) one representative of the business community nominated by the Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry and appointed by the Minister.

10.-(1) The Education Council shall–

**General
functions of
the Education
Council.**

- (a) upon a request of the Minister, advise the Minister on matters relating to education; and
- (b) have a discretion to consider and make proposals to the Minister on matters relating to education as it considers expedient.

(2) In discharging its functions under sub-section (1), the scope and focus of the Education Council shall be to–

- (a) make recommendations on the availability of, and access to, the different levels of education, including continuing education and special education;
- (b) monitor and report on factors which limit participation in education, including socioeconomic and cultural factors;
- (c) act as a forum for discussion of the goals and objectives of education and the relationships between–
 - (i) schooling and the needs of the individual; and

- (ii) education and the development of Belize as a nation;
- (d) inform and advise on the quality of schooling at the different levels including issues of curriculum, textbooks and teacher performance;
- (e) inform and advise on the effectiveness of management in the education system institutions and schools; and
- (f) make recommendations on the responsibilities and contribution of parents and the community to education.

Sub-Part 3

Belize Teaching Service Commission

Establishment
and
constitution.

11.—(1) There is established for Belize a Commission to be called the Belize Teaching Service Commission.

Schedule II.

(2) The constitution of the Commission shall be as set out in Schedule II.

(3) The Commission shall consist of nine members appointed as follows—

- (a) one person as Chairman appointed by the Minister;
- (b) the Chief Education Officer or his authorised representative, *ex-officio* member;
- (c) the officer in the Ministry with overall responsibility for teacher administrative services who shall serve as Secretary to the Commission, *ex-officio*, without a right to vote; and

- (d) six members appointed by the Minister as follows–
- (i) one representative of General Managers of primary schools elected by the General Managers of primary schools at a meeting specially convened for that purpose at which more than fifty percent of the General Managers are present;
 - (ii) one representative of managing authorities of government-aided secondary schools, who is not an *ex-officio* member of such managing authorities, elected by the chairpersons of the managing authorities of government-aided secondary schools at a meeting specially convened for that purpose at which more than fifty percent of chairpersons of such managing authorities of government-aided Secondary Schools are present;
 - (iii) one representative of managing authorities of government secondary schools, who is not an *ex-officio* member of such managing authorities, elected by the chairpersons of the managing authorities of government secondary schools at a meeting specially convened for that purpose at which more than fifty percent of chairpersons of managing authorities of government secondary schools are present;
 - (iv) one representative of managing authorities of tertiary institutions, who is not an *ex-officio* member of such managing authorities, elected by the chairpersons of such managing authorities of tertiary

institutions at a meeting specially convened by the managing authorities for that purpose at which more than fifty percent of chairpersons of managing authorities of tertiary institutions are present;

(v) one representative of the BNTU nominated by the BNTU; and

(vi) one representative of the churches nominated by the Council of Churches.

**Eligibility and
disqualifications.**

12.—(1) A person is not qualified to be appointed as a member of the Commission if that person is a member of the National Assembly or, if that person holds, or is a candidate for any elected office of Government.

(2) Save in respect of the *ex-officio* members, a person shall not be appointed as a member of the Commission if that person holds or is acting in any other public office.

(3) A representative under section 11(3)(d)(vi) shall not qualify for the appointment where such person—

(a) is an elected, executive member of the PTA in the respective districts at the time of appointment;

(b) is represented by other categories of representation under section 11(3)(d);

(c) is an employed teacher; or

(d) is a member of a District Council.

**The
Secretariat.**

13.—(1) There is established a Secretariat to be called the Belize Teaching Service Commission Secretariat which shall be charged with the performance of the administrative and management functions of the Commission.

(2) The Secretariat shall be headed by the officer in the Ministry with overall responsibility for teacher administrative services.

(3) The Secretariat shall provide such information, report and support to the Commission to enable the Commission to execute its functions in accordance with this Act and approved policies of the Ministry.

14.-(1) The Commission shall enforce—

**Powers and
functions of the
Commission.**

- (a) standards set by the Ministry for entry into the teaching service to assure the quality and status of the Belize teaching service and the quality of the delivery of education; and
- (b) relevant rules and regulations governing the conditions of service of teachers with respect to employment, appointment, transfer, discipline and termination of teachers in government and government-aided pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary institutions.

(2) The Commission shall have the power to—

- (a) verify and ensure compliance with standards, set by the Ministry, and Rules prescribed under this Act for the employment of teachers;
- (b) establish and maintain a Register of Appointed Teachers;
- (c) approve the appointment of teachers to the teaching service;
- (d) approve transfer of teachers;
- (e) approve disciplinary action, for major offences, against teachers in the teaching service or

recommend the imposition of appropriate sanctions against managing authorities for government and government-aided pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary institutions, in accordance with this Act and all other applicable laws;

- (f) advise the Minister on any matter on which the opinion of the Commission is sought by the Minister;
- (g) compile and send to the Minister an annual report, not later than six weeks after the end of each school year, on its activities during that year; and
- (h) perform such other functions as may arise from this Act or any other law, or as may be assigned to it by the Minister.

(3) The Commission shall collaborate with the Chief Education Officer to assist managing authorities achieve quality leadership in the administration of matters relating to the employment and conditions of service of teachers through a system of support, guidance, training, and monitoring.

(4) The Commission, in the exercise of its functions under this Act, may recommend the imposition of appropriate sanctions against any managing authority or proprietor which fails to comply with this Act for matters relating to the employment and terms and conditions of service of teachers.

(5) The Commission, in the exercise of its functions under this Act, shall consider evidence and any representations made, and may endorse, vary, modify or withdraw a recommendation or proposed sanction where the evidence or circumstances warrant such action.

(6) The Commission, in the exercise of its functions under this Act, shall not be subject to the direction or control of any person or authority.

Sub-Part 4

Belize Board of Teacher Education

15.—(1) There is established for Belize a Board to be called the Belize Board of Teacher Education for the purpose of assuring the quality of teacher education in Belize.

Establishment
and
constitution.

(2) In the exercise of its function, the BBTE may collaborate with the Accreditation Council on matters consistent with the broader accreditation mandate.

(3) The constitution of the BBTE shall be as set forth in Schedule III.

Schedule III.

16.—(1) The members of the BBTE, other than the *ex-officio* members, shall be appointed by the Minister.

Composition of
the BBTE.

(2) The BBTE shall consist of sixteen members as follows—

- (a) the Chairperson selected by the Minister;
- (b) four representatives of the Ministry namely the officer in the Ministry with overall responsibility—
 - (i) for teacher education who shall be an *ex-officio* member;
 - (ii) for tertiary education who shall be an *ex-officio* member;
 - (iii) for teacher administrative services who shall be an *ex-officio* member;

- (iv) for teacher professional development who shall be an *ex-officio* member;
- (c) two teacher educators representing teacher education institutions approved by the Ministry to provide teacher education programmes and services in Belize–
 - (i) one member from the University of Belize nominated by the Board of Trustees of the University of Belize; and
 - (ii) one member on a rotative basis from amongst the teacher education institutions collectively elected by the teacher education institutions;
- (d) one representative from the Association of Tertiary Level Institutions, elected by the membership;
- (e) one representative from the Association of Managers of Primary Schools, where the association comprises managers from a denominational school and elected by the membership;
- (f) one representative from the Belize Association of Principals of Secondary Schools, elected by the membership;
- (g) one representative of managing authorities of government-aided secondary schools nominated by the managing authorities of government-aided secondary schools;
- (h) one representative from the BNTU selected by the Executive of the BNTU;

- (i) one representative of the Joint Board of Teacher Education, selected by the Executive of the Joint Board of Teacher Education, or any other similar body approved by the Minister from time to time; and
- (j) one representative of the Accreditation Council nominated by the Accreditation Council.

17.-(1) The BBTE shall provide quality assurance of teacher education and training in Belize and shall make recommendations on teacher training and allied matters to the appropriate authorities.

**General
functions of the
BBTE.**

(2) The functions of the BBTE shall span the teacher education continuum of lifelong interconnected developmental processes including–

- (a) oversight of pre-service teacher preparation;
- (b) support for teacher induction at the pre-primary, primary and secondary levels;
- (c) the support of in-service continuous professional development; and
- (d) advice on policies and standards to maintain a coherent and high-quality teacher education system.

(3) In discharging its functions under this section, the BBTE shall–

- (a) make recommendations on the approval of institutions wishing to offer new or existing teacher education programmes and services;

- (b) recommend new education programmes, services or courses for delivery in existing teacher education institutions;
- (c) recommend standards for the delivery and assessment of teacher education in institutions and organisations recognised to offer teacher training programmes or services;
- (d) endorse rules, procedures and policies governing the delivery of teacher education in institutions and organisations recognised to offer teacher training programmes, services or courses;
- (e) endorse curricula for each programme and course offered for the training and continuous professional development of a teacher, teacher educator and other instructional leader throughout his career;
- (f) review annual reports submitted by institutions and organisations recognised to offer teacher training programmes or services;
- (g) review and endorse articulation and transfer agreements between institutions approved to offer teacher training programmes and services; and
- (h) approve recommendations for the granting of award to outstanding teachers for exceptional service rendered in the profession.

PART III

*Rights and Responsibilities**Sub-Part 1**Students*

18.—(1) Subject to availability of resources, every child is entitled to an educational programme appropriate to the needs of the child, in accordance with this Act.

Right to
education.

(2) The Chief Education Officer shall make available to every child of compulsory school age who resides in Belize an educational programme consistent with the requirements of this Act.

19.—(1) Every student enrolled in a school has a responsibility to—

Student
responsibilities.

- (a) observe the code of conduct and other rules and policies of the Ministry and of the school;
- (b) attend classes regularly and punctually;
- (c) participate in the educational programmes in which the student is enrolled;
- (d) be diligent in pursuing the goals of the curriculum; and
- (e) observe standards, policies and rules approved by the Chief Education Officer, the managing authority or the administrator as the case may be, with respect to—
 - (i) cleanliness and tidiness of the person;
 - (ii) general deportment;

- (iii) attire;
- (iv) courtesy; and
- (v) respect of the rights of students and other persons.

(2) Every student is accountable–

- (a) to the teacher for his conduct on the school premises during school hours and during such hours as the teacher is in charge of the student in class or while engaged in authorised school activities conducted during out-of-school hours; and
- (b) to the administrator for his general deportment at any time that he is under the supervision of the school and members of staff, including the time spent in travelling between the institution and his place of residence.

(3) Every student is under the general direction and control of–

- (a) the driver and the conductor of an authorised school bus; and
- (b) any person under whose supervision students are placed on the authority of the Chief Education Officer, in respect of the student's general behaviour and deportment on an authorised school bus, or while under supervision as the case may be.

(4) A student may express any religious, political, moral, or other belief or opinion so long as the expression does not adversely affect the rights or education of other students, or the rights of other persons in the school.

*Sub-Part 2**Parents*

20.-(1) The parent of a student attending a school is entitled—

**Rights and
responsibilities
of parents.**

- (a) to be informed of the progress, behaviour and attendance of his child;
- (b) upon reasonable notice to the principal and teacher, to observe the instruction of his child if the parental visitation does not impede the instruction of other students;
- (c) to appeal a decision that significantly affects the education, health or safety of his child;
- (d) to be consulted in the development of any individualised education programmes prepared for his child; and
- (e) to participate in parent-teacher conferences, school meetings and other activities designed to support the education and development of his child.

(2) A parent of a student attending a school may consult with the teacher or principal with respect to the student's educational programme.

(3) A parent of a student shall inform the principal in writing of any medical or other condition peculiar to his child—

- (a) on admission of the child; or
- (b) as soon as the parent becomes aware of such medical or other condition.

(4) The information provided under sub-section (3) shall constitute part of the student's record under section 22.

Choice of
education.

21.—(1) The parent of a child of compulsory school age may choose home schooling, private schooling or government or denominational schooling for his child.

(2) The choice of home schooling shall be aligned with the national curriculum, the goals and objectives of this Act and subject to the following—

- (a) the parent shall register the student at the closest District Education Office and be approved by the Chief Education Officer;
- (b) the parent shall submit an initial one-year educational plan to the Chief Education Officer three months prior to the commencement of home schooling; and
- (c) the parent shall comply with terms and conditions determined by the Ministry.

Student
records and
reports.

22.—(1) Every administrator shall establish and maintain a student record for each student enrolled in the school managed by the administrator in accordance with the guidelines established by the Chief Education Officer.

(2) A student's record is privileged for the information and use of the institution and the Ministry as required for the performance of its functions and such record shall not be disclosed to any other person or institution without the written permission of the parent or, where the student is 18 years of age or older, the student.

Damage
to school
property.

23. Every student in a school shall take good care of any property placed at the student's disposal and where such property is to be returned, the property shall be returned in

good condition at the end of the school activities on a day and time determined by the principal.

24.—(1) The parents and teachers may, in accordance with regulations made under this Act form associations, to be known as a PTA.

Parent-Teacher Association.

(2) The Ministry shall encourage and assist in the formation of—

(a) a parent-teacher association; and

(b) a national council of parent-teacher associations.

(3) The objective of a PTA shall include the promotion of the interests of the institution by bringing parents, members of the community, students and teachers into close cooperation.

(4) A PTA may, subject to this Act, set rules and procedures for the regulation and control of its business.

(5) On the formation of a PTA, the names of the members of the executive shall be forwarded to the District Education Council and subsequently the names of the members of the executive after every election of a new executive.

(6) The National Council of PTA formed in accordance with sub-section (2)(b) shall nominate the parent representatives to the Education Council as provided for in section 9(2)(h).

Sub-Part 3

Schooling

25.—(1) A child or other person shall not be refused admission to any school on account of religion, race, ethnicity, language, ability, disability or political affiliation.

Admission to schools.

(2) A child or other person shall not be refused admission to any institution on account of sex, except where such schools are historically non-coeducational.

(3) A child shall not be refused admission to any school on the basis of hairstyle or natural hair texture, including styles associated with religious, cultural, or ethnic identity, subject only to reasonable health and safety requirements.

Gender
sensitivity and
special needs.

26.—(1) The Ministry shall ensure equitable access for both males and females to education at all levels, and that provision of education is sensitive to the particular needs of both males and females and caters to the special needs of a student with disability or special education needs.

(2) A managing authority shall ensure that a school under its management is free of gender, racial and other forms of discrimination, and is managed in a way that students shall, as far as may be applicable, co-exist as peacefully and harmoniously as possible.

28 of 2024.

(3) The Disabilities Act shall apply to the accommodation of a student with a disability and for the purposes of universal design, universal access, reasonable accommodation and any policy relating to special education.

(4) In sub-section (3), “student with a disability” means any person who has a long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairment that makes it more difficult for that person to do certain activities and participate fully and effectively in society on an equal basis with any other person without a disability;

Protection
from
harassment
and abuse.

27.—(1) The Ministry and managing authorities shall ensure that policies are designed to protect a teacher from intimidation and assault by parents, administration, other teachers and students, whether they are on the premises of the school or not, at any time while in pursuit of duties.

(2) The managing authority of a school shall ensure that persons within the school environment are free from physical, sexual or other forms of harassment, from intimidation and corporal punishment, and from exposure to drugs, pornography and other forms of morally, mentally, emotionally or physically harmful article, person or activity.

(3) A person who commits the offence of assault against a teacher is liable to the penalty specified in section 45 of the Criminal Code.

CAP. 101.

28.—(1) A managing authority shall design, set and implement policies having due regard to any guidance on disciplinary matters provided from time to time by the Ministry to promote good behaviour and discipline of students at its school.

School
discipline.

(2) The managing authority may consult with administrators, staff, parents of students registered at the school, and make a written statement of general principles and measures for promoting good behaviour and discipline for schools under its management.

(3) The principal of a school shall refer to the written statement of general principles and measures provided by the respective managing authority in determining acceptable standards of behaviour and measures for regulating the conduct of students as stipulated in the policies or rules made under this Act.

(4) In accordance with sub-section (3), under no circumstance shall degrading or injurious punishment be administered.

(5) For purposes of sub-section (4), “degrading or injurious punishment” includes corporal punishment, psychological abuse, deprivation of necessities, extreme confinement or other severe physical abuse, mental anguish, or extreme humiliation.

Use of
reasonable
force not
corporal
punishment.

29.—(1) The use of reasonable force shall not be considered corporal punishment where reasonable force is required—

- (a) to avert an immediate danger of personal injury, including injury to the student himself;
- (b) to avert immediate danger to the property of any person; or
- (c) to prevent disruption of good order and discipline at the school or amongst students receiving education at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

(2) For the purposes of sub-section (1), “reasonable force” is the minimum force necessary to prevent a student from physically harming himself or others, seriously damaging property or prejudicing maintenance of good order, but used in a manner which attempts to preserve the dignity of persons concerned and justifiable given the circumstances of a particular incident and the degree of force used with respect to the age, sex, physical strength, size, understanding, medical conditions and any special education needs of that student or person.

Respect for
national
identity,
corporate
worship and
civic pride.

30.—(1) A school day in every pre-primary, primary and secondary school shall include—

- (a) singing of the National Anthem;
- (b) flag raising ceremony;
- (c) corporate worship; and
- (d) praying or other similar devotional recitation,

to be conducted on a regular basis at the school.

(2) A managing authority shall design, set and implement programmes designed to cultivate civic responsibility and patriotic values to foster community engagement, environmental stewardship, and the protection of shared public spaces inclusive of a shared heritage day and community services.

(3) Religious instruction shall be given in every government and government-aided pre-school, primary and secondary school, subject to such rules as may be prescribed, provided that no child or registered student shall be obliged to undertake religious instruction if objection thereto is made in writing by either of his parents or otherwise communicated in a reliable form capable of being tendered in evidence in a court of law.

31.—(1) The Chief Education Officer in consultation with the Education Council may approve textbooks and other educational materials for use in government and government-aided pre-primary, primary and secondary schools.

Textbooks
and other
educational
materials.

(2) The managing authority of a denominational school may determine the textbook used for religious education in that school.

32. The Chief Education Officer in consultation with the Education Council may—

Assessment and
certification.

- (a) set standards for the completion of primary and secondary level schooling; and
- (b) provide examinations and other measures in accordance with the national student assessment system under Part V, Sub-Part 2 for the assessment and certification of students to determine the attainment of such standards.

33.—(1) The Minister may make regulations—

Schooling
Regulations.

- (a) governing the school year, cycle, term, semester teaching session and holiday; and
- (b) permitting the managing authority to determine and implement with the approval of the Chief Education Officer, for a school under its jurisdiction, a school year, term, cycle, semester or holiday that is different than those specified under this Act.

(2) If any school or other institution has to be closed other than for scheduled holidays, the proprietor or managing authority, as the case may be, shall immediately inform the Chief Education Officer of the reasons for the closure, and the period for which it is likely to remain closed.

(3) The proprietor or managing authority, as the case may be, shall not proceed to close nor re-open a school or other institution unless prior approval of the Chief Education Officer is first obtained.

(4) Any regulations made under this section shall be subject to affirmative resolution of the National Assembly.

Sub-Part 4

School Admissions, Attendance and Enforcement

Parent's duty to have child of compulsory school age educated.

34.—(1) Subject to sub-section (2), it is the duty of the parent of every child of compulsory school age to cause the child to receive education by regular attendance at a school.

(2) Sub-section (1)—

- (a) includes every parent having control of a child who may become a child of compulsory school age by the end of January in the following year;

- (b) applies to attendance of the entire term, cycle, semester or school year during which the school in the district in which the child resides, or the school to which the child of compulsory school age is assigned to attend, is in session;
- (c) applies until the child of compulsory school age reaches the age of seventeen years, or unless sooner graduated or is otherwise excused in accordance with sub-section (3).

(3) A student may be excused from school attendance if the student is—

- (a) in the opinion of the Chief Education Officer, receiving satisfactory instruction at home or elsewhere;
- (b) excluded from attendance at school under this Act;
- (c) unable to attend school because of sickness, danger of infection, infirmity, sudden or serious illness of a parent or other related cause;
- (d) suffering from a physical or mental disability that, in the opinion of a registered medical practitioner, makes the student incapable of being educated by ordinary methods of instruction;
- (e) granted permission by the administrator of the school to be temporarily absent from school for good and sufficient reason;
- (f) a participant in observances, celebrations, or activities recognised by a denominational school;

- (g) suspended from school in accordance with this Act and has not been given permission to enroll in another school;
- (h) enrolled and in regular attendance at a private school or a home education programme in accordance with this Act; or
- (i) engaged in work experience or other educational programmes authorised by the administrator.

School
attendance
order.

35.—(1) If it appears to the Chief Education Officer that the parent of a child of compulsory school age is failing to perform the duty imposed on that parent by section 34(1), the Chief Education Officer shall notify the parent requiring him within fourteen days from the date of service of the notice to satisfy the Chief Education Officer that the child is a registered student and is receiving suitable education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

(2) If the parent fails to satisfy the Chief Education Officer of the requirement specified in the notice, then, if in the opinion of the Chief Education Officer it is expedient that the child be registered or to attend a school, the Chief Education Officer shall serve upon the parent a school attendance order in the prescribed form mandating such parent to cause the child to become a registered student or to attend a school named in the school attendance order, provided that—

- (a) a school attendance order shall not be served on the parent where there is not, within walking distance of the child's residence, a government or government-aided school unless suitable arrangements exist for the transport of the child to and from the child's residence and the government school or government-aided school as the case may be;

- (b) before serving such a school attendance order upon a parent, the Chief Education Officer shall, where practicable, afford the parent an opportunity of selecting the school to be named in the school attendance order;
- (c) where it is not practical to give opportunity to a parent to select a school prior to serving the school attendance order, the Chief Education Officer may accept a selection after the school attendance order is served; or
- (d) where a school is selected by the parent that school shall be the school to be named in the school attendance order or, as the case may be, to be substituted for the school named in the school attendance order.

Failure to
attend school.

(3) If a proceeding is instituted under section 36(3) against a parent for failure to comply with a school attendance order and that parent is acquitted, the court may direct that the school attendance order shall cease to be in force, but without prejudice to the duty of the Chief Education Officer to take further action under this section if at any time the Chief Education Officer is of the opinion that having regard to any change of circumstances it is expedient to do so.

(4) Save as provided in sub-section (3), a school attendance order made with respect to any child shall, subject to any modification which may be made by the Chief Education Officer, continue in force so long as such child is of compulsory school age or unless sooner revoked by the Chief Education Officer.

36.—(1) If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered student at a school fails to attend regularly, the principal shall inform the parent and the School Community Liaison Officer of the irregular attendance.

Failure to
attend school.

(2) A child of compulsory school age who is a registered student at a school shall not be deemed to have failed to attend regularly at a school by reason of his absence from that school—

- (a) at any time when he was prevented from attending by reason of sickness, bad weather or any other unavoidable cause;
- (b) on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his parent belongs; or
- (c) if the parent proves that the school is not within walking distance of the child's home, and no suitable transportation arrangements exist, and that it is inexpedient for the child to become a registered student at a school nearer to his home.

(3) If the parent of a child of compulsory school age who is a registered student at a school fails to take effective measures to ensure the regular school attendance of his child, that parent commits an offence and may be liable on summary conviction to a fine of one hundred dollars.

School
Community
Liaison
Officers.

37.—(1) For the effective carrying out of the provisions of this Act, in respect of the primary bridge between the school, family, and community agencies to enhance student success, attendance, and well-being, the Chief Education Officer, with the approval of the Minister, may appoint an adequate number of School Community Liaison Officers and define the area of their work.

(2) It shall be the duty of each School Community Liaison Officer to—

- (a) ascertain and report to the Manager of a District Education Centre every parent of every child

resident within the area who has failed to regularly attend school;

- (b) enforce school attendance of a child of compulsory school age;
- (c) enforce the provisions of this Act and to prosecute those not complying therewith; and
- (d) follow the directions, if any, laid down by the Chief Education Officer.

(3) In the absence of a School Community Liaison Officers, the Chief Education Officer shall make other arrangements for the purposes stated in sub-section (2).

38.—(1) A School Community Liaison Officer or any person duly authorised by the Chief Education Officer, upon first asking for permission to enter, may, enter any yard, house, building or place between the hours of eight o'clock in the morning and five o'clock in the evening of any day of the week except weekends and public holidays to make enquiries as to any child there residing, frequenting, visiting or employed.

Power of
School
Community
Liaison
Officers, etc. to
enter any place
for making
enquiries.

(2) The School Community Liaison Officer may stop and question any child who appears to be of compulsory school age but is not at school concerning—

- (a) his age;
- (b) his name and address;
- (c) the school at which he is registered;
- (d) the reason for his absence from school; and
- (e) any other matter relevant to the inquiry under sub-section (1).

(3) Everyone who–

- (a) willfully hinders or obstructs any such officer or authorised person as mentioned in sub-section (1) in the performance of his duty;
- (b) willfully makes any false representations to such officer or authorised person with respect to the question under sub-section (2);
- (c) willfully refuses to afford to any such officer or authorised person reasonably requiring it any information that he possesses as to the age or employment of a child of compulsory school age;
- (d) assaults, obstructs, or uses insulting, abusive or indecent language to–
 - (i) a School Community Liaison Officer in the execution of his duties; or
 - (ii) any other person executing a duty imposed on that person by this Act, in relation to the attendance of any child at school;
- (e) being a parent, fails, without reasonable cause, having been requested by a School Community Liaison Officer or any person duly authorised by the Chief Education Officer, to give any information concerning–
 - (i) the name, age, residence, parent, enrolment or the attendance of any child at school;
 - (ii) any other matter, relevant to the attendance of any child at school; or

- (f) gives to any School Community Liaison Officer or any person duly authorised by the Chief Education Officer, knowing it to be false or misleading, any information concerning any matter mentioned in paragraph (e),

commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding one hundred dollars.

(4) A member of the Police Department shall, when called upon by a School Community Liaison Officer or person duly authorized by the Chief Education Officer, render such assistance as such officer or authorised person may need in the performance of his functions under this Act.

(5) Sub-section (3) applies, although the child in relation to whom the offence is committed is not of compulsory school age.

39.—(1) In case of a serious offence, the managing authority may expel a registered student from the school in accordance with the rules made under section 105.

Expulsion
and appeal
of registered
student from
school.

(2) The District Council may establish guidelines for managing authorities to determine what constitutes serious offences for the purpose of sub-section (1) and establish the procedure for making of complaints and the investigation thereof.

(3) A registered student who has been expelled in accordance with sub-section (1) may, within 21 days of the date of expulsion, proffer an appeal to a District Council appointed in accordance with section 4(5).

40. A School Community Liaison Officer may, at the request of a parent, apprehend any student found absent from school without having been excused under section 35(3) and shall deliver the student to the school from which he is absent or to his parent.

Power to
deliver absent
student.

PART IV

*Establishment and Management of Schools and other Institutions**Sub-Part 1**General matters relating to Institutions*

Establishment
and operation
of institutions.

41.—(1) To meet the requirements of this Act, the pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary levels of schooling are approved systems of schools, the operation of which are subject to this Act.

(2) In consideration of a requirement pursuant to subsection (1), the Ministry shall recognise the partnership with churches, communities, and voluntary organisations as a foundational principle of the education system.

Power of Chief
Education
Officer to
determine
number,
location,
assignment
and closure of
schools.

42. The Chief Education Officer in joint consultation with the Education Council and with the prior approval of the Minister shall have the power to determine—

- (a) the number and location of schools and other institutions;
- (b) the retention or establishment of government schools and other institutions in areas where government-aided schools cannot be maintained effectively and economically, or with due regard to the reasonable demands of the population or segments of the population; and
- (c) the closure or amalgamation of schools or other institutions in consultation with the proprietor and managing authorities of such schools or other institutions and with due regard to the representations of the persons affected including teachers, students and parents.

43.—(1) A person or body of persons wishing to operate a pre-school, primary school, secondary school or tertiary institution, or other institution shall apply to the Chief Education Officer for a licence to operate such a school or institution.

Approval
of schools
and other
institutions.

(2) The procedure and criteria for obtaining a licence to operate a school or other institution shall be set out in rules made under this Act.

(3) The Chief Education Officer shall maintain, in the BEMIS, a Register of Schools and other Institutions in which it shall record particulars in respect of licensed schools and other institutions.

44.—(1) Prior to any change in the ownership of a school or other institution, or any modification in the particulars supplied on the application for a licence to operate such a school or other institution, the proprietor shall apply to the Chief Education Officer on the prescribed form providing full information about the proposed change and any other particulars as may be required by the Chief Education Officer.

Change in
ownership of
institutions.

(2) On receipt of an application under sub-section (1), the Chief Education Officer may approve or disapprove the change of ownership of the school or other institution.

45.—(1) The proprietor of a school or other institution in possession of a licence to operate shall have overall responsibility for the proper management, functioning and development of its school or other institution in accordance with this Act.

Responsibility
of Proprietors.

(2) The proprietor of a school or other institution shall provide legal counsel to advise a teacher of his rights and obligations with respect to an assault by a student or parent of that student and shall render all reasonable assistance to the teacher in connection with handling of the incident by

the Belize Police Department and by the court, provided that the proprietor is satisfied that the teacher has acted within its policy and rules.

**Managing
authorities.**

46.—(1) Every organisation, body, institution or denominational entity having one or more schools or other institutions shall appoint a manager, board of management, board of governors or board of trustees, as may be appropriate, to be the managing authority for each school or institution for which it is the proprietor.

(2) A managing authority shall be appointed in accordance with prescribed rules.

(3) The Chair of any board appointed under this section shall be appointed by the respective managing authority.

(4) The Chief Education Officer shall keep a current Register of Managing Authorities.

**General
functions of
managing
authorities.**

47.—(1) The managing authority of pre-primary, primary, secondary or tertiary institution shall be responsible for—

- (a) the proper and efficient organisation and management of the school or institution under its management;
- (b) the formulation of policies and rules for the efficient and effective conduct of schooling, student discipline and behaviour, and student attire; and
- (c) the adequate provision of such support systems required to deliver appropriate education to students enrolled in schools or other institutions under its management.

(2) The responsibility at a government-aided school, specially-assisted school or a community school shall be

met with assistance and in partnership with the Government under the conditions for government-aided schools.

48.—(1) A managing authority shall recruit, interview, select and recommend persons to fill vacancies for the dean, assistant dean, principal, vice-principal, school counsellor, teacher and other staff and may offer employment to the recommended persons in accordance with section 83.

**Role of
Managing
Authorities in
employment
and
appointment of
teachers etc.**

(2) A managing authority may recommend to the Commission the appointment of a teacher who has successfully completed the required probationary period under its management pursuant to section 83(4).

(3) A Managing Authority is empowered to—

- (a) grant release to teachers who have so requested in accordance with prescribed rules;
- (b) transfer teachers within its management in accordance with section 85;
- (c) grant leave of less than ten days such as sick, professional development, compassionate, urgent personal, paternity, and special leave in accordance with prescribed rules;
- (d) indicate support or otherwise, with justification, on applications for extended study leave, secondment or for posting as Itinerant Resource Officer;
- (e) take disciplinary action for minor offences against a teacher under its management in respect of oral and written warnings or reprimands; and
- (f) with the approval of the Commission, take disciplinary action against a teacher under its

respective management for major offences in accordance with this Act and the rules made thereunder.

(4) The Minister may by rules made under this Act specify minor offences and major offences for the purpose of sub-section (3) and prescribe the procedure for making of complaints and the investigation thereof.

(5) Nothing in sub-section (3)(f) relating to major offences shall preclude a managing authority from suspending a teacher accused of a major offence pending a reference to the Commission as required by the said sub-section.

School
monitoring.

49.—(1) The proprietor, managing authority or other appropriate entity shall monitor a pre-school, primary school, secondary school or tertiary institution and keep such staff and student records as prescribed for submission to the Ministry through BEMIS.

(2) Within one month of the end of a school year, the managing authority of a pre-school, primary school, secondary school or tertiary institution shall furnish through BEMIS a report of the year just ended, on the form prescribed for that purpose.

(3) The Chief Education Officer shall determine the intervals at which a school or institution is to be inspected and shall conduct inspections accordingly.

(4) The continued permission of an institution to operate may be dependent on the results of an inspection conducted under sub-section (3).

(5) Any person who—

(a) willfully makes any false representation or return to the Chief Education Officer or any officer deputed by the Chief Education Officer; or

- (b) willfully refuses to furnish to the Chief Education Officer or any officer deputed by the Chief Education Officer any information which such person may be required to furnish by this Act or rules made under this Act,

commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding five hundred dollars.

50.—(1) The Chief Education Officer in consultation with the Director of Health Services may make regulations governing the health conditions to be observed in schools.

Health
conditions in
schools.

(2) Regulations made pursuant to sub-section (1) shall be subject to the approval of the Minister.

(3) The regulations made under this section shall be subject to negative resolution of the National Assembly.

51.—(1) The Chief Education Officer or any education officer deputed by the Chief Education Officer may enter any premises where schooling is conducted, at any reasonable time during school hours, for the purpose of making enquiries and discharging such duties as may be imposed by the Chief Education Officer under this Act.

Chief
Education
Officer may
enter any
school.

(2) Any person who willfully obstructs or resists the Chief Education Officer or any education officer deputed by the Chief Education Officer in the performance of his duties, commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding five hundred dollars.

52.—(1) If the Proprietor or managing authority of a government school or government-aided school commits any breach of this Act, the Chief Education Officer shall give notice in writing to the Proprietor, or Managing Authority requiring compliance with such provision.

Non-
compliance
with Act.

(2) Where the managing authority of a government school or government-aided school or other institution fails to comply with the notice issued in accordance with sub-section (1), the Proprietor may appoint a new administrator, manager or managing authority.

(3) A proprietor or managing authority who fails to comply with the notice issued in accordance with sub-section (1) by failing to bring the deficiencies into conformity with this Act commits an offence and is liable, on summary conviction, to a fine of one hundred dollars for each day on which he fails to comply with the notice and the Chief Education Officer may with the approval of the Minister, suspend or revoke the government-aid or licence to operate the school.

(4) Where the deficiencies causing a notice under sub-section (1) to be issued, pose a threat to the health or wellbeing of the students or staff, the Chief Education Officer may, with the approval of the Minister, make an urgent application to the Magistrate Court for an order to close the school for such time until there is compliance with the provisions of this Act.

(5) Any action taken under this section shall be taken in accordance with natural justice principles.

Sub-Part 2

Grant-in-Aid and other financial assistance

Conditions of grant-in-aid.

53.—(1) The Ministry may assist such schools or other institutions as are approved under section 56 by way of grant-in-aid from public funds for such expenditures as are provided for in rules made under this Act.

(2) It is a condition for grant-in-aid approved under this section that the managing authority shall—

- (a) employ only teachers who possess a licence to teach;
- (b) submit justification to the Ministry, prior to the recruitment of teachers;
- (c) comply with this Act and any rule or regulation made thereunder; and
- (d) comply with any other reasonable conditions which the Minister may prescribe.

(3) Where a Managing Authority or any other person fails to comply with the conditions specified under sub-section (2), the managing authority or other such person commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding five thousand dollars and, in addition, the managing authority shall be liable to—

- (a) suspension or revocation of the grant-in-aid; or
- (b) suspension or revocation of licence to operate.

54.—(1) The Government shall not approve a grant-in-aid or other financial assistance to any school or other institution which fails to comply with this Act.

**Refusal of
grant-in-aid or
other financial
assistance.**

(2) If a school or other institution already in receipt of grant-in-aid fails to comply with this Act, that school or other institution may be subject to a suspension or revocation of the grant-in-aid or other financial assistance.

(3) The procedure for suspension or revocation of grant-in-aid shall be conducted in accordance with natural justice principles.

*Sub-Part 3**Higher and Further Education*

Higher
education and
continuing
education.

55.—(1) The Minister may establish and maintain, in accordance with this Act, any tertiary institution of higher education at such places as the Minister may determine.

(2) The Ministry may make provision for continuing and higher education and training of Belizeans in such tertiary, professional, technical, and vocational education institutions or programmes as may be approved by the Minister in accordance with regulations governing further education that may be made from time to time.

Statutory
corporations.
CAP. 37.

56.—(1) Matters relating to tertiary education by way of the University of Belize including the establishment, management and development of that institution shall be in accordance with the University of Belize Act.

(2) An Act which establishes a corporation for the purposes of tertiary education and containing provisions relating to powers and capacity shall continue to apply in respect of an equivalent requirement of an institution under this Act, and in every other requirement, this Act shall apply to such corporation as if it were school or other institution.

(3) Sub-section (2) shall apply to the following corporations—

CAP. 46:04.

(a) Sacred Heart College Act;

CAP. 46:03.

(b) Saint Catherine Academy Act;

CAP. 46:02.

(c) Muffles College and Sixth Form Act; and

CAP. 46:01.

(d) St. John's College Act.

*Sub-Part 4**Scholarships and Bursaries*

57.—(1) The Minister may make regulations governing the award, granting and holding of scholarships.

Regulations
in respect of
scholarships
and awards.

(2) The Minister may, in each year, award scholarships and bursaries, in such number and value as may be available and tenable, at approved pre-schools, primary schools, secondary schools, and tertiary institutions.

(3) The Minister may, in each year, award one or more scholarships to persons in accordance with the Regulations governing the award of such scholarships to enable that person to undergo approved areas of study at a college, university or other such tertiary institution.

(4) The award of a scholarship under sub-section (3) shall be in accordance with the financial assistance programme.

58.—(1) Citizens and permanent residents are entitled, as of right to be admitted to and free from payment of tuition at any government school or at any select government-aided primary school.

No payment
of tuition as of
right.

(2) Citizens and permanent residents are entitled, as of right, to be admitted to and free from payment of tuition at any government school at secondary-level, particularly if that child is a graduate of a primary school.

(3) The Minister shall select the government-aided school at secondary-level or tertiary level to which a student may be entitled as of right to be admitted to and free from payment of tuition,

provided that the Minister shall, in the selection process, consider the specific regions apart from the limits

of a government school, to ensure that a government-aided school is selected in a manner which guarantees the utmost, if not full, protection from special fees and other fees thereby securing the maximum number of students' access within the widest geographic coverage when combined with the geographic coverage of government schools.

CAP. 17.

(4) In respect of a CARICOM national who is a student and resident in Belize, the right to be admitted to and free from payment of tuition shall be in accordance with the Caribbean Community Act, and other laws relating to CARICOM nationals and mutual collaboration with the Ministry responsible for foreign affairs.

(5) For purposes of sub-section (3), the Minister may consult with partners and stakeholders if the Minister considers it prudent to do so.

(6) For purposes of this section, "tuition" refers to the fee or compensation charged by a school or other institution for providing instruction, training, or teaching services to a student.

Special fees
and other fees
to be charged.

59.—(1) The managing authority of a secondary school may charge special fees or other fees consequent to the student's admission in an educational programme if the secondary school is not the recipient of funds from or through the Government under an educational upliftment project, which supports students through initiatives such as healthy meals, uniforms, transportation, learning device needs and improvement to school infrastructure and other resources aimed at reducing or removing barriers to education.

(2) The fees under sub-section (1) may include—

(a) fees payable in such amounts, for such purposes and by such persons or classes of persons who are not citizens of Belize or any CARICOM

Member State as defined in the Caribbean Community Act; CAP.17.

- (b) fees may be payable in such amounts, for such purposes and by such persons or classes of persons who are not a Belizean as the Minister may prescribe by Order published in the *Gazette*; and
- (c) other charges may be imposed at a government school, government-aided or specially assisted school with the approval of the Minister.

(3) For purposes of this section, “fee” includes such sums of money, which may be covered under an educational upliftment project such as healthy meals, uniforms, transportation, learning device needs and improvement to school infrastructure and resources.

Sub-Part 5

Private Schools

60.—(1) A person shall not establish or operate a private school unless that person satisfies the requirements and policy guidelines on school approvals established by the Ministry for operation and education service delivery.

Establishment.
operation and
service delivery
guidelines.

(2) The managing authority of a private school shall be responsible for compliance with the requirements of this Act in respect of the—

- (a) requirements for a licence to operate a private school;
- (b) qualifications of staff;
- (c) health and safety conditions of the registered student at the school and on its premises; and

- (d) formulation and adoption of non-discriminatory policies and practices for the–
 - (i) proper and efficient organisation and management;
 - (ii) efficient and effective conduct of schooling;
 - (iii) regulation of student discipline and behaviour; and
 - (iv) adequate provision of such support systems as are necessary to deliver appropriate education to registered students.

Act No. 11 of
2022.

(3) Any foreign company as defined under the Belize Companies Act that intends to operate an institution in Belize shall apply to the Ministry for approval by submitting the required documents, declaration and certificates–

- (a) attesting to competence which corresponds to pre-primary, primary, secondary or tertiary level education;
- (b) attesting to competence or accreditation by the Accreditation Council; and
- (c) any other documentation required by the Ministry.

Rescinding or
suspending
of licence
or closure
otherwise.

61.–(1) The Ministry, in consultation with the Education Council, may rescind or suspend a licence if it is proved that the private school has differed in ways for which approval was initially granted.

(2) If a school, to which a licence has been granted, does not operate fully within two years after date of approval of the licence, the licence shall lapse.

(3) The Minister may order the closure of a private pre-school, or primary school if–

- (a) the school is not managed in the best interests of the students attending the school; and
- (b) the continuing existence of the school is not in the public interest.

(4) Where a school is closed permanently, arrangements shall be made for the students to be admitted into other schools with available space.

62.–(1) A person shall not construct or operate a school without authorisation from the Ministry.

Unauthorised
establishment
of a school.

(2) A person who contravenes sub-section (1) commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding \$10,000 and to a further fine of not less than \$500 for every day during which the school continues to be constructed or operated as the case may be.

63.–(1) Prior to a change of ownership of a school or institution, or a modification in the particulars supplied on the application for a licence to operate such school or institution, the proprietor shall apply to the Chief Education Officer on the prescribed form providing full information about the proposed change of ownership or modification, and any other particulars as may be required by the Chief Education Officer.

Change of
ownership.

(2) On receipt of an application under sub-section (1), the Chief Education Officer may approve or disapprove the change of ownership of the school or institution or the modification, as the case may be, in accordance with the rules prescribed pursuant to section 105.

PART V

*Curriculum, Assessment of Students and Teaching Services**Sub-Part 1**Curriculum***National
curriculum.**

64.—(1) The Minister shall establish a national curriculum for government schools, government-aided schools and specially-assisted schools.

(2) A curriculum established under sub-section (1) shall be balanced and broadly based and shall, in addition to the goals and objectives specified in section 3(3)—

- (a) promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, intellectual and physical development of students and of the society; and
 - (b) prepare students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life.
- (3) The Ministry shall—
- (a) ensure that the national curriculum is available in government schools, government-aided schools, and specially assisted schools together with the requisite teaching and learning materials, including textbooks and readers in digital or physical forms;
 - (b) authorise the periodic review of the national curriculum;
 - (c) in collaboration with the Commission and the BBTE, organise professional development training and workshops for teachers, teacher

educators and other education providers on the proper use of the syllabuses and related teaching resources; and

- (d) on the advice of relevant partners and stakeholders, introduce new subjects into the education system.

(4) The Minister may revise the national curriculum whenever the Minister considers it necessary and expedient to do so.

65.—(1) The school curriculum shall comprise of primary and secondary school subjects and specify in relation to each of them—

School curriculum.

- (a) attainment targets that include the knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes which students of different abilities and maturities are expected to have;
- (b) programmes of study that include the content, skills and processes which are required to be taught to students of different abilities and maturities; and
- (c) assessment arrangements for assessing students at or near the end of each key stage for the purpose of ascertaining what was achieved in relation to the attainment targets.

(2) Sub-section (1) shall not apply in the case of a school engaged in the delivery of special education programmes and services.

66. The Chief Education Officer in consultation with the Education Council shall, with respect to government schools and government-aided pre-school, primary school and secondary schools and specially-assisted schools—

Areas of study.

- (a) specify a programme of study;
- (b) issue curriculum guidelines and require that areas of study be developed therefrom;
- (c) issue assessment guidelines and require assessments to be developed therefrom;
- (d) issue guidelines or policy transforming the proficiency and grading descriptors for application into the education system; and
- (e) permit the managing authority of such schools or other institutions to provide alternative areas of study in lieu of or in addition to the areas of study in paragraph (a).

School
assessment
design.

67.—(1) A managing authority shall develop an assessment design plan, which shall be per subject according to a school year, the student, the subject, scope, time and month of assessment, and type of assessment—

- (a) analysing the national curriculum of each subject to decide on the assessment areas and achievement standards set for each area;
- (b) developing assessment standards comprising the statements that differentiate student achievement levels with mastering, achieving, developing or emerging criteria for assessment of each subject; and
- (c) scoring, equating, and analysing the results across different test years for analysing trends in achievement.

(2) The effectiveness of the assessment design plan may be made by the Ministry or by a body or organisation designated or contracted to do so.

*Sub-Part 2**National Student Assessment System and Other Assessment System***68. In this Part–****Interpretation.**

“assessment” means the process of gathering and evaluating information on what students know, understand and can do by reliably measuring the knowledge, skills, attitudes and national core competencies in order to make an informed decision about next steps in the educational process or to participate effectively in society and contribute to national development;

“assessment quality” means the psychometric quality of the instruments, processes and procedures used for the assessment activity;

“assessment system” means the group of policies, structures and practices for generating and using information on student learning that provides information on sufficient quality and quantity to meet information and decision-making needs in support of improved quality of student learning;

“classroom assessment” means the continuous assessments carried out by teachers and students in the course of daily activity, which encompass a variety of standardised and non-standardised instruments and procedures for collecting and interpreting written, oral, and other forms of evidence on student learning or achievement;

“data collection and evaluation methods” includes oral questioning, classroom assessments, examinations, largescale assessment and response or complex computer-adaptive testing models based on multifactorial scoring algorithms and learning progressions; and

“system” or “NSAS” means the comprehensive National Student Assessment System for assessing student learning within a modern, competency-based education system established under this Sub-Part.

Establishment
of system.

69.—(1) The Ministry shall develop a system for quality education, which—

- (a) evaluates student learning in foundational areas, including literacy, numeracy, Belizean studies, science and technology; and
- (b) assesses students on a wide range of other competencies, including—
 - (i) the 21st century skills aligned with the national curriculum;
 - (ii) critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, communication, creativity, digital literacy; and
 - (iii) personal and social responsibility.

(2) In developing the NSAS under sub-section (1), the Ministry shall consider the following—

- (a) assessment of learning outcomes to improve overall learning experience;
- (b) increased understanding of what, when, where and how students learn;
- (c) equitable access, equitable learning opportunities, improved quality and a modernised education sector in Belize;
- (d) the assurance of a high-quality and relevant education sector, that is inclusive, technologically

driven and capable of fostering development of productive citizens;

- (e) the generation and availability of reliable data to guide teaching, support learning, optimise investments and guarantee value for money; and
- (f) the systematic approach to measuring quality, analysing and using assessment to improve teaching, learning and educational outcomes.

(3) The law or policy framework for assessment activities within the NSAS shall include the following–

- (a) to diagnose educational achievements of primary and secondary students and track the trends of their achievements;
- (b) to provide basic data for development or improvement of the national curriculum by analysing students' achievements and monitoring issues with curriculum implementation at the key stages of education specified in sub-section (5);
- (c) to improve teaching and learning methods by analysing the test items and the relationship between the students' achievement and background variables;
- (d) to guide the school toward improved assessment methods by enabling the development of appropriate assessment tools;
- (e) to explore further research design and methods to analyse the findings of the system;

- (f) to generate valid, comparable, and consistent data on learner achievement and school performance;
- (g) to provide students with meaningful feedback on their strengths and areas for growth as measured against the learning outcomes of the national curriculum;
- (h) to support teachers in adapting instruction to students' needs and competency levels;
- (i) to equip proprietors and managing authorities with data to drive improvements in teaching and learning;
- (j) to inform parents of their child's progress relative to national expectations, enabling stronger home and school partnerships;
- (k) to provide the Ministry with detailed evidence of system performance, including value for investment, changes in quality and standards over time, differences across schools, and outcomes for diverse groups of students.

(4) The Ministry shall ensure that the system is developed into a coherent structured framework for monitoring of learning outcomes, informing policy and practice for evidenced-based decision-making pertaining to students, in particular, a framework that–

- (a) manages education quality, and checks the current state and trends in academic achievement of students based on the national curriculum;
- (b) measures the academic outcome of each student, the results of which may clarify the general

performance level of students by school grade and serve as the basis on which institutions may improve its teaching methods;

- (c) contributes to the setting of directions for educational policies, and extension of support to schools and other institutions; and
- (d) enable a school or other institution to use its results in understanding the academic performance of individual students and the subjects to which programmes for improving basic academic ability are applied.

(5) The key stages in relation to a student are as follows—

- (a) the period ending at the lower division or standard one;
- (b) the period ending at the middle division or standard four;
- (c) the period ending at the upper division or standard six;
- (d) the period ending at form one;
- (e) the period ending at form two;
- (f) the period ending at form three; and
- (g) the period ending at form four.

(6) For each key stage listed in sub-section (5), the Chief Education Officer shall ensure that arrangements are made for the assessment of students to ascertain what they have achieved, in relation to the attainment targets.

**Classroom
assessments.**

70.-(1) An institution shall engage in classroom assessment to improve education and achieve the objectives of the NSAS through–

- (a) formative or summative in school assessments;
- (b) authentic in school assessment;
- (c) standardised national tests;
- (d) competency-based assessments;
- (e) computer adaptive national assessments;
- (f) regional or international external exams (where applicable); and
- (g) any other appropriate form of assessment method.

(2) The managing authority, administrators and teachers are responsible for supporting the implementation of classroom assessments in accordance with national guidelines and ensure that procedures are consistently followed and that students have equal opportunities to participate.

(3) The data on a student for each indicator specified in section 74 (1), shall display the four development levels of the competency-based proficiency scale with explanations to understand how to progress through those levels, namely–

- (a) emerging which is the lowest level of performance and it represents the absence of, or deviation from, the competency;
- (b) developing which is the next level up representing the partial presence of the competency;

- (c) achieving which represents the acceptable minimum standard on the indicator; and
- (d) mastering which represents the ideal or current best practice.

71.-(1) The Ministry shall oversee the system and provide vision, leadership, and decision policy frameworks to–

Ministry role.

- (a) ensure fairness, validity, reliability, and inclusivity;
- (b) coordinate the administration of assessments nationally, including scheduling, field-testing and piloting, distribution of test materials, training of supervisors and invigilators, and monitoring adherence to established protocols;
- (c) illustrate the importance of assessment of, for, and as learning, rather than as a separate disjointed element of the education sector;
- (d) provide feedback to students, teachers, and schools about what has been learned, and ‘feed forward’ information that can shape future learning as well as further education, tertiary and career-related decision making;
- (e) ensure the close alignment of curriculum expectations, subject and performance criteria, and desired learning outcomes;
- (f) engage teachers in assessment development and scoring as a way to improve their professional practice and capacity to support student learning and achievement;
- (g) engage students in authentic assessments to improve their motivation and learning;

- (h) seek to advance student learning in 21st century skills and problem solving by using a wider range of pedagogical strategies;
- (i) prioritise quality over quantity of standardised testing; and
- (j) encourage the use of open-ended performance tasks and school-based assessments that require students to produce detailed written responses and provide modern-day skills.

(2) The Ministry may–

- (a) work with partners to create an enabling context by pooling resources or institutional arrangements for developing, implementing, analysing, or reporting on tests; and
- (b) collaborate with other agencies for regional assessment where a profile determines it cost effective to develop higher-quality tests and to incorporate technological advances into the testing process.

Other
obligations.

72.–(1) A managing authority with its staff shall be responsible for reviewing results of assessment and incorporating the findings into its school improvement plans.

(2) A teacher shall draft and receive individualised student performance summaries–

- (a) to support instructional decision-making;
- (b) for disaggregation to reporting on students with special education needs and disabilities; and
- (c) to adapt instruction, provide differentiated support, and engage parents and paraprofessionals

in understanding students with special education needs and disabilities progress and needs.

(3) The teacher shall incorporate assessment results into the student records from in-school tests, national standardised assessments, and competency-based assessments into the student report card to support consistency and transparency in reporting.

(4) A teacher may engage a broader accountability system that includes other assessments and indicators, such as classroom visits and observations, classroom-based assessment, or surveys of the teacher, student and parents, in order to obtain a greater understanding of a student and school performance.

73.–(1) The Ministry shall establish data protection and governance protocols to safeguard the confidentiality, integrity, and ethical use of the information collected through the NSAS, applicable–

Data protection and ethical use of assessment information.

- (a) to all forms of assessment data, including sensitive information such as socio-economic status, special education needs, and indicators of student well-being;
- (b) to processes related to data collection, storage, analysis, reporting, and dissemination in accordance with the Data Protection Act and other internationally recognised standards for data protection.

45 of 2021.

(2) Access to individual-level data shall be strictly limited to the officer in the Ministry authorised by the Chief Education Officer who require such information for legitimate educational purposes, and accessible through secure systems and procedures to prevent unauthorised use or disclosure.

(3) Wherever possible, data shall be anonymised or aggregated to reduce the risk of identifying individual students.

(4) The protocols established under sub-section (1) may include–

- (a) data retention, privacy safeguards, and the ethical analysis of demographic information;
- (b) requirement for primary assessment data and secondary or derived datasets to be kept indefinitely; and
- (c) disposal guidelines including the anonymisation of records for continued protection of student privacy.

(5) The analysis and reporting of demographic and sensitive data shall be guided by principles of equity, fairness, and non-discrimination, ensuring that such information is used solely to support improved learning outcomes, system monitoring, and the advancement of educational equity.

(6) Personally identifiable information shall not be publicly released, and measures shall be implemented to prevent the inadvertent identification of individuals or small groups in published reports.

(7) The Ministry shall oversee compliance with these data governance requirements and guide managing authorities to ensure consistent and responsible implementation across the education sector.

**Professional
standards.**

74.–(1) The Ministry shall set indicators and maintain strict protocols to test security, including–

- (a) secure handling, storage, and distribution of assessment materials;

- (b) the enforcement of standardised administration and scoring procedures;
- (c) maintenance of the integrity and comparability of results across schools and regions; and
- (d) mechanisms to detect and address irregularities to ensure that results accurately reflect student performance.

(2) The indicators under sub-section (1) may be focused on areas such as policies, fiscal resources, the organisational structure, human resources, the learning goals and standards, curriculum, pre-service and in-service teacher training, design and analysis, administration and uses among others determined by the Ministry.

75.–(1) The Ministry shall be responsible for the compilation of clear and accurate assessment results into the standardised national report.

**Reporting of
assessment
results.**

(2) The standardised national report shall present system-wide trends in student learning across assessed education levels including–

- (a) analyses of overall performance;
- (b) patterns in competency attainment; and
- (c) comparisons across districts, school types, and demographic groups.

76.–(1) The Ministry shall, on an annual basis, publish the results of assessments under the NSAS, for each school and for each grade, in a format that presents the combined average performance of students and provides a summarised overview of academic proficiency and growth, enabling stakeholders to compare performance across grades and school years.

**Publication of
NSAS report.**

(2) The Ministry shall design an approach to publication aimed at systemic monitoring, school self-evaluation, and public reporting.

(3) In pursuance of the requirements of this section, the Ministry may utilise its website for publication of the results of NSAS provided that the Ministry's website is structured to reach the national population.

Sub-Part 3

Teaching Services

Teaching
Services
Records.

77.—(1) The Commission shall cause the Secretariat to assist with recording particulars of teachers, including employment and appointment history, the licensing history as well as other relevant details.

(2) The Commission may cause the Secretariat to maintain the Register of Appointed Teachers in which it shall record the particulars of teachers who have been appointed which includes—

- (a) the names and schools of every appointed teacher;
- (b) the qualifications in respect of which the appointment is approved; and
- (c) such other particulars as may from time to time be determined by the Commission.

Licensing etc.,
of teachers.

78.—(1) A person wishing to teach in a pre-school, primary school or secondary school shall apply to the Chief Education Officer for an appropriate licence to teach.

(2) The Chief Education Officer may, upon being satisfied that the applicant has met the requirements under section 79

and the requirements prescribed by rules under section 105, grant one of the following—

- (a) full licence;
- (b) provisional licence;
- (c) special licence;
- (d) special permit;
- (e) permit to teach; or
- (f) such other prescribed permit or licence,

to the applicant which may be subject to prescribed conditions.

(3) A person shall not be granted a licence or be permitted to teach who has—

- (a) been convicted of a felony of a nature indicating unsuitability for the teaching profession;
- (b) not been certified by a registered medical practitioner to be free of—
 - (i) the use of illegal drugs;
 - (ii) a communicable disease, or where he is not free of a communicable disease, does not constitute a risk of communicating said disease and is not likely to be a danger to the health of the students; and
 - (iii) any infirmity likely to interfere with the efficient performance of assigned professional duties.

Core eligibility
requirements.

79. The applicant for a licence to teach shall satisfy the requirements set out below–

- (a) in respect of a teacher preparation, the applicant must have completed an approved teacher preparation programme, which covers pedagogy, classroom management, and subject-specific methodologies;
- (b) in respect of student teaching and field experience, the applicant must have completed a supervised student teaching or clinical field experience, which is essential for developing practical classroom skills;
- (c) in respect of the examination, the applicant must have passed a standardised exam administered by the Ministry to demonstrate knowledge and teaching competence on literacy, numeracy and the subject matter;
- (d) in respect of moral character and fitness, the applicant must demonstrate personal, ethical, behavioural and legal standards of a positive educator and role model;
- (e) such other documents and information as requested by the Chief Education Officer for the purposes of evaluation of an application; and
- (f) such other prescribed requirement.

Application
for licence or
permit.

80.–(1) The Chief Education Officer shall engage a licensing or permission process that is designed for teachers to meet the professional academic and ethical standards of teaching, which shall entail a combination of higher education, supervised practical experience and standardised testing.

(2) Where an applicant for a licence has satisfied the requirements imposed under this Sub-Part, the Chief Education Officer may grant a licence or permit under section 78 (2) to such applicant.

(3) Any person whose application for a licence or permit under sub-section (1) is refused may appeal to the Tribunal within such time and in such manner as may be prescribed by regulations.

81.—(1) The Commission shall not employ a teacher, administrator or other person in a pre-primary, primary or secondary level institution unless that person holds a valid teaching licence in accordance with regulations made by the Minister.

Unlicensed
teacher
prohibited
from
employment.

(2) A teacher shall not be employed as a school counsellor unless that teacher holds an appropriate certification.

82.—(1) Subject to sub-section (4), a licensed teacher at the secondary level in possession of provisional licence or a full licence may be certified by the Ministry to teach a subject for which that teacher is not in possession of an educational degree, but has completed that subject in partial fulfilment of the educational degree awarded to that teacher.

Certification.

(2) A teacher who wishes to obtain certification in accordance with sub-section (1) shall apply to the Chief Education Officer in the form and manner prescribed by the rules.

(3) A teacher under sub-section (2) shall have—

- (a) passed a standardised examination administered by the Ministry in the subject the teacher is seeking to be certified to teach, which shall demonstrate knowledge and teaching competence in that subject;

- (b) completed sufficient credits in the subject the teacher wish to teach as part of an educational degree; and
- (c) meet such other requirements as are specified in guidelines to be established by the Chief Education Officer.

(4) A licensed teacher may be certified to teach a subject under sub-section (1) where the Ministry is satisfied that such teacher demonstrates–

- (a) adequate academic preparation in the subject; or
- (b) subject-matter competence, through assessment or evaluation determined by the Commission; and
- (c) relevant teaching experience or professional development in the subject area, where applicable.

(5) Where the Ministry is satisfied that an applicant meets the requirements, the Chief Education Officer shall grant the applicant certification to teach the relevant subject and shall issue a certificate, subject to prescribed conditions.

Employment,
probation and
appointment.

83.–(1) A managing authority shall not recommend or employ, as a teacher, a person who does not possess a licence to teach.

(2) A person in possession of a full licence to teach is eligible for temporary employment for a probationary period not exceeding two years and for subsequent appointment.

(3) Notwithstanding sub-section (2), the managing authority supervising the teacher during the probationary period may recommend appointment at the elapse of twelve months and before the expiration of the probationary period.

(4) A teacher may be eligible for appointment pursuant to sub-section (3) if that teacher possesses a full licence and—

- (a) successfully completes the probationary period specified in sub-section (2); or
- (b) receives a recommendation based upon exceptional performance prior to the expiration of the probationary period from the managing authority; and
- (c) complies with any other condition, which the Minister may prescribe.

(5) Where a teacher who is appointed fails to maintain the requirements of a full licence, that teacher may be struck off the Register of Appointed Teachers and shall no longer be eligible for continued employment.

(6) A teacher under sub-section (5) may be eligible for re-employment or re-appointment if that teacher subsequently fulfills the requirements to hold and maintain a full licence.

(7) A teacher in possession of a provisional licence, special licence, permit or special permit may be eligible for temporary employment for a period not exceeding five years during which time the teacher shall acquire the necessary qualifications for a full licence and be in possession of such full licence.

(8) A period of temporary employment, or any part thereof under sub-section (7), on recommendation based on the managing authority's performance appraisal of the teacher, may be regarded as the probationary period for the purposes of appointment as a teacher if that teacher has met the requirements for a full licence.

(9) A teacher on temporary employment pursuant to sub-section (7) who fails to meet the requirements for a full

licence shall have his employment terminated and that teacher shall no longer be eligible for continued employment unless or until he acquires the necessary qualifications for a full licence.

(10) The period of temporary employment, or any part thereof, during which a teacher fails to meet the qualifications for a full licence shall not be considered as a probation period for the purposes of appointment.

(11) A teacher in possession of a full licence to teach may be considered for temporary employment for a specified period where a temporary vacancy may arise during the school year.

Leave and
allowances.

84.—(1) A teacher is eligible for leave and allowances as prescribed in rules made under section 105.

(2) The Ministry may approve leave as long leave, study leave or maternity leave, extended sick leave, professional leave or any other leave extending beyond ten days for teachers in a government school or government-aided school.

(3) Any study leave considered by the Ministry shall be dependent on the availability of funds within the budget for that fiscal year.

Transfer,
release,
secondment,
Itinerant
Resource
Officer status.

85.—(1) The managing authority of a school may, on the approval of the Commission, transfer a teacher, from one school to another school within the management of that Managing Authority, but every attempt shall be made to employ teachers who reside in the community where the school is located, provided that a teacher on probation pending appointment may not be transferred unless an exceptional circumstance arise.

(2) A teacher shall not be involuntarily transferred unless an exceptional circumstance arises but in no circumstance shall the teacher be subjected to any of the following—

- (a) a negative career impact;
- (b) logistical, financial or personal hardship;
- (c) a less desirable duty; or
- (d) a transfer indicative of retaliation or bias.

(3) The conditions and rules of procedure governing transfers shall be as prescribed by regulations.

(4) A teacher may request a release from the Managing Authority in order to facilitate movement between managements and such Managing Authority shall not unreasonably withhold the release requested.

(5) An appointed teacher may request a release from the managing authority to take up employment in the public service or the University of Belize.

(6) An appointed teacher may be eligible for secondment or posting as an Itinerant Resource Officer if such teacher request to be seconded or posted.

(7) The managing authority upon receipt of a request for secondment or posting may consider and recommend a secondment or posting for the approval of the Commission.

86.—(1) A managing authority may propose a Code of Conduct to the Ministry for teachers aimed at guiding disciplinary action.

Disciplinary
action by
managing
authorities.

(2) The Ministry shall verify that the Code of Conduct provides for—

- (a) core values;
- (b) rules of behaviour which complies with principles of natural justice and procedural fairness;

- (c) written notification to a teacher in respect of an allegation;
- (d) a reasonable opportunity for a teacher to respond to an allegation;
- (e) the right of a teacher to impartial consideration and notification of reasons for a decision;
- (f) the right of a teacher to have legal and union representation;
- (g) the right of appeal against a decision under paragraph (e);
- (h) the right to notification, opportunity to be heard and reasons for a decision where there is intention to make an involuntary transfer; and
- (i) any other component which the Minister considers appropriate.

(3) In determining whether to approve a Code of Conduct proposed by a managing authority under sub-section (1), the Minister may seek the advice of the Education Council.

(4) The managing authority shall allow the elapse of ninety days to allow for the Ministry to request adjustment or revision to the Code of Conduct, before approval, provided that the Ministry shall notify the managing authority of any period of extension beyond the ninety days required and the reasons for such extension.

(5) An extension of time under sub-section (4) shall not exceed thirty days after which time, the Education Council shall consider, require adjustment and approve the Code of Conduct.

(6) A teacher may be subject to disciplinary action by the managing authority, in accordance with the Code of Conduct, the rules and this Act.

87. Every teacher aggrieved by an order, by the managing authority of a school, for suspension without pay or on half pay, a fine or loss of salary, deferment or stoppage of salary increment, demotion in rank, involuntary transfer, retirement in the interest of the profession, termination or dismissal from service may, within thirty days of receipt of such order, proffer an appeal to the Tribunal in accordance with section 97(2).

Appeals to the Tribunal.

88.-(1) The Minister may make regulations governing the terms and conditions of employment or re-deployment of teachers and other staff of the education sector.

Teaching services regulations.

(2) The Minister shall consult with managing authorities and the BNTU prior to making of regulations under sub-section (1).

(3) Regulations under sub-section (1) shall be subject to negative resolution of the National Assembly.

PART VI

Quality Assurance and Management

Sub-Part 1

Education Management Information System

89.-(1) The Ministry shall increase its ability to make informed decisions and appropriate response actions on long-term planning, budgeting and to respond appropriately to education needs by the regular collection of accurate data and analysis across all levels in the education sector for input into an education management information system established for that purpose.

Data collection and analysis.

(2) The education management information system of the Ministry shall track key performance indicators including–

- (a) teacher and student attendance;
- (b) the status of facilities in the schools; and
- (c) school feeding enrolment, and other relevant indicators as specified under section 74(1).

(3) The BEMIS shall serve as a tool to support decision-making through an evidence-based and data-driven process for research, informed policy, planning and evaluation of interventions across schools.

(4) To the extent possible, reports shall be generated and accessible via BEMIS.

Establishment
of data
management
system,
BEMIS.

90.–(1) The Ministry shall establish an education management information system that–

- (a) aims to facilitate easy data access, transparency, and collaboration among stakeholders;
- (b) enable efficient data collection, process, store, analyse, and disseminate a range of data and to report successfully on the NSAS results;
- (c) include data on students’ socio-economic backgrounds, first language, whether different from the language of instruction, date and place of birth, special educational needs, and any other relevant information; and
- (d) ensures the reporting process is accurate, comprehensive, and meaningful for stakeholders.

(2) A student shall have a national student identification number provided by BEMIS to ensure a unique learner

identification which shall be used to track the students and provide other reliable information on that person.

(3) A teacher shall have a national teacher identification number provided by BEMIS to ensure a unique teaching identification which shall be used to track the teacher performance and provide other reliable information on that person.

(4) A student or teacher's data may be shared only in accordance with the Data Protection Act governing personal data and information sharing.

No. 45 of 2021.

(5) The Ministry shall, within twelve months of the date of commencement of this Act, publish on its website or any other method of national circulation, a policy on data protection and management, which governs the collection, use, storage, disclosure, retention and disposal of personal data held in BEMIS, or otherwise held by the Ministry, in respect of a student or a teacher.

Sub-Part 2

Supervision and Review of Educational System

91.—(1) The Chief Education Officer, or a public officer authorised in writing by the Chief Education Officer shall, at such times and in the manner prescribed, supervise and inspect government schools, government-aided schools, specially-assisted schools, and private institutions.

Inspection
of schools
and other
institution.

(2) Any person who, under sub-section (1), inspects or supervises a school or other institution shall—

- (a) give such assistance and guidance to the teachers employed at the school or other institution to promote the good conduct and efficiency of the school or other institution;

- (b) advise the administrator of the school or institution on matters relating to its welfare and development; and
- (c) give to the Minister, the Chief Education Officer, the Board of Management or the Proprietor, a report on the school.

Schools
and other
institutions to
be opened for
inspection,
supervision
and visits.

92. The Administrator of a school shall keep the school open at all times during school hours to visits or inspections—

- (a) by the Minister;
- (b) by the Chief Education Officer; or
- (c) by any other person authorised in writing by the Minister or the Chief Education Officer to visit or inspect the school.

Offences.

93. A person who—

- (a) prevents a person empowered or authorised under this Act from inspecting a government school, specially-assisted school or other institution; or
- (b) assaults or obstructs a person empowered or authorised under this Act to inspect a government school, a specially-assisted school or other institution during an inspection of such institutions,

commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding one thousand dollars and in the case of a second or subsequent conviction to a term of imprisonment not exceeding six months.

*Sub-Part 3**Quality Control*

94. The Ministry shall ensure that there is regular collaboration among its stakeholders and partners for effective monitoring of service delivery and in order to guarantee quality assurance and that the Ministry's operations, standards and goals are forward-looking, realistic and achievable.

Quality
assurance.

95.—(1) The Ministry shall ensure that its quality assurance programme include the following—

Monitoring and
supervision.

- (a) periodic visits to schools, observe and take note of what is happening and offer professional advice;
- (b) in collaboration with the school proprietor or manager, insist that a teacher develop his scheme of work and lesson plans and obtain the proper teaching aids; and
- (c) the receipt of reports on the quality and quantity of the teaching and learning materials in the school and make recommendations to the Chief Education Officer, as appropriate.

(2) Managing authorities or proprietors shall regularly visit the schools in their area or school owned by it to make sure that effective teaching and learning takes place and corrective measures as appropriate are instituted.

PART VII*Teaching Service Appeals Tribunal*

96.—(1) There is hereby established for Belize a Teaching Service Appeals Tribunal to hear appeals as set out under this Act.

Teaching
Service Appeals
Tribunal.

(2) The Tribunal shall consist of five members who shall be appointed by the Prime Minister as follows–

- (a) an attorney-at-law of not less than five years standing, who shall be the Chairperson;
- (b) the Labour Commissioner;
- (c) the Chairperson of the Education Council;
- (d) a legal professional nominated by the BNTU; and
- (e) one member nominated by the managing authorities of either the government schools or the government-aided schools on a rotative basis commencing the first term of office with nomination from the managing authorities of government-aided schools.

(3) No person shall be qualified to be appointed as a member of the Tribunal if that person is a member of the Commission.

**Powers and
functions of
the Tribunal.**

97.–(1) The functions of the Tribunal shall be as follows–

- (a) to hear appeals from the decisions of managing authorities to transfer, dismiss or take other disciplinary action against teachers in the teaching service;
- (b) to hear appeals against the decisions or determinations of the Commission taken or made in the lawful exercise of its functions; and
- (c) to perform such other functions and to hear such other appeals as are specified in this Act or as may be prescribed by regulations.

(2) Any teacher who is aggrieved by a decision of a managing authority or the Commission falling within subsection (1) above may appeal to the Tribunal within such time and in such manner as may be prescribed by regulations.

(3) On appeal, the Tribunal may confirm, set aside, modify or suspend the decision under appeal or take such other action as it thinks fit.

98. In the exercise of its functions under this Act, the Tribunal shall not be subject to the direction or control of any other person or authority.

Independence of the Tribunal.

99. Subject to the foregoing provisions of this Part, the constitution of the Tribunal shall be as set out in Schedule IV.

Constitution of the Tribunal. Schedule IV.

100. Prior to the consideration of an appeal by the Tribunal, the Chairperson may appoint a mediator to attempt to settle the matter under appeal.

Mediation.

101. A copy of the decision of the Tribunal shall be sent to the Minister and the parties to the appeal.

Copy to Minister and parties.

PART VIII

Miscellaneous

102. A school counsellor shall—

Duties of school counsellor.

- (a) identify issues affecting school performance, such as absenteeism;
- (b) address social or behavioral problems;
- (c) assist students to develop career and skills needed for academic success;

- (d) provide short-term counselling and care services to individuals and small groups of students; and
- (e) assess students' abilities and interests.

Protection
from injurious
conduct.

103. A teacher shall not be—

- (a) dismissed;
- (b) suspended;
- (c) disciplined;
- (d) transferred;
- (e) denied appointment, promotion or any other professional opportunity;
- (f) subjected to harassment, intimidation or adverse treatment; or
- (g) subjected to any other behavior, action, or course of treatment that causes physical, financial, emotional, or reputational harm,

by reason only of that teacher's membership or lawful participation in the activities of a trade union including the BNTU.

Arbitration
Panel.

104.—(1) The Minister may by rules made under this Act establish an Arbitration Panel to arbitrate matters not falling within the jurisdiction of the Tribunal.

(2) Such rules may prescribe the composition, powers and functions of the Panel.

Rules.

105.—(1) The Minister, in consultation with the Education Council, may make rules for the carrying out of the purposes of this Act, including rules—

- (a) setting out the conditions for students to receive assistance;
- (b) prescribing forms and notices as required for the administration of this Act;
- (c) prescribing textbooks and practices in a government school, government-aided school or specially-assisted school so as to ensure conformity with national standards of education except that in the case of specially-assisted school textbooks for religious education shall be as determined by the proprietor or managing authority of a denominational school;
- (d) in relation to an appeal made by a registered student to the District Council—
 - (i) the form and manner of notice of an appeal;
 - (ii) the procedure and grounds of appeal including a right of representation;
 - (iii) the procedure for managing authority to submit the facts and circumstances rendering the disciplinary action;
 - (iv) the manner of request for additional information including the recommendations considered in the circumstances; and
 - (v) the powers of the District Council to confirm, re-assess or substitute a disciplinary measure taken by the managing authority.
- (e) in relation to a licence or permit under section 80(2)–

- (i) the eligibility and maintenance requirements for each type of licence and permit;
 - (ii) the form, fees and manner of application for a licence or permit;
 - (iii) the terms and conditions of a licence or permit; and
 - (iv) the design and administration of the standardised examination;
- (f) in relation to certification under section 82–
- (i) the maintenance requirements for each certification;
 - (ii) the form, fees and manner of application for certification;
 - (iii) the conditions of certification; and
 - (iv) such other requirement or guideline for the certification of a teacher; and
- (g) any other rules required by this Act to be made.

(2) Consultation required under sub-section (1) may be in any form the Minister considers fit.

(3) Rules made under sub-section (1) shall, as soon as they are made, be laid before the National Assembly and shall be subject to affirmative resolution.

Repeals,
transitional
and savings.

106.–(1) On the coming into force of this Act, the Education and Training Act shall stand repealed.

(2) Notwithstanding the repeal of the said Act–

- (a) rules, regulations and orders made thereunder shall continue to be in force insofar as they are consistent with this Act until repealed or replaced by rules, regulations and orders made under this Act;
- (b) licences, permits and other documents issued under the said Act insofar as they are not inconsistent with this Act, shall continue to be effective for such period and subject to such terms and conditions as may be stated therein; and
- (c) the appointment or employment of a member of staff or the appointment of a person to the Education Council, the Commission, the BBTE and other person or entity appointed or employed under the repealed Act shall continue to be enforced under this Act as if such member of staff or person is appointed or employed under this Act.

(3) Nothing effected or authorised by the repealed Act is to be regarded as—

- (a) placing the existing teacher, Ministry or other person in breach of contract or confidence, or as otherwise making any of them guilty of a civil wrong; or
- (b) giving rise to a right for any managing authority to terminate or cancel any contract or arrangement or to accelerate the performance of any obligation.

(4) The requirements for the licensing of a teacher in respect of the subject matter testing shall be enforced on a new prospective teacher within the period of three years

from the date of commencement of this Act, provided that subsequent to the transitional period, where the licence of an existing teacher is revoked, the existing teacher shall be required to comply with the additional licensing requirements under this Act.

(5) The requirements for the certification of a licensed teacher shall be enforced within the period of three years from the date of commencement of this Act for a new teacher or for an existing teacher where the subject is assigned after the date of commencement of this Act.

SCHEDULE I
EDUCATION ACT
[section 8(2)]

**CONSTITUTION OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR
EDUCATION**

1.—(1) There shall be a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary and Recording Secretary of the Education Council. Officers.

(2) The Vice-Chairperson shall be elected by members of the Education Council from its membership at its first meeting.

(3) The Chief Education Officer shall be the Secretary.

(4) The Chief Education Officer shall appoint the Recording Secretary.

(5) Any vacancy on the Education Council shall be filled by a replacement appointed by the Minister and such a replacement shall be for the remainder of the unexpired term of the person replaced and must be from the same category of persons as the former member.

(6) The Education Council shall be considered to be properly constituted for the purposes of this Act notwithstanding any vacancy amongst the members or any defect in the appointment of a member thereto.

2.—(1) The term of office of the members of the Education Council, other than *ex officio* members, shall be for three years from the date of appointment but members may be eligible for reappointment for a term of office not exceeding two terms. Term of office.

(2) The appointment of a member of the Education Council referred to in section 9(c) to (i) may only be revoked by the Minister on the recommendation of the organization which recommended the appointment of such member.

(3) Where the appointment of a member of the Education Council referred to in section 9(c) to (i) is revoked pursuant to sub-section (2), another member shall be appointed within a reasonable time, in the same manner as the previous member, and shall hold office for the unexpired term of office of the previous member.

(4) A member, other than an *ex officio* member, who absents himself from three consecutive meetings of the Education Council without cause sufficient in the opinion of the Chairperson, shall cease to be a member.

(5) The Chairperson may at any time resign his office by informing the Minister in writing of his resignation.

(6) Any member of the Education Council may resign his office by informing the Minister in writing through the Chairperson of his resignation.

(7) Upon the recommendation of the Education Council, the Minister may terminate the appointment of a member who is incapable of carrying out his responsibility as a member of the Education Council.

Meetings.

3.—(1) The Education Council shall meet on a quarterly basis.

(2) Notice of every meeting shall be given and the agenda of the meeting and minutes of previous meeting thereof circulated not less than seven days prior to the date of such meeting, provided that this shall not apply to special meetings.

(3) The Chairperson shall preside over all meetings of the Education Council which he attends and in his absence, the Vice-Chairperson shall preside. When both the Chairperson and the Vice Chairperson are absent from a meeting, the members present shall choose one of the members present to act as Chairperson.

(4) Nine members of the Education Council shall form a quorum at any meeting.

(5) Decisions of the Education Council at meetings thereof shall be taken by the majority of members present and voting. The members of the Education Council shall have one vote. In the event of an equality of votes, the Chairperson shall have a casting vote.

(6) No recommendations of the Education Council or of any committee thereof shall be invalidated on account of any vacancy amongst the members of the Education Council or such committee, as the case may be.

Special
meetings.

4. The Chairperson may, at any time, summon a special meeting of the Education Council and shall call such a meeting within fourteen days—

- (a) of a request for that purpose addressed to him in writing and signed by at least five members of the Education Council; or
- (b) of a direction to that effect addressed to him in writing and signed by the Minister,

provided that such request shall state the specific purpose for which the meeting is required to be summoned and that such meeting shall consider only the specific purpose for which it was summoned.

5.—(1) Minutes of each meeting shall be kept by the Secretary or such other person as the Education Council determines for this purpose; and such Minutes shall be confirmed at the next regular meeting of the Education Council.

Minutes.

(2) The Education Council shall keep a minute book in which its proceedings shall be recorded.

(3) A copy of the confirmed minutes of each meeting shall be forwarded to the Minister as soon as possible after the meeting at which they were confirmed.

6.—(1) The Education Council is empowered to appoint standing or *ad hoc* committees as it considers expedient.

Standing or *ad hoc* committees.

(2) Each standing or *ad hoc* committee shall consist of members appointed by the Education Council from among its members. However, the Education Council may also appoint persons to a standing or *ad hoc* committee who are not members of the Education Council but have specific expertise.

(3) The Chairperson of any standing or *ad hoc* committee formed by the Education Council shall be a member of the Education Council and shall be appointed by the Chairperson of the Education Council.

(4) The Education Council shall establish the terms of office, powers and functions of every standing or *ad hoc* committee it appoints under sub-section (1) and provide the members of such standing or *ad hoc* committee with a copy of the said terms of office, powers and functions.

(5) Recommendations of standing or *ad hoc* committees shall be submitted to the Education Council for its review and the Education Council shall then submit such final recommendations to the Minister.

SCHEDULE II
[section 11(2)]

**CONSTITUTION OF THE BELIZE TEACHING SERVICE
COMMISSION**

Officers of
Commission.

1.—(1) There shall be a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Commission—

- (a) the Chairperson shall be appointed in accordance with section 11(3)(a);
- (b) the Vice-Chairperson shall be elected from among the members of the Commission who are not *ex-officio* members.

(2) Each nominating or electing body shall, as soon as possible after the commencement of this Act, furnish to the Minister the names of the persons whom it nominated or elected for appointment under section 11.

(3) If any vacancy occurs in the membership of the Commission such vacancy shall be filled by the appointment of another member who shall, subject to the provisions of this Schedule, hold office for the remainder of the period for which the previous member was appointed, so, however, that such appointment shall be made in the same manner and from the same category of persons, if any, as the appointment of the previous member.

(4) A nominating or electing body may at any time by instrument in writing addressed to the Minister requests to cancel the appointment of any person nominated or elected by it.

(5) Whenever pursuant to sub-sections (3) and (4) the occasion requires, the nominating or electing body shall submit to the Minister the name of an additional person in place of any person whose appointment is cancelled.

(6) The names of all members of the Commission as first constituted and every change in the membership thereof shall be published in the *Gazette*, and in at least one newspaper of general circulation in Belize.

(7) The Commission shall be considered to be properly constituted for the purposes of this Act notwithstanding any vacancy amongst the members or any defect in the appointment of a member thereto.

Term of office.

2.—(1) Subject to the provisions of this Schedule, a member of the Commission shall hold office for a period not exceeding three years and each

member may be eligible for reappointment; however, in no case shall any member be eligible for reappointment for more than two consecutive terms.

(2) Subject to the provisions of this Schedule, the office of a member of the Commission shall become vacant—

- (a) at the expiration of three years from the date of his appointment or such earlier time, being not less than two years, as may be specified in the instrument by which he was appointed;
- (b) if any circumstance arises that, if he were not a member of the Commission, would cause him to be disqualified for appointment as such; or
- (c) if the Chairperson, or any member of the Commission, submits his resignation in writing to the Minister and from the date of the receipt by the Minister of such resignation, such member shall cease to be a member of the Commission.

(3) A member of the Commission may be removed from office only for inability to perform the functions of his office whether arising from infirmity of mind or body or from any other cause, or for misconduct, and shall not be so removed except in accordance with this Schedule.

(4) There shall be paid to the Chairperson and other members of the Commission such remuneration, if any, whether by way of salaries or travelling or other allowances, as the Minister may determine.

3. The Minister on the application of any member of the Commission may grant to such member leave of absence for any period not exceeding six months and may appoint some other person to act as a member during the period of leave of absence so granted, provided that where leave of absence is granted to a member who has been nominated or elected for appointment, the relevant nominating or electing body may be required to nominate or elect, as the case may be, another person to temporarily act in place of the appointed member.

Leave of absence.

4.—(1) The Commission shall meet at least once every month or at such other times as may be necessary or expedient for the transaction of business and such meetings shall be held at such places and times and on such days as the Commission may determine and—

Meetings.

- (a) in the case of the absence or inability of the Chairperson to act, the Vice-Chairperson shall exercise the functions of the Chairperson; and

- (b) the Chairperson or, in the case of the absence or inability of the Chairperson to act, the Vice-Chairperson shall preside at the meetings of the Commission, and when so presiding the Vice-Chairperson, shall have a casting vote.

(2) Subject to the provisions of this Schedule the Commission may regulate its own proceedings.

(3) The Chairperson may provide for a recording secretary who shall be responsible for the minutes of all meetings of the Commission and who shall liaise with the Secretary to finalise the agenda for meetings and ensure that notice of and documents relevant to the business of meetings are circulated as required.

(4) The quorum of the Commission shall be five voting members including the Chairperson or the Vice-Chairperson.

(5) The decision of the Commission or of a committee appointed by it shall be by a majority of votes of the members present and voting and forming a quorum and in addition to an original vote the Chairperson or any person presiding at a meeting shall have a casting vote in any case in which the voting is equal.

(6) The validity of any proceedings of the Commission shall not be affected by any vacancy amongst the members of the Commission or by any defect in the appointment of a member thereof.

(7) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary no act done or proceeding taken under this Act by the Commission shall be questioned on the ground of any omission, defect or irregularity not affecting the merits of the case.

(8) No member of the Commission shall be personally liable for any act or default of the Commission done or omitted to be done in good faith in the course of the operation of the Commission.

Special
meetings.

5. The Chairperson may at any time call a special meeting of the Commission and shall call a special meeting to be held within seven days of a written request for that purpose addressed to him by any two members of the Commission.

Standing or *ad
hoc* committees.

6.—(1) The Commission shall have power to appoint a Disciplinary Committee, an Appointments committee and such other committees from among its members as it may consider necessary from time to time and each such committee shall, subject to the directions of the Commission, have power to regulate its own proceedings.

(2) The Commission may delegate to any committee the power and authority to carry out on its behalf such functions as the Commission may determine so, however, that any such delegation shall be without prejudice to the performance of those functions by the Commission.

(3) The Chairperson of any standing or *ad hoc* committee shall present the results of the committee's proceedings to the Commission for a final decision.

SCHEDULE III

[section 15(3)]

**CONSTITUTION OF THE BELIZE BOARD OF TEACHER
EDUCATION**

Composition of
Board and Terms
of office.

1.—(1) There shall be a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary and Recording Secretary to the BBTE—

- (a) the Chairperson shall be appointed by the Minister;
- (b) the Vice-Chairperson shall be elected by members of the BBTE from its membership at its first meeting;
- (c) the Director of Teacher Education Unit shall serve as Secretary; and
- (d) the Recording Secretary shall be appointed by the Chief Education Officer.

(2) An elected member of the BBTE may at any time resign office by informing the Minister, through the Chairperson, in writing of his resignation.

(3) In the event of the resignation of a member of the BBTE, the vacant position on the BBTE shall be first filled in accordance with these rules of procedures and nomination or elections then held in accordance with section 16(2).

2.—(1) The term of office of the members of the BBTE, other than the *ex-officio* members and the two members, under section 16 (2)(c) shall be for three years from the date of appointment. Reappointment of members shall not be automatic and in any case such appointment shall not exceed six consecutive years.

(2) A term of office of members shall begin on August 1.

(3) The membership of a representative may be rescinded at any time by the respective nominating or electing institution or agency upon notification in writing to the Minister through the Chairperson.

(4) An institution or agency shall nominate or elect another person if a member of the BBTE is unable to carry out his duties.

(5) In the event that a named representative is unable to continue serving in his capacity as member of the BBTE, the nominating institution or agency shall advise the Minister through the Chairperson, of the member's resignation and of his replacement.

(6) The Chairperson may ask a nominating or electing institution or agency to nominate or elect another representative to the BBTE if the respective member has been absent from three consecutive meetings. Such appointment shall be for the remainder of the term of office of the member who is being replaced.

3.-(1) The Chairperson shall guide the process of providing oversight on matters relating to the quality of teacher education in Belize and in this capacity shall be responsible for spearheading the formulation of such policies, procedures and regulations for consideration by the BBTE.

Powers and
functions of
Chairperson and
Vice-
Chairperson.

(2) The Chairperson shall preside over meetings of the BBTE which he attends and in his absence, the Vice-Chairperson shall preside.

(3) The Chairperson, with the assistance of the Secretary, shall ensure that members and standing and *ad hoc* committees of the BBTE are performing effectively in accordance with the terms of reference.

(4) In the absence of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson shall perform the functions of the Chairperson.

(5) The Vice-Chairperson may at any time resign office by informing the Chairperson, in writing of his resignation and the BBTE may elect another of its member to serve as Vice-Chairperson.

4.-(1) The Secretary, under the direction of the Chairperson, shall guide the process of providing oversight regarding managing the delivery of teacher education in Belize with respect to policies, procedures, and regulations, and in this capacity shall be responsible for spearheading the formulation of such policies, procedures and regulations for consideration and endorsement by the BBTE.

Powers and
functions of
Secretary.

(2) The Secretary shall be the primary liaison between the BBTE and the Teacher Education Unit in the Ministry.

(3) The Secretary shall provide the BBTE with the necessary documentation relating to teacher education matters and shall ensure that the appropriate reports arising from working sessions of the BBTE are properly prepared and circulated to the respective persons.

5.-(1) The Recording Secretary, is responsible for the minutes of meetings of the BBTE.

Recording
Secretary.

(2) The Recording Secretary shall liaise with the Secretary to finalize the agenda for meetings of the BBTE and shall ensure that notice of and documents relevant to the business of meetings are circulated as required.

Meetings.

6.-(1) The BBTE shall meet on a quarterly basis.

(2) The Secretary shall ensure that notice of every meeting is given and the agenda of the meeting and minutes of previous meeting thereof are circulated not less than seven days prior to the date of such meeting, provided that this shall not apply to special meetings.

(3) Seven members of the BBTE shall form a quorum at any meeting, one of whom must be the Chairperson or Vice Chairperson and the Recording Secretary of the BBTE.

(4) Decisions of the BBTE at meetings thereof shall be taken by the majority of members present and voting. All members of the BBTE shall have one vote, including the *ex-officio* members. In the event of an equality of votes, the Chairperson shall have the casting vote.

(5) No act or proceedings of the BBTE or of any committee thereof shall be invalidated on account of any vacancy among the members of the BBTE or such committee.

7. The Chairperson may, at any time, summon a special meeting of the BBTE and must call such a meeting within fourteen days of a—

- (a) request for that purpose addressed to him in writing and signed by at least six members of the BBTE;
- (b) request for that purpose addressed to him in writing by the Recording Secretary; or
- (c) directive to that effect addressed to him in writing and signed by the Chief Education Officer,

provided that such request shall state the specific purpose for which the meeting is required to be summoned and that such meeting shall consider only the specific purpose for which it was summoned. Notice of such a meeting, stating the purpose of the meeting, is to be circulated no later than seven days prior to the meeting.

8.-(1) Minutes of each meeting shall be kept by the Recording Secretary or in his absence, such person as the Chief Education Officer appoints for this purpose.

(2) The Secretary shall ensure that the minutes of the BBTE meetings are documented, prepared and distributed to members; and must be confirmed

at the next regular meeting of the BBTE; the Chairperson of the said regular meeting shall sign and date the official copy of the minutes upon confirmation.

(3) The Secretary shall forward a copy of the confirmed minutes of each meeting to the Chief Education Officer as soon as possible after the meeting at which they were confirmed.

(4) It shall be the responsibility of each member of the BBTE to maintain a file of minutes and other records of the BBTE and to ensure that these are appropriately conveyed to his membership and successor of the institution or agency he represents.

9.—(1) The BBTE is empowered to appoint standing or *ad hoc* committees as it considers expedient.

(2) Each standing or *ad hoc* committee shall consist of members appointed by the BBTE from amongst its membership. However, the BBTE may also appoint persons to a standing or *ad hoc* committee who are not members of the BBTE but have specific relevant expertise.

(3) The Chairperson of any standing or *ad hoc* committee formed by the BBTE shall be a member of the BBTE and shall be appointed by the Chairperson of the BBTE.

(4) The BBTE shall decide on the terms of office, powers and functions of every standing or *ad hoc* committee it appoints.

(5) Decisions of standing or *ad hoc* committees shall be taken by a majority of members present and voting.

SCHEDULE IV

[section 99]

**CONSTITUTION OF THE TEACHING SERVICE APPEALS
TRIBUNAL**Officers of
Tribunal.

1.-(1) There shall be a Chairperson and non-member recording Secretary of the Tribunal.

(2) The names of all members of the Tribunal as first constituted and every change in the membership thereof shall be published in the *Gazette*, and in at least one newspaper of general circulation in Belize.

(3) The Tribunal shall be considered to be properly constituted for the purposes of this Act notwithstanding any vacancy amongst the members or any defect in the appointment of a member thereto.

Terms of office.

2.-(1) The Chairman and other members of the Tribunal shall hold office for such period not exceeding three years, as the Prime Minister shall determine and shall be eligible for reappointment.

(2) In the case of the absence or inability of the Chairman to act, the Prime Minister may appoint another attorney-at-law to temporarily act as Chairman.

(3) The Chairman may at any time resign his office by instrument in writing addressed to the Prime Minister and such resignation shall take effect as from the date of the receipt of such instrument by the Prime Minister.

(4) There shall be paid to the Chairman and other members of the Tribunal such remuneration whether by way of honorarium, salary or fees and such allowances as the Prime Minister may determine.

Proceedings of
Tribunal.

3.-(1) The quorum necessary to constitute a sitting of the tribunal shall include the Chairperson and two members.

(2) Except as otherwise expressly provided in this Act, the Tribunal may regulate its procedure and proceedings as it thinks fit.

Decisions of
Tribunal.

4.-(1) The decision of the Tribunal shall be by a majority of votes of the members present and voting and, in addition to an original vote, the Chairman shall have a casting vote in any case in which the voting is equal.

(2) The Tribunal shall make its award without delay and where practicable within twenty-one days from the date of reference.

(3) An award on any matter referred to the Tribunal for settlement may be made retroactive to such date not being earlier than the date on which the dispute or question to which the award relates first arose.

(4) The decision of the Tribunal as to the date on which the dispute arose shall be final.

(5) Where any question arises as to the interpretation of any award of the Tribunal, any party to the award may apply for a decision on such question and the Tribunal shall decide the matter after hearing the parties or without such hearing if the consent of the parties has been first obtained.

(6) The decision of the Tribunal referred to in sub-section (4) shall be notified to the parties and shall be binding in the same manner as the decision in an original award.