

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION OF INQUIRY
INTO THE ADMINISTRATION OF
THE ALEXANDRA SCHOOL

*Submitted by the Commissioner,
The Hon. Mr. Justice F.L.A. Waterman, CHB, Q.C.
pursuant to the
Commissions of Inquiry Act, Cap. 112*

Dated the 21st day of September, 2012

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WARRANT OF APPOINTMENT OF COMMISSION

To: THE HON. FREDERICK LAWRENCE ADAMSTRAW
WATERMAN, CHB, Q. C.

WHEREAS by section 3(1) of the *Commissions of Inquiry Act*, it is provided, *inter alia*, that the Governor- General may, whenever he deems it expedient in the public interest, appoint one or more commissioners to be a commission of inquiry designated as an investigatory commission, to investigate and report upon a matter which the Governor-General deems to be of special public importance.

NOW THEREFORE I, Sir Elliott Fitzroy Belgrave, Governor-General, deeming it expedient in the public interest, do hereby, in the exercise of the power and authority Vested in me under the *Commissions of Inquiry Act*, issue this warrant appointing you The Honourable Frederick Lawrence Adamstraw Waterman, CHB, QC as an investigatory commission and authorizing you to:

- (a) Conduct an inquiry into the administration of the Alexandra School pursuant to the provisions of the *Commissions of Inquiry Act, Cap. 112*.
- (b) Commence work on June 18, 2012 with hearings to start on a date determined by you;
- (c) Be the sole Commissioner with legal Counsel to the Commission and a Secretary to the Commission;
- (d) Have as the initial terms of reference of the Commission the following:

- (i) to inquire into the causes or causes in 2011 which led to the breakdown of relations between the Principal of the Alexandra School, St. Peter and members of the teaching staff and which further led to industrial action being taken;
- (ii) to inquire into the cause or causes which led to the breakdown in relations between the Board of Management of the Alexandra School, St. Peter and the Principal of the Alexandra School;
- (iii) to determine whether the manner in which the Principal of the Alexandra School, St. Peter performed his duties as Principal of the school was in accordance with regulations 15 to 18 of Part III of the *Education Regulations, 1982* and to determine whether the Principal has contravened any of the said Regulations by the manner in which he related to:
 - (a) members of the teaching staff;
 - (b) the Chairman and Members of the Board of the Management of the Alexandra School;
- (iv) to determine whether there was a breach of any relevant law, regulation, rule, order or duty, procedure or established practice on the part of the Principal, Deputy Principal, teaching and non-teaching staff of the Alexandra School;

- (v) to determine whether the manner in which the teacher holding the post of Deputy Principal of the Alexandra School, St. Peter performed her duties at the school was in accordance with the provisions of regulation 19 of the *Education Regulations, 1982* and to determine whether the said Deputy Principal has contravened any of the terms of the said Regulations;
- (vi) to consider and determine whether in the performance or non-performance of their duties as public officers employed at the Alexandra School, St. Peter, either the Principal, Deputy Principal, or any other member of the teaching staff at that school have in any way infringed, breached or contravened the *Code of Discipline* as contained in the Third Schedule of the *Public Service Act, 2007-41* or the *Education Regulations, 1982* so that any such infringement, breach or contravention of the said *Public Service Act, 2007- 41* or the *Education Regulations , 1982* , may be referred to the Public Service Commission to be dealt with as provided by Law;
- (vii) to make such recommendations as the Commission may deem appropriate and necessary in all the circumstances so that the harmonious relations between the Principal, staff, pupils and parents of the Alexandra School, St. Peter may be restored.

And I do direct under this warrant that

- (a) the inquiry shall be held at such place as you deem convenient, on such dates and at such times as you shall appoint;
- (b) the inquiry shall be held in public unless you, the Commissioner is of the opinion, having regard to the matters stated in section 20(2) of the said Act, that any part of the inquiry shall be held in private;
- (c) you the Commission shall furnish me with a written report of the said inquiry containing an account of the proceedings together with your findings and recommendations as soon as possible but not later than the 31st day of August, 2012.

Issued this 22nd day of June, 2012.

Governor-General.

S.I. 2012 No 70

Commissions of Inquiry Act, Cap. 112

COMMISSIONS OF INQUIRY (VARIATION OF WARRANT OF APPOINTMENT OF COMMISSION) ORDER, 2012

The Governor-General, in exercise of the powers conferred on him by section 8(1) of the *Commissions of Inquiry Act*, makes the following Order:

1. This Order may be cited as the *Commissions of Inquiry (Variation of Warrant of Appointment of Commission) Order, 2012*.
2. "Commission" means the investigatory Commission appointed on 22nd day of June, 2012 to conduct an inquiry into the administration of the Alexandra School.
3. The date for presentation of the written report set out in the warrant of Appointment of the Commission is extended to 21st, September, 2012.

Made by the Governor-General this 30th day of August, 2012.

Governor-General

CHAPTER 1

Introduction and Background to the Inquiry

- 1.1 The Alexandra School, affectionately known as the "Beacon of the North", is a public secondary school, situated in Speightstown, St. Peter, Barbados. It was originally opened in 1894 as a school for girls and named after the then Princess of Wales and wife of Edward, Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII. The school became co-educational in 1984 and celebrated its 116th anniversary on September 24th, 2010.
- 1.2 The Alexandra School has a teaching staff complement of fifty-one (51) and a support staff of twenty-six (26). The school has a roll of eight hundred and six (806) students. At this co-educational institution a number of curriculum areas are taught: Commercial studies, Technical subjects, Home Economics, the Humanities, Languages and Sciences. The examining bodies used are Caribbean Examination Council and the Royal School of Music. In addition, students are engaged in a number of extra- curricular and sporting activities. There is also a vibrant Student Council at the school.
- 1.3 In the recent past, some of the more well-known principals of the Alexandra School were Mrs. Shelia Ward (1977-1980), Mrs. Ada Straughn (1980- 1986) and Mrs. Glencora Titus (1986-1994). In 1994, Mr. Erwin Brathwaite, became the first male principal. He was succeeded by the current principal, Mr. Jeffrey Broomes who became the school's second male principal, having been appointed to the office of Principal, in August, 2002.

- 1.4 Principal, Mr. Jeffrey Broomes assumed the principalship of the Alexandra School in 2002 with what he called "*an expressed mandate to address and reverse the declining performance of the school.*"¹
- 1.5 He stated that during his interview for the post of principal, he had been challenged by the then Deputy Chief Education Officer, Ms. Idamay Denny, an old scholar of the Alexandra School, to give a clear outline of his vision and planned approaches to making Alexandra a school of choice. Principal Broomes told the Commission that he saw his appointment as "*a signal privilege and somewhat of a calling for him to lead Alexandra at this time*"
- 1.6 Principal Broomes however told the Commission that his appointment as Principal had been "*met with immediate resistance and conflict*" as many persons felt and actually said to him that he had taken away the job that belonged to Mrs. Beverley Neblett-Lashley, an old scholar who had served as Deputy Principal for at least five years and who was seen as the "*virtual heir apparent.*"
- 1.7 Principal Broomes also told the Commission that on his assumption of duty, he had observed what he described as obvious failings and unacceptable practices at the school which he had sought to address within his first year. He also admitted that the actions which he had taken to address these matters had not always met with the support and

¹ See p. 1 of the Principal's Report submitted by Mr. Jeffrey Broomes to the Alexandra School Commission of Inquiry;

understanding that he had hoped for and had led to some complaints and sources of conflict.²

- 1.8 For their part, the evidence of the former BSTU President (Mr. Patrick Frost) as well as the current President (Ms. Mary-Anne Redman) is to the effect that industrial relations problems at the Alexandra School began within months of Principal Broomes' having assumed duties as principal of the Alexandra School.
- 1.9 Ms. Mary-Anne Redman drew the Commission's attention to the fact that the Minutes of the BSTU Executive Meeting of November 6th, 2002 clearly spoke of *the "challenges facing the school with the advent of the new Principal."* Additionally, she pointed out that there were foreboding entries and references in these early minutes to the *"management style"* of the Principal, the *"customs and practices of the school"* and *"potential areas of conflict."*³
- 1.10 By 6th October, 2003, the BSTU had declared a grievance procedure against the Principal. The grievance arose out of Mr. Broomes' unilateral proposal to change the structure of the school's existing Management Team and to introduce a new Strategic Leadership Team comprising junior members of staff and only certain members of the senior staff. The grievance was withdrawn following the intervention of the Chief

² See the list of alleged failings, breaches and unacceptable practices said to have been observed by Principal Broomes at the Alexandra School on his assumption of duty and the course of action taken to address them @ p. 3 of the Principal's Report submitted by Mr. Jeffrey Broomes to the Alexandra School Commission of Inquiry;

³ See p. 4 written statement of Mary-Anne Redman submitted to the Alexandra School Commission of Inquiry;

Education Officer who directed Principal Broomes that he could not proceed with his planned dismantling of the existing Management Team.⁴⁴

- 1.11 Ms. Mary-Anne Redman drew the Commission's attention to the fact that between March and May of 2004, the threat of industrial action loomed at the Alexandra School in relation to numerous issues which had arisen at the school since the visit of the Chief Education Officer to the school in October of 2003. Strike action, it seems, was only averted when the Board of Management of the school had eventually agreed to meet with the Principal following a BSTU Press Release in May 18th, 2004 advising the public of the impending strike.
- 1.12 Tensions between the Principal and the BSTU and the teachers of the Alexandra School came to a head once again in November 2006, when Principal Broomes wrote a letter to certain teachers who had attended the BSTU's Teachers' Professional Day activity. In his letter, the Principal threatened to mark the teachers absent from duty if they failed to produce documentary evidence confirming their attendance at the BSTU seminar. Strike action ended some days later when the Ministry of Education intervened once again and directed the Principal to withdraw the letter he had written to the teachers.

⁴⁴ Evidence of BSTU President Mary-Anne Redman;

- 1.13 The Commission was informed that in the 6 years which elapsed between 2006 and 2012 the BSTU remained actively engaged in addressing numerous issues which had arisen at the Alexandra School. In a chronology of events, Ms. Redman listed some of the matters involving the Principal which the BSTU had dealt with during the period. She also indicated that during this period the BSTU had provided emotional support, motivation and encouragement to teachers at the school who, according to the BSTU President, had been suffering abuse, physical and emotional pain, frustration, demoralisation and anger as a result of the Principal's behaviour.
- 1.14 BSTU President, Ms. Redman submitted further that the industrial relations climate during this period had been characterized by the unwillingness of the Principal to meet and negotiate with the Union, the unwillingness of the Board of Management to act; the inability of the Principal to adhere to agreements reached and the tardiness of the Ministry of Education to respond and deal with matters over which they had direct responsibility and control.
- 1.15 On July 28th 2010, acting pursuant to sections 49-52 of the *Education Regulations, 1982*, the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development established an investigative team to evaluate the effectiveness of the system at the Alexandra School.

- 1.16 The Inspection was prompted by a number of issues which arose at a series of meetings between the Principal of the Alexandra School and the President of the BSTU. The meetings were chaired by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development. Prominent issues identified at these meetings related to the relationship between the Principal and staff, communication, payment of travelling allowances and problems with respect to the deployment of staff and the hiring of staff at the school.
- 1.17 On July 28 2010, a decision was taken by the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development that all meetings should be suspended and that a Full Inspection should be conducted pursuant to the *Education Regulations, 1982*, commencing 25th October 2010.
- 1.18 The Inspection team was led by Team Leader Professor Winston King and comprised officials from the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development and representatives from the Alexandra School Board of Management, the Barbados Secondary Teachers Union, the Barbados Association of Principals of Public Secondary Schools and the Parent Teacher Association.
- 1.19 The purpose of the Inspection was to identify strengths and weaknesses so that the School could improve the quality of education it provides and raise the educational standards achieved by its students.
- 1.20 The objectives of the Inspection were to:
- Examine the management structure, systems and the overall functioning of the management team.
 - Examine the disciplinary structures at the school.

- Examine all the existing documents at the school
- Analyse the implementation of Curriculum 2000 and how materials are utilized to enhance learning and evaluate learning outcomes.
- Examine the school's physical plant
- Conduct interviews with a randomly selected number of all members of staff
- Conduct interviews with representatives of the student body
- Recommend corrective strategies for the areas being examined

1.21 The Full Inspection concluded on November 26th, 2010. The Report was submitted by the Team Leader some four months later on April 6th, 2011 to the Minister of Education and Human Resource Development, the Hon. Ronald Jones, Chairman of Board of Management, Mr. Keith Simmons, Principal, Mr. Jeffrey Broomes and Deputy Principal, Mrs. Beverley Neblett- Lashley.

1.22 The Inspection Report contained some eleven (11) recommendations, none of which have been implemented to date. A list of the recommendations of the Inspection Report is attached to the Commission's Report at *Appendix 1*

1.23 On 2nd December, 2011, Principal Broomes purported to issue a public apology to the parents and students of a fourth form class who had not been taught by the teacher he had assigned to teach them for what he alleged was an entire term.

- 1.24 In his evidence before the Commission, Principal Broomes stated that he was justified in issuing the apology because the teacher had refused to honour a lawful instruction which he had issued to her to teach the class and had openly refused despite his having issued written instructions to her. He also told the Commission that the adjustment to have the teacher teach the fourth form class instead of the first form class which she had previously been assigned to teach, had become necessary due to a disruption due to the illness of another colleague.
- 1.25 Principal Broomes further stated that after meeting with a delegation of parents of the fourth form class to discuss the non-teaching of the students, he had made 3 promises to assuage their concerns, one of which was to make a public apology to them and to their children on behalf of the school.
- 1.26 Against the foregoing background, teachers of the Alexandra School commenced industrial action in January 2012 demanding Principal Broome's separation from the school. After attempts were made to resolve the matter at the level of the Ministry of Education, teachers only ended their strike following the intervention of the Prime Minister who undertook to set up a Commission of Inquiry to inquire into the administration of the school.

CHAPTER 2

The Proceedings

- 2.1 In addition to the Warrant of Appointment which was issued to the Commissioner, Dr. Donna Hunte-Cox was also appointed Secretary to the Commission on 22nd June, 2012. Dr. Hunte-Cox and I were both sworn in before Your Excellency in separate ceremonies the same day.
- 2.2 Additionally, on the 22nd June, 2012, acting pursuant to section 22 of the *Commissions of Inquiry Act*, I appointed Mr. Milton Oscar Pierce and Mr. Michael Yearwood as Senior and Junior Counsel to the Commission respectively.
- 2.3 Excellent accommodation was made available to the Commission at the Sir Garfield Sobers Sports Complex, Wildey, St. Michael.
- 2.4 A Public Notice that the Commission would hold public sessions there, beginning 28th June 2012, was published in the *Official Gazette* and in the Press.
- 2.5 The formal Opening Session took place on 28th June 2012. At this Session the Warrants appointing the Commission and the Secretary were read. Mr. Milton Oscar Pierce and Mr. Michael Yearwood who were present were formally introduced.
- 2.6 Provision was made to accommodate the Press, Television, members of the public and the Bar.

- 2.7 I made a formal Opening Statement in which I outlined the procedures which would be followed during the hearings which were held in public as directed. As required by section 20 of the *Commissions of Inquiry Act*, all evidence was received and disclosed in public.
- 2.8 However, to avoid the possibility of public confusion due to the possible mis-characterization or distortion of evidence during legal submissions, it was decided that closing arguments to the Commission should be taken in private.
- 2.9 Members of the public were invited to contact the Secretary to the Commission or the Police, if they were in possession of any information which could assist the Commission in its quest to investigate the management and administration of the Alexandra School.
- 2.10 The Commission did not sit on Saturdays, Sundays or on Bank Holidays. The sessions started at 9:30 a.m. and ended at 4:30 p.m. each day with suitable breaks for refreshments. On certain days, the Commission even worked until after 6:00 p.m. to ensure that the evidence was completed.
- 2.11 At the hearings, Mr. Jeffrey Broomes was legally represented by Mr. Vernon Smith QC who was assisted by his Junior, Mr. Cecil McCarthy QC. The Barbados Secondary Teachers' Union was represented by Mr. Hal Gallop who was assisted by attorney-at-law, Mrs. Saffron Griffith. The Board of Management of the Alexandra School was represented by attorney-at-law, Mr. Guyson Mayers.

- 2.12 I wish to record my thanks to Counsel to the Commission for the capable manner in which they performed their duties. Many thanks also to the Secretary to the Commission Dr. Donna Hunte-Cox who made the Commissioner's task easier in the manner in which she performed her duties.
- 2.13 Three Marshals from the Court Process Office Mr. Anthony Harris, Mr. Haskell Drakes and Mr. John Bancroft were assigned to assist the Commission in summoning witnesses, and assisting with exhibits so that the business of the Commission could run smoothly. They were of great assistance to the Commission and my grateful thanks go out to them. I wish also to thank Mr. Charles Piggott who performed administrative duties for the Commission.
- 2.14 The Commissioner of Police made a number of police officers available to the Commission. The presence of the police ensured that order was maintained in and out of the building.
- 2.15 Inspector Carolyn Blackman-Alleyne was assigned to interview prospective witnesses and take statements from them. She performed her duties in a professional manner and was of great assistance to the Commission. I am grateful to the Commissioner of Police for permitting Inspector Carolyn Blackman- Alleyne to assist me and to Superintendent Livingstone Eversley for selecting her for this important assignment.

- 2.16 In total, Witness Statements were received from eighty-six (86) prospective witnesses and of these thirty-nine (39) attended and gave oral testimony at the hearing. Principal of the Alexandra School, Mr. Broomes indicated his desire to call a number of witnesses to testify at the hearing and those persons were duly called. A full list of the witnesses and all persons who testified at the hearing together with the dates when they did so is attached to the Report at *Appendix 2*.
- 2.17 The all-important task of making an accurate record of the proceedings of the Commission was carried out by a team of transcribers from the public and private sector. These professionals did not disappoint the Commission at any time and must be complimented for their devotion to duty and their efficiency. I must also thank Ms Katie Alleyne for the capable manner in which she performed her clerical duties to the Commission. I also wish to thank the media and resource team from the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development.
- 2.18 The Commission's findings and such evidence as was relevant to each of the Commission's seven (7) terms of reference will now be discussed *seriatim* in the Chapters which follow.

CHAPTER 3

Discussion of Findings: (i) What led to the breakdown in 2011 between the Principal and the teaching staff?

- 3.1 Under item (i) of the Commission's Terms of Reference, the Commission is required: *"to inquire into the causes or causes in 2011 which led to the breakdown of relations between the Principal of the Alexandra School, St. Peter and members of the teaching staff and which further led to industrial action being taken"*.
- 3.2 Notwithstanding that the Commission's mandate under the first Term of Reference is drafted somewhat narrowly to determine the cause or causes in 2011 which led to the breakdown in relations between the principal of the Alexandra School and members of the teaching staff, the Commission considered that it was still necessary to look back beyond 2011 in order to gain an appreciation of the atmosphere which existed at Alexandra School shortly after the start of the Principal's tenure in August 2002.
- 3.3 The Commission found that by 6th November 2002 there was a problem with Mr. Phil Perry who was being passed over to act as Head of the English Department. Mr. Perry was a shop steward at the School. Mr. Perry, it is said, considered that he had a legitimate expectation that he would act as Head of the English Department when the substantive Head went on leave.
- 3.4 Mr. Perry had in fact previously acted in that capacity and positive reports had been placed on his file in relation to his acting stint. It appears that in selecting a person to act, the Principal had not consulted with the Head of the Department which caused the Barbados Secondary Teachers' Union ("the BSTU") to intervene on Mr. Perry's behalf and to try to

regularise the situation. Mr. Perry, however, was ultimately not allowed to take up the acting position.

- 3.5 The Commission heard evidence of the Principal's lack of communication with various Heads of Department and of his intermeddling with the functioning of certain Departments. The evidence suggested that the Principal had started to show signs of a different style of leadership from that previously experienced at the school. His leadership style was non-inclusive of the Heads of Department and had no regard for the statutory duties and responsibilities which Heads were required to fulfil in assisting the Principal in recruiting staff for their Departments.
- 3.6 Regulation 22 (f) of the *Education Regulations, 1982* provides that a Head of Department is responsible for assisting the principal in matters relating to the recruitment and training of staff for his department. It has also been the custom and practice of secondary schools in Barbados that Heads of Department be included in the interviewing panels. There have also been Circulars sent from the Ministry of Education to that effect.
- 3.7 Yet the Principal sought to exclude Mrs. Gail Streat-Jules, Head of the Fine Arts Department, Mrs. Alana Sandiford, Head of the Foreign Language Department, Mrs. Deborah Springer- Bryan, Head of the Home Economics Department and Mrs. Amaida Greaves, Head of the Science Department from the interviewing process.
- 3.8 The Commission heard evidence⁵ which indicated that Mrs. Streat-Jules, a shop steward of the BSTU, and a Head of Department had been specifically targeted by the Principal as a result of her being a shop steward. She felt that she was being harassed. For example: (i) in an

⁵ Testimony of Gail Streat-Jules, August 2012;

effort to ensure that the correct procedure was followed when students in her Department were being taken on an overnight excursion by a teacher, she was told by the Principal that she was “pimping” behind the teacher, Mr. Carl Padmore; (ii) the keys to her cupboard that contained equipment specific to the teaching of her Fine Arts Programme were taken from her by the Principal; and (iii) she was not allowed to claim legitimate travel allowances for doing her Department’s business while other teachers were allowed to file claims and get the allowance; and (iv) she was frustrated by the Principal’s actions in her efforts to properly manage her Department and the personnel therein.

3.9 With respect to the allegation of discrimination and victimisation by the Principal, the Commission heard evidence that Mrs. Fiona Joseph, a language teacher at the school who had applied for day release in order to pursue a Diploma in Education at Erdiston College. The Principal had asked her to defer her acceptance for the next academic year. Subsequent to the strike action, in which she participated, she went to the Principal and reminded him of the previous agreement to defer. His response to her was that he was not going to release anybody for any type of study as he needed to settle his school.

3.10 Mrs. Shernell Clarke suffered a similar fate to that of Mrs. Joseph. Having had discussions with the Principal about pursuing further academic studies and having provided him with the documentation that he requested, he subsequently refused to follow through on his obligation to facilitate such training. In fact, in a telephone conversation with her, he said that he was waiting for her separation from the School. Mrs. Clarke was one of the teachers who went on strike in January 2012.

- 3.11 From the evidence given, the Commission found that one of the main causes leading to the breakdown of relations between the Principal and the teachers was the establishment of a level of factionalism among the teachers that saw a divide between the older members of the staff and the younger members, with the young members believing that because of their affiliation with the Principal they were above reproach and could not be held accountable for any infraction on their part.
- 3.12 The evidence showed that some of these younger members of staff were temporary, were vulnerable and very intimidated by the Principal. There were some who were appointed with no reference to the Heads of Department. Some were brought in after the Principal had held out for as long as nine weeks in one instance, to make sure that he got a specific teacher whom he wanted, while classes went untaught in that area of study.
- 3.13 The fractures among the staff must have been brought to the Principal's attention because a number of senior teachers, including the Deputy Principal, Mrs. Neblett-Lashley, Heads of Department Mrs. Margo Clarke and Mrs. Gail Streat-Jules gave evidence to that effect before the Commission.
- 3.14 The Commission also heard evidence of a number of instances where the Principal assumed the role of Head of Department. In his evidence, the Principal, admitted that he had indeed taken on the role of Head of the Physical Education Department, the role of Guidance Counsellor, the role of Head of the English Department and the Head of the Science Department from Mrs. Amaida Greaves. The evidence also disclosed that when the Principal took over the Science Department, one member of that Department, Dwayne Bryan, became totally disrespectful of Mrs.

Greaves because he felt empowered to do so by the support the Principal was giving him in his on-going conflict with Mrs. Greaves.

- 3.15 Additionally, the Commission heard that the Principal's assumption of the responsibility for the running of the Music Department had led to the breakdown in arrangements for a speech day event and more recently affected the arrangement to have a trained accompanist for students who were taking the Associate Board of the Royal School of Music Examinations.
- 3.16 The Commission heard evidence given by several teachers, by members of the ancillary staff of the School and by members of the Board of Management to the effect that on many occasions the Principal was heard to say, "*I am the person in charge*"; "*I am the Principal*"; "*That is why I am the Principal and not you.*" That attitude seemed to dominate the Principal's relationship with members of the entire staff structure of the School.
- 3.17 From the evidence given, another serious concern on the part of several members of the staff at the school was the credibility of the Principal. Staff gave evidence that they could not rely on his word. They could not believe anything that he said. That evidence came from Board Chairmen, namely, Senator Professor Velma Newton and Mr. Keith Simmons, The Deputy Principal Mrs. Neblett- Lashley, former secretary Mrs. Williams, former Secretary-Treasurer Mrs. Yearwood, from Heads of Department, from Mrs. Redman, President of the BSTU, and from Mr. Patrick Frost the Consultant to the BSTU.
- 3.18 The Commission found that another reason for the breakdown in the relationship between the Principal and the teachers was the Principal's treatment of the members of the BSTU and the BSTU itself. In his

evidence, the Principal had no difficulty in admitting that he no longer reads any correspondence coming into his office from the BSTU.

3.19 Surely this cannot be a wise decision taken by the Principal when one considers that the BSTU represents over 60% of the staff of the School. It is my view that the Principal himself a unionist of long standing, must take cognisance of, and pay due respect to the BSTU, the teachers' representative. The Commission observed that over the course of his ten years at the School, the Principal had so incensed the BSTU and its members that three strikes were called against him.

3.20 The Commission found that another matter that caused serious concern at the school is the most unsatisfactory relationship that was allowed to develop between the Principal and his Deputy Principal. The attitude of the Principal towards the Deputy Principal was seen from day one. Page 1 of his written statement to the Commission is instructive and reads as follows:

"My appointment as principal was met with immediate resistance and conflict. Many felt, and actually said to me that I had taken away the job that belonged to Mrs. Neblett- Lashley, an old scholar who had served as Deputy Principal for at least five years and was seen as the virtual heir apparent. This was underscored by my transformational style of leadership as well as my focus that spoke first and foremost to student interest. The Deputy Principal immediately took a term's leave thereby denying me the link that should have existed during my transitional period..."

- 3.21 The Principal gave evidence that the rift started because there was a difference in vision for the school between himself and the Deputy Principal which he gleaned from the officials who conducted the interviews for the post of principal of the School.
- 3.22 The Principal indicated that he was willing to go by what he had heard to formulate an impression of what might be the relationship between himself and his Deputy Principal. He formed the impression that the Deputy Principal's going on leave on his arrival meant that she failed in her duty to give him the co-operation he required on assuming the post of principal.
- 3.23 There is evidence that the Deputy Principal applied for leave a year before the appointment of principal was made. It was indeed made quite clear in the evidence given that the Principal has very little respect for the Deputy Principal. He treated her as "the most insignificant person in the administrative structure".
- 3.24 He has also admitted to having likened her to a "Vice President" who is the most insignificant person in any organisation. Her response when told the above, "The disrespect was complete". He often told her, "He is the boss. He is the principal" and "That is why she is not the principal". The kind of exchanges that the Principal and Mrs. Neblett-Lashley have had over the years has led to a fracture in their relationship and that fracture, she says, is not capable of being repaired.
- 3.25 From the evidence, the Commission found that many teachers at the School have been affected by bullying and workplace abuse at the hands of the Principal. Some of the earliest persons to suffer include Julian Bowen and Celina Roach both of whom, as temporary teachers, did not

have their contracts renewed for reasons totally unrelated to their quality of work or professional performance at the School.

- 3.26 Further by the actions of the Principal, the Commission found that Mr. Bowen was forced to repay money to the School which he had legitimately earned as an accompanist for students doing the Royal School of Music Exams, 2005. This was most unsatisfactory. However, the decision of the Principal was later rescinded through representation by the BSTU to the Ministry in 2010.
- 3.27 Further the Commission found that there was an attempt by the Principal to bully Celina Roach and Amaida Greaves into changing the SBA marks for some of their Biology and Chemistry students respectively, even though there was undisputed evidence that the students had cheated. They both refused but Mrs Roach was a temporary teacher and so, when she refused, the Principal elected to write an unsatisfactory report on her, further threatening her that if she did not sign it she could not report to the staff meeting at the beginning of the new school year. She was shocked at seeing some of its contents and in the absence of being granted a copy she refused to sign it. Later he refused to allow her to sign it and told her that he was not recommending her reassignment to the School. The BSTU had to fight the case at the level of the Ministry.
- 3.28 Evidence was given before the Commission that the Principal, at the request of the Chief Personnel Officer wrote a report on Mrs. Amaida Greaves in relation to an application for the position of Deputy Principal of the Ellerslie School. He showed this document to Mr. Greaves about five minutes before he claimed he had to leave to take it in. She saw some negative comments and requested a copy of the report to be able to address it. He refused to provide her a copy. She indicated that she

would sign the report but would have to register her objections to it and therefore needed a copy. He responded that she should sign only, and not write anything else on the report. He said that she could write the fact of her objection on a separate piece of paper and he would attach it to the report. Mrs. Greaves signed the report and indicated her discontent with some sections of it. The Principal became very angry at this and proceeded to shout at her and tell her, among other things, that she never follows instructions.

- 3.29 During her interview when she was questioned about her comment, the Chief Personnel Officer (“CPO”) on hearing that she had never been provided with a copy, made one available to her and requested that she respond as quickly as possible.
- 3.30 There was evidence before the Commission, which the Commission accepts, that the Principal shouts at the teachers, engages in demeaning and belittling behaviour towards them in the sight and hearing of students, parents and their colleagues, for example, shouting at Margo Clarke in front of Gail Streat-Jules and Victor Johnson when the Principal told Mrs. Clarke to *“get out of my office, don’t put a foot in here. Don’t come in here”*. In the case of Mrs. Gail Streat-Jules, the Principal shouted at her in front of a parent and said that she should *“leave my office, I cannot deal with you now”*.
- 3.31 Senator Professor Velma Newton gave evidence that in 2006 when she resigned as Chairman of the Board, the situation at the School was potentially explosive. Her assessment then was that it would worsen unless the Principal became less confrontational in dealing with teachers who disagreed with him. She was also convinced that as time went by more and more teachers would become disenchanted with his style of

management. She was therefore not surprised that by 2012 many of the teachers felt that nothing less than the Principal's separation from the School would lead to a restoration of the peacefulness for which the School was known before 2002.

- 3.32 Evidence was also given that the Principal manipulated the students. His approach to discipline has been very lax and he has delegated much responsibility for discipline matters to the Deputy Principal. In this way she becomes the bad one and the students see him as their 'friend' who cares for them and does not punish them, their 'Uncle Jeff' who they can 'high five' in the schoolyard even in the presence of the Chairman of the Board Professor Velma Newton.
- 3.33 Witnesses also told the Commission that the Principal sought to ensure his popularity by leaving many serious disciplinary matters unpunished, especially those involving disrespect of teachers. He offers chocolates, according to him and them, to students sent to his office for punishment.
- 3.34 Notwithstanding the litany of complaints by teachers and staff regarding Principal Broomes' management style and the disrespect which they had been enduring at his hands since his arrival at the school in 2002, the Commission is satisfied that the most proximate cause of the breakdown in relations between the Principal and the teachers of the Alexandra School was the Speech Day incident on 2nd December 2011 which the Ministry of Education itself, and several teachers, described as "*the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back,*" and which caused the teachers to agitate for the "separation" of the Principal from the School.
- 3.35 Set out hereunder is the relevant portion of the Principal's address at the Alexandra School's Annual Awards Ceremony, 2011, which speaks for itself.

"...Despite that, it would be disingenuous of me not to address one matter that I deem to be the most unprofessional and unethical that I have ever experienced in my thirty-six years in the profession. I have been challenged by too many parents and students about this issue for it to go unaddressed. It was most disturbing and in many ways distressing to me to be made aware of the fact that one senior member of the teaching staff went through an entire term refusing to teach a class of fourth form students who were assigned to her.

Not only did this bad precedent take place but, when I spoke to her, she also said to me on both occasions, "I am not teaching them!" These children at the onset of their CXC programme were compromised in this manner. It was wrong, they did not deserve that, our school does not stand for that and our profession is not about that! As an educator and I saw it possible for me to operate in this way I would take it as a clear sign that I should leave the profession, and leave I would! We have got to be better than that, so on behalf of the school I sincerely apologize to you students and you parents who suffered this betrayal of trust.

Of course, there will be some group, no doubt supported by its emboldeners, who will seek to come after me for those comments. Tell them to bring it on! I have been given a responsibility for these children and for this school and when it comes to protecting their interest and the school's good name, there is no fear and no possibility of retreat in any bone in my body. None! These children do not deserve it, our school's legacy should not stand for it and our profession will never uphold it. I am not here to court friendships or avoid conflicts. If they come they come and, if they will in anyway compromise these children or this school, I will meet them head on every time."

- 3.36 In relation to this matter, the Principal's evidence to the Commission was that Mrs. Amaida Greaves, the Head of the Science Department, refused to honour a lawful assignment given by him for her to teach a particular class. She openly told him that she was not teaching the class. He re-issued his instructions to her by way of a letter dated 24 May 2011 but she still refused to carry out his instructions. This situation, he said, continued for the entire second term.
- 3.37 Mrs. Greaves, according to the evidence was the most senior chemistry teacher in the School and the Principal was of the opinion that she was the best person to teach this group of students preparing for the CXC programme rather than a first form that she had previously been assigned by him to teach. These adjustments to the timetable had to be made when there was disruption in the science department due to the illness of another colleague, June Greaves.
- 3.38 Further, according to the Principal's evidence, he wrote a letter to the Ministry of Education on 4th June 2011 complaining that Mrs. Greaves was not teaching. No trace of the letter can be found in the Ministry. The Ministry's Human Resources representative Mrs. Stephanie Charles-Soverall said in evidence that she could think of no plausible explanation why a letter of this nature could be delivered to the Ministry by any means, and not be found anywhere. There was no follow up by the Principal in connection with the matter.
- 3.39 The Principal also gave evidence that a representative body of the parents of the class met with him and expressed their anger that their children were not being taught. The Principal claims that he openly discussed the matter with the parents and made three promises to assuage their

concerns:

- 1) to provide extra lessons for the students;
- 2) to make a public apology to them and their children on behalf of the school; and
- 3) to have a process of chemistry immersion for the children.

3.40 Shortly, thereafter, the Principal said that the BSTU went on strike asking for his separation from the school. At no time, he said, did any teacher, any representative or any member of the Union speak to him about his apology to the parents or any concerns they may have had relative to anything that he said; in what way it could have negatively impacted anyone or what action could be taken to relieve this real or imagined grief.

3.41 Then there is the conclusion to the written statement of Ms. Mary Redman in relation to the industrial dispute in 2012 in which she says:

"In a nutshell the industrial action in 2012 resulted from a breach by Government in not following an industrial relations precedent that it had set with the BSTU in the Hallam King case in 1996. It failed to act according to what it had established as best practice in a specific situation having been faced with previously similar circumstances.

The refusal of senior government officers to meet us and treat to outstanding issues at the Alexandra School, the most recent of which was the incident of the Principal's speech at the Awards Ceremony on 2nd December, 2011, did not satisfy the resolution that the BSTU wanted, especially given the fact that there was a clear precedent that should have guided their actions.

The Ministry officials sought no timely advice or guidance to speedily address the matter. In both our meetings with the PS on 30th December 2011 and the Minister of Education on 14th January, 2012 the PS was asked if he had sought advice from the Solicitor General's office or the Chief Labour Officer on the matter, on both occasions he said 'no'.

The Union went on strike against government as an employer and that underscores the method of industrial action chosen at that time: THE GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE UNDER THE PUBLIC SERVICE ACT DOES NOT APPLY in those circumstances. Neither Ministry officials nor the Chief Personnel Officer understood or appreciated that fact, as evidenced in their correspondence to us advising us to follow the grievance procedure.

There is NO grievance procedure between government and any Union, that procedure exists for personal grievances only, where Unions may represent individual workers against their employers.

There is a precedent for our actions as the BSTU has taken industrial action against government as an employer before 2012. In 1969 the BSTU was involved in industrial action for 19 days when government in setting salaries at the Barbados Community College did so without reference to the agreed principles of payment according to qualifications and experience.

1991 the BSTU withdrew services and marched with many other trade unions against unilateral measures that the then government was engaging in.

There are no dispute resolution procedures in Barbados to deal with issues between Government as employer and trade unions.

Further, even when there exists the possibility for a grievance procedure the Public Service Act makes it explicit that the grievance procedure "MAY" be followed. The use of the term "may" is discretionary and empowering only and not mandatory as is the case of "shall". Therefore, even for persons who might have a legitimate complaint, with the context of a personal grievance, the grievance procedure is not the only way of resolving the complaint.

It has always been and continues to be the contention of the BSTU that all public officers, most especially those at a senior level, must be exposed to adequate, relevant Industrial Relations training. The events at the Alexandra School have, over time, underscored and reinforced the necessity for and obligation of those in authority to heed the Union's constant calls for the expeditious implementation of such."

- 3.42 The Commission found it significant that Mr. Guildford Bruce Alleyne, the former Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education, when asked by the Senior Counsel to the Commission the following question – *"What do you see as the cause which led to the breakdown of relations between the Principal and members of the teaching staff?"* He replied – *"From meetings. Sir, with the BSTU, it became clear to us, meaning the Ministry, that the offensive or alleged offensive remarks made by the principal on 2 December 2011 would have been the cause of the total breakdown between Principal and Staff".*⁶ The Commission agrees.

⁶ See p. 44 transcript;

3.43 During his evidence Mr. Laurie King, the Chief Education Officer was asked whether the BSTU in its meetings with the Ministry raised the speech of 2 December 2011 made by the Principal as an issue that they needed to have addressed. Mr. King replied that they had sent correspondence to the Permanent Secretary on the matter and felt that it should not have happened and needed to be resolved speedily. The record of the proceedings continued in respect of Mr. King's evidence thus:

"I believe that we should not wash our dirty linen in public. Meaning that a matter like this one should be discussed in a more professional manner behind, perhaps, closed doors with the teacher in question, BSTU, whoever, the Chief Education Officer, whoever, to have a matter like this resolved, but I think to go public ...I was checking the legislation with respect to trying to determine if it was actually illegal to do it, but I did not – I am not a lawyer though – I did not come across any legislation that speaks to it as being an illegal act, but at the same time in terms of customer practice it is not something that I would recommend a Principal or anyone to do, to make public in that particular forum on that particular day a matter of this nature. So I thought that that was essentially out of order for the Principal to have done."

3.44 Evidence was given by Ms. Redman and Mr. Patrick Frost that the action of the Principal in criticizing a teacher in his address at the Awards Ceremony on 2 December breached a 1996 Agreement between the BSTU and the Government, as employer. However, no written agreement between the parties was produced to the Commission. Furthermore, no minutes or notes of any meeting at which that agreement was reached were provided.

3.45 The BSTU witnesses told the Commission that the precedent was set in 1996 as the result of Mr. Hallam King, the then principal of the Coleridge and Parry School delivering a speech day address at the school in which he, like Mr. Broomes, criticized teachers and their work in the presence and hearing of students.

3.46 Mr. King in his written statement to the Commission of 21 August 2012 stated thus:

“Further, the BSTU was not my employer. My employer, the Government of Barbados, never informed me – as Principal - or any other Principal in any public school in the Island of Barbados about any agreement with the BSTU concerning what should or should not be said in the “Principal’s Remarks” during a Speech Day Ceremony.”

3.47 Before concluding my discussion on this particular term of reference, the Commission wishes to state that even though (as in this case) it has identified the Principal’s December 2nd 2011 Speech Day remarks as the single cause which may be said to have triggered industrial action, the Commission is also satisfied that the breakdown in the relationship between the Principal and the teachers of the Alexandra School cannot be attributed to a single cause.

3.48 The evidence which the Commission heard over the eight weeks of hearings has pointed to a complete breakdown in trust between the Principal and the teachers of the school resulting from a combination of events and circumstances dating back many years.

- 3.49 The Commission wholeheartedly endorses the findings of the 2011 Inspection Report which found that professional co-existence at the Alexandra School was almost impossible in the present atmosphere at the school, where the various divisions have taken seemingly immovable positions.
- 3.50 The Commission is also convinced that if co-existence was thought to be a difficult proposition two years ago at the time of the Inspection Report in 2010, the subsequent Speech Day impasse, coupled with the further hardening of positions which has inevitably resulted from the very public nature of these proceedings, have rendered professional co-existence in the future well nigh impossible.
- 3.51 I am also of the view that a Speech Day or Awards Ceremony cannot be an appropriate forum for teachers to be criticized by a principal, even if it is couched as an apology to the parents and children of the school. As the Hallam King and Jeffrey Broomes incidents in 1996 and 2011 respectively have clearly shown, this type of conduct has now occurred at public secondary schools in Barbados on at least two occasions and should never be permitted to happen again.
- 3:52 **Recommendation:** The Commission accordingly recommends that the *Education Regulations* and the *Public Service Code of Conduct* should be appropriately amended at the earliest opportunity so that such conduct by a Principal is expressly forbidden by law. In the interim, a Ministry of Education Circular to this effect should be issued to the Principals of all public educational institutions.

CHAPTER 4

Discussion of Findings: (ii) What led to the breakdown in relations between the Principal and the Board of Management?

- 4.1 Under item (ii) of the Terms of Reference, the Commission is required “to inquire into the cause or causes which led to the breakdown in relations between the Board of Management of the Alexandra School, St. Peter and the Principal of the Alexandra School.”
- 4.2 The existence of a strained relationship between the Principal and the current Board of Management of the Alexandra School chaired by Mr. Keith Simmons is already well documented in the Alexandra School Inspection Report of 2011 which was presented to the Ministry of Education in April 2011.⁷
- 4.3 The Inspection Report was formally admitted into evidence before the Commission on July 3rd, 2012 by Chief Education Officer, Mr. Laurie King and now forms part of these proceedings.
- 4.4 The Inspection Report reveals that among the Board’s numerous concerns identified at a meeting between the Inspection Team and Board on November 26th, 2010, were in particular, two letters which had been issued by the Principal Broomes in 2010.
- 4.5 One of the letters of concern dated June 18th, 2010 was formally admitted in evidence as *Exhibit “KS 1”* during the testimony of Board Chairman, Mr. Keith Simmons⁸. In the letter, Principal Broomes had requested the

⁷See Appendix 8 attached to the Alexandra School Inspection Report submitted by Professor Winston King to the Ministry of Education on April, 2011;

⁸ See Official Transcript of the testimony of Keith Simmons dated July 11th, 2012 @ p. 1128;

Ministry's intervention on what he claimed was a matter which, if left unresolved, could have negative implications for the school.

- 4.6 As the letter shows, Principal Broomes also requested that the Ministry convene an early meeting between himself and the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Board to deal with the matter. He also expressed the view that the Board of Management was "*misunderstanding its role and level of authority in a manner that...was compromising the authority of the Principal.*"⁹
- 4.7 The Commission heard from current Board Chairman, Keith Simmons who told the Commission that he had been present at the meeting of officials which the Ministry had convened in response to the Principal's request. At the meeting, rather than discussing his written complaint about the Board, Principal Broomes had proceeded to accuse Reverend Griffith of insulting him at Board meetings and had further complained that he did not like how CTUSAB's representative on the Board, Mr. Giles spoke to him.¹⁰
- 4.8 The Commission was also informed that Chairman Simmons and the Ministry's representative on the Board, Ms. Vaneisha Cadogan had both expressed surprise at Mr. Broomes' accusations, which Ms. Cadogan had characterized as "*really unfair.*"¹¹

⁹ Letter dated 18th June, 2010 addressed to the Chief Education Officer by Jeffrey D. Broomes admitted as Exhibit "KS 1";

¹⁰ Testimony of Keith Simmons @ p. 1129;

¹¹ Testimony of Keith Simmons @ p. 1129;

- 4.9 The Commission heard that at the Alexandra School Board meeting which followed the meeting at the Ministry, Principal Broomes had apologized to Reverend Griffith about the remarks which he had made about him at the meeting with the Ministry officials.
- 4.10 Chairman Simmons told the Commission that the incident had left him wondering what the whole thing had been about and why the Principal would make such a serious accusation and then come back at the following meeting and apologize.¹²
- 4.11 The Commission heard that upon his learning what the Principal had said about him at the meeting at the Ministry, Board member Reverend Griffith had expressed his intention to resign from the Board and had only decided not to resign after Chairman Simmons prevailed on him to stay on the Board in view of the valuable contribution which he had been making to the Board on matters of education, given his experience as a former principal.¹³
- 4.12 The Inspection Report also documents the fact that the Board had found it very difficult to function and also felt that the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development should bear some responsibility for how the situation had been prolonged without meaningful solutions. The Board is reported to have recommended to the Inspection Team that the Public Service needed to be called upon to be involved in the rift.

¹² Testimony of Keith Simmons @ p. 1129;

¹³ Testimony of Keith Simmons @ p. 1129;

- 4.13 Asked by Counsel for the Commission to comment on a recommendation in the 2011 Inspection Report which had stated that there was an urgent need to find ways to heal the rifts that are militating against the continued development of the school¹⁴, Chairman Simmons told the Commission that he had tried his best when he first came to the school to see if he could assist with the disagreement between the staff and the Principal. However he said that it seemed that this had been the wrong move and that he had thereafter decided not to get involved.
- 4.14 Chairman Simmons told the Commission that he and Principal Broomes had been friends 'outside the Board', but that the nature of their relationship had changed since taking up his appointment as Chairman in 2008.
- 4.15 He told the Commission that problems with the Principal had become evident from as early as the first three Board meetings which had been convened following the appointment of the new Board. The Commission heard that without offering an explanation for lateness, the Principal had consistently kept the Board members waiting and had to be summoned to the meeting on each occasion.
- 4.16 Chairman Simmons gave the Commission details of numerous issues which had arisen in relation to the Principal including, *inter alia*, his attitude to certain Board members, his refusal to speak directly to or consult certain teachers and Heads of Department; his views in relation to where authority for approving travel claims from teaching staff resides and his view that the Board was undermining the role and influence of the Principal within the school.

¹⁴ See Appendix 1

- 4.17 The Commission also heard that the Principal had failed to attend the March, April and June 2012 Board meetings and that in the case of the June meeting, had indicated his “option” not to accept the Board’s invitation to attend the meeting.
- 4.18 The Commission found that difficulties between Principal Broomes and the Board were not restricted to the current Board of Management and had been a recurring theme in the testimony of virtually all of the witnesses who gave evidence before the Commission relevant to the term of reference now under consideration. Ultimately, it was not difficult for the Commission to conclude that Principal Broomes is the common denominator associated with much of the unsatisfactory working relationship between the Principal and all the Boards of Management of the Alexandra School from as early as the year 2005.
- 4.19 The Commission heard testimony from former Chairman, Velma Newton who served as Chairman from March 2005 to June 2006 when she resigned in disgust, having apparently had enough of the situation.¹⁵
- 4.20 Mrs. Newton told the Commission of the shocking and disgraceful manner in which Principal Broomes had reacted to her when, shortly after her appointment, she had simply telephoned him as a courtesy and sought to introduce herself as the incoming Chairman and to ask when they could meet. After being told that she should not attempt to enter the school premises without his permission and enduring his verbal tirade on the telephone, Mrs. Newton was eventually able to make an appointment and was subsequently shown around the school.

¹⁵ Official Transcript of the testimony of Velma Newton dated July 17th, 2012;

- 4.21 The Commission was told that while the first two Board meetings had gone relatively smoothly, Principal Broomes had treated her with coldness or hostility at most meetings thereafter, more especially after she had advised him that he was not entitled to make corrections to the Board Minutes or to unilaterally change the Minutes taken of his contributions at Board meetings to reflect what he would have wished to say.
- 4.22 Mrs. Newton also informed the Commission that during her short tenure, she had occasion to draw the Principal's attention to the applicable provisions of the *Education Act* and the *Education Regulations* in relation to (i) the procedure to be followed for the suspension of pupils from school; (ii) the hiring of non-teaching staff; and (iii) the expenditure of grants to the school.
- 4.23 The Commission also heard Mrs. Newton's testimony regarding what she saw as the causes of the discord between the Principal and the teaching staff at the school. She informed the Commission that the Board Minutes of October 25th, 2004 had recorded the existence of unrest between the teaching staff and the Principal in relation to several matters which had been the subject of ongoing discussions between BSTU representatives and the School Board.
- 4.24 One of these matters involved the Principal's attempt in 2004 to conduct an interview for a part-time teacher without inviting the Head of the English Department to the interview. Mrs. Newton informed the Commission that this particular matter had only been resolved in 2005 when the Board, under her Chairmanship, had insisted that the post be advertised.

- 4.25 Mrs. Newton also drew the Commission's attention to another situation which arose in 2005, in which the BSTU had notified the Board of the Principal's failure to consult with the Head of the English Department before short-listing a number of candidates to be interviewed for a post in the English Department.
- 4.26 The Commission heard of the attempts which the Principal had made to recruit staff for the Department of English without seeking the assistance of the Head of Department as provided for in the *Education Regulations*. Mrs. Newton also described the role which she had played as Chairman of the Board and the decision which the Board had ultimately made in refusing the Principal's recommendation for a particular candidate to be recruited based on a faulty interview process and her insistence that statutory requirements first be complied with.
- 4.27 Mrs. Newton also informed the Commission about her concerns about possible breaches of the *Financial Rules* and the lack of transparency in the operation of the Special Fund Account and the Principal's Account managed directly from the Principal's office. She informed the Commission that in response to her concerns, the Auditor General had conducted a review of the Special Fund.
- 4.28 The Commission was referred to the Auditor General's Report¹⁶ and the recommendations which had been made, *inter alia*, for the establishment of guidelines for the operation of the Special Fund Account under the overall management of the Board of Management of the Alexandra School.

¹⁶ "Review of the Alexandra School Special Fund Account for the period April 2002 to March 2006" dated 2006-09-05 prepared by Mr. Leigh Trotman, Auditor General;

- 4.29 Mrs. Newton told the Commission that by the time of her resignation as Board Chairman in 2006, it was clear to her that the problems between Principal Broomes and members of the teaching staff would continue as he was resolved to doing things his way, such as not involving them in decisions affecting the Departments which they managed.
- 4.30 In her view, the teaching staff had become so incensed by the Principal's determination to leave them out of the appointment process, by his short temper and by his penchant for shouting down his opponents, that even his reasonable requests for performance of certain tasks were being resisted by some staff.
- 4.31 Mrs. Newton told the Commission that Principal Broomes' refusal to meet with the Board and the English Department following her promise in December 2005 to facilitate such a meeting, had convinced her that the Principal was not genuinely interested in finding solutions, but in continuing the feud.
- 4.32 Finally, Mrs. Newton advised the Commission that she had not been impressed by the representation of the Ministry of Education or by the manner in which senior officers in the Ministry dealt with problems at the Alexandra School. While admitting that she had frequently had occasion to call them because of the numerous issues requiring resolution which had arisen during her tenure, she expressed the view that she was sometimes of the opinion that they did not want to "lock horns" with the Principal. She also advised the Commission that she had been informed on more than one occasion that the Ministry of Education had not recommended Mr. Broomes for the post of Principal due to problems which he had had at his previous school, but the Ministry's recommendations had been ignored.

- 4.33 The Commission also heard evidence from another former Board Chairman, Mrs. Joan Williams, who had served as Chairman of the Alexandra School Board between December, 2003 until her resignation in 2005 to take up another assignment. She again served as Chairman following Mrs. Newton's resignation in 2006 and served until February 2008 when she was replaced by the current Chairman, Keith Simmons.
- 4.34 Mrs. Williams was the only witness¹⁷ who described the relations between the Board and the Principal as "cordial and respectful." She also told the Commission that she had experienced none of the difficulties with the Principal as were described by Mrs. Newton or by Mr. Simmons. She however, admitted being a friend of the Principal, and the Commission found that it was unable to attach much weight to the evidence which she gave.
- 4.35 Deputy General Secretary of the Barbados Worker's Union, Mr. Julian Hunte told the Commission that he became a member of the Board of Management of the Alexandra School in April 2011. He replaced the previous CTUSAB representative on the Board, Mr. Giles who told him that he had no interest in continuing to serve on the Board.
- 4.36 At the time of giving his evidence, Mr. Hunte had attended a total of 7 Board meetings the first of which took place in June 2011.
- 4.37 He told the Commission that there was not much interaction between the Board and the Principal and that it would be generous to describe what exists between the Principal and the Board as a relationship¹⁸.

¹⁷ Testimony of Joan Williams dated August 17th, 2012;

¹⁸ See Official Transcript of the testimony of Julian Hunte dated July 18th, 2012 @ p. 1769;

- 4.38 He expressed the view that the Principal saw the Board as a nuisance and said that the Principal was the person who appeared to set the pace at Board meetings and to dominate the discussion. He told the Commission that he did not observe a high level of cooperation from the Principal when inquiries on various issues were made of him by Board members¹⁹.
- 4.39 Describing the Principal's communication style, Mr. Hunte told the Commission that he was confrontational. He noted that most of the Principal's speech at Board meetings was forceful in nature and tended to be argumentative in tone even when not in an argument²⁰.
- 4.40 Mr. Hunte further stated that the Principal was not very accommodating of views which were unlike his own and had a dismissive attitude to issues raised by the Board.
- 4.41 Referring to the statutory functions of the Board under the *Education Act*, to give directions of a general nature to the Principal, Mr. Hunte cited an example of the dismissive disregard and defiant attitude displayed by the Principal at a Board meeting when faced with the Board's concerns as to how he had handled a situation involving students who had been found using marijuana at school²¹.
- 4.42 He later stated that the Principal's having told the Board that he would do it again if he had to, was indicative of his unwillingness to accept guidance or direction from the Board which he said was inconsistent with the Board's authority under the Act to give general directions to the

¹⁹ Testimony of Julian Hunte @ p. 1771;

²⁰ Testimony of Julian Hunte @ p. 1780;

²¹ Testimony of Julian Hunte @ p. 1771;

Principal and to deal with serious breaches of discipline involving pupils of the school.²²

4.43 With respect to the attendance by the Principal at Board meetings, Mr. Hunte told the Commission that the Principal had not attended all of the 7 meetings which he attended and there had been meetings which he did not attend. When inquiries were made as to his whereabouts, the Board was told that he had neither indicated his intention to attend nor offered an apology for his absence and just did not show up²³.

4.44 It was Mr. Hunte's view that the Principal's non-attendance at meetings hampered the work of the Board because there were matters which the Board had previously discussed for which up-dates were required. The Principal's absence from Board meetings prevented the Board from making inquiries and being advised by him²⁴. Furthermore, there was nobody deputizing for the Principal at the meetings which he did not attend.

4.45 Asked whether he was aware that the Deputy Principal had been invited to meetings but that the Principal had objected to her attendance, Mr. Hunte told the Commission that he had heard talk of the objection, but had not personally witnessed the Principal objecting to the Deputy's attendance at meetings.

²² Testimony of Julian Hunte @ p. 1802;

²³ Testimony of Julian Hunte @ p. 1772

²⁴ Testimony of Julian Hunte @ p. 1773;

- 4.46 Mr. Hunte agreed that the functions of the Deputy Principal are integral to the management of the school. He said that the attendance of the Deputy Principal at Board meetings, even if the Principal was in attendance, would be a useful practice and would provide reasonable opportunity for continuity, since the Deputy was the person who would be expected to pick up and carry on in the absence of the Principal and the Deputy should be kept abreast of the goings on at all levels in the management of the school.²⁵
- 4.47 Questioned as to his views as to whether there is any possibility of there being a future working relationship between the Board and the Principal, Mr. Hunte expressed the view that *“any effort...to restore that relationship between the Board and the Principal would require powers akin to the power of being able to perform a resurrection.”*²⁶
- 4.48 Mr. Hunte told the Commission that his training in industrial relations told him that the whole Commission of Inquiry exercise was a factor which had significantly impeded the possibility of any future working relationship between the Board and the Principal. He expressed the view that in an industrial relations setting, there can come a time when a relationship between two parties becomes so fractured that efforts to continue the relationship was pointless. He agreed that a consequence of what had been revealed at the Commission over the last several days or weeks, had, in his view, had the effect of hardening positions.²⁷

²⁵Testimony of Julian Hunte @ p. 1774;

²⁶ Testimony of Julian Hunte @ p. 1782;

²⁷ Testimony of Julian Hunte @ p. 1783-84;

- 4.49 Under cross-examination, Mr. Hunte agreed that the Principal was a common denominator associated with all of the conflict at the school. He told the Commission the only future he could envisage for the Alexandra School with the present Principal remaining as Principal was one characterized by negativity. Asked whether moving the Principal across to another school could provide a solution, Mr. Hunte was pessimistic about that as an option.²⁸
- 4.50 Under further cross-examination, Mr. Hunte advised the Commission that on his appointment to the Board of Management in April 2011, the relationship with the Principal had, in his assessment, already broken down. He stated that what he had witnessed since joining the Board was that the Principal's attitude and approach had played a significant role in actuating the breakdown.²⁹
- 4.51 While admitting that at other school board meetings, the vast majority of principals had strong personalities, Mr. Hunte advised the Board that the Principal had not displayed an adequate amount of patience, tolerance nor spoken to the Board in a tone or manner conducive to the type of symbiotic relationship that is supposed to exist between a Principal and a Board.
- 4.52 While Mr. Hunte stopped short of characterizing the Principal's behaviour at Board meetings as that of a dictator, but he agreed that the current Chairman of the Board, Mr. Keith Simmons was consistently tolerant and long suffering and had consistently conceded ground to the Principal.³⁰

²⁸ Testimony of Julian Hunte @ p. 1794-95;

²⁹ Testimony of Julian Hunte @ p. 1796;

³⁰ Testimony of Julian Hunte @ p. 1798-1800;

- 4.53 Under cross-examination by Counsel for Mr. Broomes, Mr. Hunte agreed that it was possible that Mr. Broomes was acting consistent with the letter of regulation 13(3) of the *Educations Regulations* when he talked so much at Board meetings³¹. However, he felt that the spirit of the law should place a corresponding duty on the Principal to listen to the Board members as well.³²
- 4.54 The Commission found Mr. Hunte to be a credible and independent witness and found his testimony as to the fact of the breakdown and the causes of the breakdown in the relations between the Board and the Principal compelling. Furthermore, as he was neither a friend of the Principal nor the current Chairman, he was in a position to offer the Commission the most dispassionate assessment of the current relations between the Board and the Principal. Additionally, having regard to his training and experience in industrial relations, the opinions he offered as to the way forward, were insightful and helpful.
- 4.55 The Commission also heard from the Principal, Mr. Jeffrey Broomes who stated that in its first year the current Board had functioned professionally and had given the Principal the type of critical support which he had expected and had come to experience since his tenure at the school started in 2002.³³

³¹ Regulation 13(3) provides : "A Board must give full consideration to and decide upon any views or proposals put to it by a principal."

³² Testimony of Julian Hunte @ p. 1807;

³³ Testimony of Jeffrey Broomes in August, 2012

- 4.56 Mr. Broomes, however, accused the current Board Chairman of overreaching and exceeding the limits of the authority provided to the Board under the regulations. He also accused the Chairman of consistently encouraging members of staff to disregard the Principal's supervisory authority over them.
- 4.57 The Commission took the view that even if it were to accept the Principal's allegations of overreach against the current Board Chairman, the overwhelming evidence before the Commission is that the Principal's confrontational attitude and approach had played a significant role in actuating the breakdown. Additionally, the Commission accepted that the Principal had not displayed an adequate amount of patience or tolerance nor spoken to the Board in a tone or manner conducive to the type of symbiotic relationship that is supposed to exist between a Principal and a Board.
- 4.58 The Commission is satisfied that the evidence points strongly to the unwillingness, or even to the inability of the Ministry of Education (as presently structured) to proactively and decisively respond in a timely manner to the numerous problems and the disharmony which had become evident at the Alexandra School from as early as within months of the Principal's arrival.
- 4.59 The Commission found it astounding that even though the Inspection Report presented to the Chief Education Officer in April, 2011 had clearly highlighted problems, *inter alia*, between the Principal and the current Board and had recommended the urgent need to find some mechanisms and strategies to heal the rifts that were militating against the continued development of the school, the Ministry of Education is yet to act on its recommendations.

4.60 **Recommendations:** Based on the evidence and the foregoing findings, the Commission recommends that:

- 1) A review of the *Education Act* and its Regulations should be undertaken under the auspices of the Ministry of Education to identify and address any areas of ambiguity or uncertainty which could give rise to conflict between the Principal and the Board of Management.
- 2) Consideration be given to the strategic re-organization of the Ministry of Education and the refocusing of its staff with the aim of ensuring that the Ministry operates proactively and is more responsive to the issues faced by the Boards of Management, the Principal and the staff and other stakeholders of every public secondary school. Members of the Ministry's senior staff should also be trained in alternative dispute resolution.
- 3) The *Education Regulations* be amended to make it mandatory for both the Principal and the Deputy Principal to attend all Board of Management meetings.
- 4) The Ministry of Education take urgent action to ensure the implementation by the Board of Management of the Alexandra School (and of any other school where Special Fund Accounts are operated) of the six recommendations issued by the Auditor General in his Review Report of 2006-09-05.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion of Findings: (iii) Was the manner in which the Principal performed his duties in accordance with the Education Regulations? Did the Principal contravene the Regulations by the manner in which he related to members of the teaching staff and the Chairman and members of the Board of Management?

- 5.1 Under item (iii) of the Terms of Reference, the Commission is mandated *“to determine whether the manner in which the Principal of the Alexandra School, St. Peter performed his duties as Principal of the school was in accordance with regulations 15 to 18 of Part III of the Education Regulations, 1982 and to determine whether the Principal has contravened any of the said Regulations by the manner in which he related to:*
- (a) *members of the teaching staff;*
 - (b) *the Chairman and Members of the Board of the Management of the Alexandra School.”*
- 5.2 **Regulation 15** (a) requires the Principal to determine the programme of each pupil after consultation with (a) the teacher (b) the parent where it is expedient to do so. In relation to this reference the programme of each pupil includes the subjects that are taught and the syllabus in respect thereof. The paragraph also requires that there should be consultation with the teachers. As a result, a complaint made by Mrs. Streat-Jules on the lack of consultation a meeting was held at the Ministry. It was decided that all principals should be sent a circular indicating that there must be consultation with the teachers in relation to the subjects being taught and any new programmes that the Principal proposes to introduce. There was evidence from the Deputy Principal that the teachers generally

heard about new programmes when they attended meetings of the Parent Teachers Association.

- 5.3 **Regulation 17(a)** stipulates that “Subject to the policy of the Minister and the general direction of the Board, every Principal has *control* of the building etc..” The evidence before the Commission was replete with the many occasions on which Board members, BSTU officials and even teachers were expressly forbidden by the Principal from entering the premises.
- 5.4 Undoubtedly, as the person vested with control of the premises, the Principal could not be said to have been in breach of regulation 17(a) when (as the evidence disclosed) he exercised control by excluding persons from the premises. However, the Commission was satisfied that in the situations which were drawn to its attention, it was clear that the Principal had a tendency to use the power of exclusion implicit in regulation 17(a) as a means of exerting authority over specific persons or to at the very least, to remind them who was in charge of the school.
- 5.5 There appears to be a grey area of responsibility between this provision and Regulation 5(a) and (b) and Regulation 44(5) (a) and (e) as it relates to the Board of Management and the Principal. Regulation 5(a) and (b) appear to be all inclusive in nature since it includes the use of the buildings and premises of the school for community activities and other activities. This regulation also refers to the insurance of the entire plant which would include all the buildings and premises of the school which the Board is required to supervise under Regulation 5(a) and (b).

Similarly, Regulation 44(5) (a) and (e) seem to be in conflict with Regulation 5(a) and (b). The interplay between regulations 5(a) and (b) and regulations 17(a) and 44(5) and the areas of responsibility allocated to the Board and the Principal respectively should be clarified by way of amendment to the Regulations.

5.6 **Regulation 17(b)** provides that “Subject to the policy of the Minister and the general direction of the Board, every Principal must allocate duties to staff.” It would appear from the evidence that the Principal took a very capricious attitude towards the allocation of duties to staff. Evidence is that the Principal allocated staff without giving full consideration to the qualifications of the individuals, as for example, the deployment of Julian Allman and Mario Lashley in the music department and Ms Odwin in the Science Department. The Commission is of the view that the Principal in the allocation of duties to staff should always act in consultation with the Head of Department. The requirement for consultation between the Principal and Heads of Department should be more clearly expressed by an appropriate amendment to the *Education Regulations, 1982*.

5.7 **Regulation 17 (c)** provides that “Subject to the policy of the Minister and the general direction of the Board, every Principal is responsible for the discipline of the school” The evidence is that the current Principal sees discipline as existing in a sort of hierarchical structure, commencing

with the “student court”, then the form teacher, the Head of Department, Deputy Principal and finally the Principal.³⁴ Even though it may be laudable to have “student courts” which have met the approval of the Chief Education Officer the legislation does not provide for such a structure. It seems to the Commission that the discipline of the School is the responsibility of the Principal advised and otherwise assisted by the Deputy Principal. Clearly the legislation reflects that any teacher, senior teacher or head of department must maintain proper order and discipline in the classroom among pupils under his/her care. However the overall discipline of the school ultimately rests with the Principal assisted by his Deputy.³⁵

5.8 It would also appear that for whatever reason the Principal is trying to dilute the area of responsibility for discipline which the legislation squarely places on his shoulders. The Commission recommends that the Principal follows the legislation closely.

5.9 **Regulation 18(a)** requires every Principal to supervise the teachers of his school. This paragraph is designed for the effective management of the school and when coupled with the other paragraphs of this Regulation, requires the principal to co-operate with other stakeholders in order to

³⁴ see transcript pages 5386-5388

³⁵ See transcript pages 5385-5396

have a well run institution for the provision of the learning and education for all students of the school.

5.10 However, the Commission is satisfied that the whole saga surrounding the non-teaching for “a whole term” by a senior teacher as the Principal alleged, could not have occurred if he was exercising proper supervision over his teachers as required by regulation 18(a). Does the principal do the normal walkabout the school? Dwayne Bryan, in his evidence, says that he drew to the Principal’s attention on more than one occasion that Mrs. Greaves was not teaching her classes. The Principal himself stated that it was brought to his attention by two female students in the corridor.

5.11 This points to possible dereliction of the duty imposed on the Principal by Regulation 18(a) and he may well be found to have fallen short of the duty imposed on him under this Regulation in that he did not effectively supervise the teachers of his school.

5.12 **Regulation 18(b) and (d)** There is considerable evidence that there was sometimes no consultation by the Principal with the teachers in the preparation of timetables,³⁶ allocation of duties among teachers in order to make the best use of their aptitudes³⁷ and³⁸ there was the case of Ms

³⁶ See transcript - Mrs. Amaida Greaves pages 2897-2902

³⁷ See exhibit PDF 22 submitted by Patrick Frost

³⁸ See transcript – Mary Redman pages 4914-4918

Woods who was placed to teach without a timetable being given to her. The Commission finds that Regulation 18(b) and (d) were not strictly followed.

5.13 **Regulations 18(i) and (j)** The evidence of Mrs Joan Williams, a former Chairman of the Board, regarding an alleged injury to a child in Mrs. Margo Clarke's class when the class was allegedly left unattended, was brought to the attention of the Board by the Principal, but the incident was never clearly substantiated.³⁹

5.14 Generally, the Commission determined that breaches under these Regulations can, in most instances, be attributed to the extremely high-handed management style of the Principal, who failed to pay adequate attention to the consequences of the manner in which he sought to perform his duties under the *Education Regulations, 1982*.

³⁹ See transcript pages 5221-5226

CHAPTER 6

Discussion of Findings: (iv) Was there a breach on the part of the Principal, Deputy Principal, teaching and non-teaching staff of any relevant law, regulation, rule, order, or duty or established practice?

- 6.1 Under item (iv) of the Terms of Reference, the Commission is required “to determine whether there was a breach of any relevant law, regulation, rule, order or duty, procedure or established practice on the part of the Principal, Deputy Principal, teaching and non-teaching staff of the Alexandra School.”
- 6.2 So far as this term of reference relates to the Deputy Principal, the matter will be addressed in the next term of reference⁴⁰. On the question of breaches by the Principal, the Commission will now seek to examine the non-teaching issue by Mrs. Greaves in this context.
- 6.3 The Principal claimed in his speech of 2nd December 2011 that he discovered that Mrs. Greaves had not taught a class for an entire term. If his allegation were true, it would amount to misconduct of a serious nature by Mrs. Greaves under the *Code of Discipline* set out in the Third Schedule to the *Public Service Act*, particularly paragraph 2(q). “Failure to perform the duties assigned to the office”, because her duties were to teach.

⁴⁰ See Chapter 7.

- 6.4 If what the Principal is saying is factually correct, that Mrs. Greaves did not teach for an entire term the question which immediately arises is whether having so discovered, the Principal himself discharged the duties imposed on him as a Head of Department under the *Code of Discipline*. This is because paragraph 4(2) provides, *inter alia*, that a Head of Department shall within 14 days of becoming aware of misconduct of a serious nature on the part of an officer investigate the matter and if he is of the opinion that the public interest requires that the public officer cease forthwith to perform the functions of his office during the investigation, he as Head of Department may suspend the officer on full pay for the purpose of carrying out the investigation and immediately inform the Public Service Commission through the Chief Personnel Officer of the suspension.
- 6.5 So that, having discovered that Mrs. Greaves, according to his evidence, was not teaching, it became immediately incumbent upon the Principal under the *Code of Discipline* to carry out an investigation as required by paragraph 4(2). There is no evidence that the Principal carried out such an investigation.

- 6.6 In the circumstances, the Commission finds, that the Principal breached paragraph 4(2) of the *Code of Discipline* by failing to carry out the required investigation. There is, however, no evidence that any other member of the teaching and non-teaching staff breached any relevant law or regulation.

CHAPTER 7

Discussion of Findings: (v) Was the manner in which the Deputy Principal performed her duties in accordance with the *Education Regulations*? Did the Deputy Principal contravene any of the *Regulations*?

- 7.1 Under item (v) of the Terms of Reference, the Commission is mandated “to determine whether the manner in which the teacher holding the post of Deputy Principal of the Alexandra School, St. Peter performed her duties at the school was in accordance with the provisions of regulation 19 of the *Education Regulations, 1982* and to determine whether the said Deputy Principal has contravened any of the terms of the said *Regulations*.”

- 7.2 Mrs. Beverley Neblett-Lashley, by letter dated 19th June 1997 was appointed Deputy Principal, Alexandra School with effect from 1st July 1997. Her appointment was on promotion and made by the Governor General, acting on the advice of the Public Service Commission. The advice of the Chief Personnel Officer is that if the occasion arose she may be transferred without her consent.
- 7.3 By application dated 2nd October 2001⁴¹ the Deputy applied for one term's leave from September to December 2002. Mr. Jeffrey Broomes was appointed Principal with effect from 1st August 2002. The Deputy's leave therefore coincided with the Principal's arrival and their first management meeting took place in 2003.
- 7.4 In his evidence before the Commission, Principal Broomes attached some significance to the fact that following his appointment, the Deputy Principal immediately took a term's leave and had thereby denied him of what he termed "*the link that should have existed during [his] transitional period.*"

⁴¹ See Exhibit BNL 1

- 7.5 Based on the evidence, the Commission was satisfied that the Deputy Principal's leave which had coincided with Principal Broomes arrival at the Alexandra School, had not been a deliberate response to his having been appointed principal as he appeared to suggest since Mrs. Neblett-Lashley's leave application had been submitted for approval on October 2001 and in any event, before the post became vacant.
- 7.6 The Deputy has made it clear in her evidence that she too had applied for the post of Principal to which Mr. Broomes was appointed, that naturally she was disappointed at having been overlooked for the job but she says, that nonetheless she approached her job with professionalism.
- 7.7 From the evidence before the Commission, it is clear that the Deputy Principal functioned with limited support from the Principal. At her first management meeting with the Principal at the start of term 2 of 2003, Principal Broomes publicly made a statement which implied that as he had gotten the job that she had also applied for, he fully expected her to be less than cooperative. Since then, Principal Broomes has consistently suggested to others that she is resentful of him because she did not get the job and is responsible for the fact that he started to experience problems with the management team.

- 7.8 In her evidence, the Deputy Principal told the Commission that she was unable to use her initiative and the Principal told her in no uncertain terms that the “Vice President” is the least effective officer in an organisation. When this was told to her, she says, she felt as though she was the messenger.
- 7.9 To avoid friction with the Principal, she applied for and was granted no pay leave for four years to work as a classroom teacher in a school in Louisville, Kentucky, at the end of which she applied for another three years leave but the leave was not granted. However, the evidence which the Commission heard regarding her creditable performance at the Alexandra School became somewhat scarred when she produced in evidence, what may be referred to as “the enhanced transcript” of a student.
- 7.10 This transcript, Exhibit BNL26, which the Principal eventually admitted is his document which he prepared in his own handwriting and gave to his secretary, Merlise Sealy (“the Secretary”), now retired, to type. Mrs. Sealy added the particulars of the student at the bottom of the document in her handwriting but made no other marks on the document. Mrs. Sealy then proceeded to type Exhibit BNL26, as instructed by the Principal⁴² kept the original in her possession, and on her retirement in August 2004,

⁴² See lines 1-4 of transcript dated 13 August 2012

she gave the original document to the Deputy Principal for safe keeping.

7.11 This document was kept by the Deputy Principal and was produced by her when she gave evidence before the Commission. The Deputy Principal kept this document given to her by the Principal's secretary, apparently as it was suggested, in her possession for approximately eight years, waiting for an opportune moment to produce it.

7.12 The question that arises from her action was (a) whether she was under an obligation to disclose the document either to the Principal or the Chief Education Officer and (b) in failing to disclose the document; she was in breach of "any of the terms of the said Regulations".

7.13 It seems clear to the Commission that both the Secretary and the Deputy Principal knew of the importance attached to BNL26, since it was the Principal's original document, in his own handwriting, and purported to be the record of a student who did not attend the Alexandra School during the period stated on the document. The Exhibit has the child's name recorded thereon, and grades for forms 1 to 4. According to the child's father, when he removed the child from Combermere School and sought to transfer her to the Alexandra School he spoke to the Principal and passed on the child's report to him personally and not by telephone as the Principal claims. Why did the principal prepare BNL26 in the first place and for what purpose? It is clear that an employee owes a duty of trust to

an employer.

7.14 The Deputy Principal kept this original document in her possession without disclosing it to any of her superiors, but it surfaced for the first time at the Commission of Enquiry. In the circumstances of its production it can be reasonably inferred that the Deputy Principal knew the potential danger its presentation could have on the career on the principal.

7.15 Was there a conspiracy between the Secretary and the Deputy Principal? Did the Secretary and the Deputy Principal set out to undermine the Principal? What offence or breach, if any, did either of them and in particular the Deputy Principal commit? Guidance may be found in the *Public Service Act 2007 – 41* and the provisions of the Second Schedule, *Code of Conduct and Ethics*.

7.16 **Paragraphs 4 and 5 read as follows:-**

“4 Officers shall serve the Government in accordance with the principles set out in this Code recognising:

- (a) the accountability of officers to the officer in charge of their department;

- (b) the duty of all officers to discharge their functions reasonably and in accordance with the law;
- (c) the duty to comply with the law.....and to uphold the administration of justice, and
- (d) the ethical standards governing professions.

5 Officers shall

- (a) conduct themselves with integrity, impartiality and honesty;
- (b) give honest and impartial advice.....and make all information that is relevant to a decision, available to them, and
- (c) not deceive or knowingly mislead Ministers, Parliament, Permanent Secretaries or the public.

Attention must, however, be paid to Paragraphs 11(1) (a), (b) and 11(2)

(a), (b)

7.17 In the case of the Secretary, if she felt that she was being called upon to perform an illegal act, she should have reported the matter to her employer, in this case, the Board of Management. She did not. She has now been retired for over eight years. The Commission is of the view that no action should be taken against her.

7.18 In the case of the Deputy Principal in her written statement under the heading, Ethical Issues she states:

“There are a number of ethical issues which have negatively impacted the environment of the Alexandra School, and on my interactions with the Principal. In his very first year at the School the school secretary came to me distraught because she was being asked to write a transcript for a student who had been taken in by him to re-do her fifth year and had thus spent one year at the school. Yet the secretary was being asked to prepare a transcript for five years. (cf BNL25-27) The Secretary, Mrs. Sealy, recounted that she told him it was not right, but she felt she had no choice but to follow the instructions given. However, she was so disturbed by the occurrence that she held on to the original handwritten note from the Principal in case she needed to represent herself. This handwritten note was passed over to me when the Secretary decided to take early retirement, disturbed by the financial and other transactions that she was being asked to sign off on without proper accountability”.

7.19 The Commission is of the view that although the evidence given by the Deputy Principal might have had the effect of undermining the Principal, no breach or offence was committed. The evidence disclosed that from her initial management meeting following her return to the school in 2003, Principal Broomes, had publicly accused her of wanting to take over his job.

7.20 There is quite clearly no love lost between the Principal and the Deputy Principal. She, for the most part, felt that she was harassed, mentally abused, disrespected and humiliated by the Principal. The Commission accepts and shares her feelings in this regard.

7.21 In conclusion, the Commission finds that the manner in which the Deputy Principal of the Alexandra School, Mrs. Beverley Neblett-Lashley performed her duties at the school was in accordance with the provisions of regulation 19 of the *Education Regulations, 1982* and that she has not contravened any of the terms of the said *Regulations*.

CHAPTER 8

Discussion of Findings: (vi) Are there any breaches by the Principal, Deputy Principal or other member of the teaching staff of the *Public Service Code of Discipline* or the *Education Regulations* which may be referred to the Public Service Commission for action?

- 8.1 Under item (vi) of the Commission's Terms of Reference, the Commission is required: *"to consider and determine whether in the performance or non-performance of their duties as public officers employed at the Alexandra School, St. Peter, either the Principal, Deputy Principal, or any other member of the teaching staff at that school have in any way infringed, breached or contravened the Code of Discipline as contained in the Third Schedule of the Public Service Act, 2007-41 or the Education Regulations, 1982 so that any such infringement, breach or contravention of the said Public Service Act, 2007- 41 or the Education Regulations , 1982 , may be referred to the Public Service Commission to be dealt with as provided by Law."*
- 8.2 **Principal Jeffrey Broomes:** On August 16th, 2012, acting in accordance with section 23 of the *Commissions of Inquiry Act*, the Commission issued a formal notice to Mr. Jeffrey Broomes, Principal of the Alexandra School notifying him that it appeared that an allegation of misconduct had been made against him by certain witnesses The notice also gave him the opportunity to contest the allegation by calling evidence in rebuttal or

by cross-examination or otherwise. A copy of the Commission's Notice to Jeff Broomes is attached to the Report as *Appendix 3*.

8.3 In response to the Commission's Misconduct Notice, Principal Broomes acting through Mr. Vernon Smith, Q.C, his Attorney-at-law on record in the proceedings, issued a letter dated August 20th, 2012 by way of response to the Commission's said Notice. A copy of the letter of response to the Commission's Notice which was received from Mr. Vernon Smith, Q.C. on Mr. Broomes' behalf is attached to the Report as *Appendix 4*.

8.4 In response to the Commission's Misconduct Notice four (4) witnesses gave evidence in relation to the allegation against the Principal.

8.5 Mrs. Merlise Sealy gave evidence that she was employed as a secretary at the Alexandra School for many years. In her last two years at the School August 2002 to August 2004 she worked as secretary to Mr. Broomes, the principal. She said that on one occasion Mr. Broomes gave her a transcript to type for a former student who was in the U.S.A. When she checked the records she found that the student had in truth and in fact spent one year in Form 5 instead of her entire school life at the School as Mr. Broomes had indicated in his hand written copy "Exhibit BNL26". She pointed this out to Mr. Broomes and he told her to type as he had

indicated. She prepared the transcript Exhibit BNL27 and posted it to the U.S.A. address which he gave her.

- 8.6 On reflection, she kept this handwritten document, as she says, in case there were any questions after. When she retired, she gave the handwritten document to Mrs. Beverley Neblett-Lashley, the Deputy Principal and told her of her concerns. Counsel showed Mrs. Sealy the handwritten document. She said the document was the one which was handed to her by the Principal. The document has been previously marked as Exhibit BNL26.
- 8.7 Merlese Sealy stated that the whole top of the document had been written by Mr. Broomes and the bottom part of the document is in her handwriting because Mr. Broomes did not have in all the relevant information which was needed to complete the transcript. She copied the bottom part from what they call as teachers, a yellow card which keeps the record of the student's complete school life.
- 8.8 The witness was then shown a copy of the Confidential Record Card (Exhibit BNL25) of the Alexandra School which normally carries the photograph of the student. In the Exhibit presented by Mrs. Neblett-Lashley, the photograph was in fact blotted out so as not to identify the student. When shown the Exhibit, the witness said that the document

represented the time that the student spent at the Alexandra School which was one year, in the 5th Form.

- 8.9 The signature of the then form master Mr. Charles Conliffe appears on the Confidential Record Card. Mrs. Sealy told the Commission that the transcript prepared by her was a fair representation of the handwritten note she received from the Principal except that the 5th year was different because the 5th year came from the card. The first four years were exactly what Mr. Broomes had given her. Further, Mrs. Sealy, told the Commission that she received nothing whatsoever from Combermere in relation to the student.
- 8.10 The transcript was entirely made up by the Alexandra School. She said in her evidence that she was surprised because normally when a student goes to two schools they get one transcript from the original school and then we complete the years the student spends at Alexandra School. So they provide two different transcripts, one where they were before and then we give one if they spend a year or two here. We give them a separate transcript.
- 8.11 **Mrs. Beverley Neblett-Lashley** in her evidence of 13 August 2012 said that in the Principal's first year at the School Mrs. Sealy, the Principal's Secretary, came to her very distraught because she was being asked to write a transcript for a student who had been taken in by the Principal to

re-do her fifth year and had spent one year at the School. Yet, the Principal was asking the Secretary to prepare a transcript for five years. The Secretary recounted that she told him it was not right, but she felt that she had no choice but to follow the instructions given her by the Principal. She felt, however, so disturbed by what had happened that she kept the original handwritten note from the Principal in case she needed to represent herself.

8.12 Mrs. Neblett-Lashley gave further evidence that Ms. Sealy passed over the handwritten notice to her when she decided to take early retirement. She kept the note and produced it when she gave evidence before the Commission.

8.13 Mrs. Neblett-Lashley also told the Commission that before she gave her evidence, she had reproduced from a computer record a document of the School in relation to the student. There was no signature on the document. That was a copy of the transcript extracted from the record of the School which purported to have gone off to the U.S.A.

8.14 In her evidence on 24th August 2012 given under cross-examination by Mr. Vernon Smith, Q.C., Senior Counsel for Mr. Broomes, Mrs. Neblett-Lashley appeared to change her evidence as to the date when she was given Exhibit BNL26, the Principal's handwritten document, she said that when Mrs. Sealy was going through her papers at home in 2008, she

found the Principal's handwritten Exhibit BNL26 document among her papers and gave it to her when she returned to Barbados in 2008 to teach. In her first statement she had said that Mrs. Sealy gave her the document in 2004 when she, Mrs. Sealy, was retiring.

8.15 Despite Mr. Smith's submission that I regard Mrs. Neblett-Lashley to have perjured herself, the Commission considered that the inconsistency which had arisen in Mrs. Neblett-Lashley's evidence at the hearing was a lapse in the witness' memory and did not amount to a deliberate attempt to lie or to mislead as he suggested.

8.16 Mr. Leroy Browne gave evidence before the Commission on 24th August 2012. He said because of problems his daughter had at Combermere School in the last term of her fourth year, he decided to send her to a high school in the United States, and asked his sister, Sonia, who lived in Boston, Massachusetts, in the U.S.A. to find a high school for her to attend and to accept guardianship of her while she attended the school in the U.S.A.

8.17 However, a friend of his suggested that he speak to Mr. Broomes, the Principal of the Alexandra School, to obtain a transfer for his daughter from Combermere School to Alexandra School to complete her fifth year of secondary education and take the CXC examination. Mr. Browne said he met with the Principal during the first week of the school year in

September 2002, and took along his daughter's report book as requested. His daughter was accepted on transfer to the Alexandra School in the second week of the term in September 2002, and consequently the idea and intention of sending her to a high school in the U.S.A was abandoned. He further told the Commission that he had never given the Principal the name and address of any high school in the U.S.A. to which transcripts should be sent.

8.18 **Mr. Jeffrey Broomes, Principal** told the Commission that during the first week of the school year commencing September 2002, the student's father Leroy Browne, came to meet him at the School for the purpose of applying for a transfer for his daughter from Combermere School to the Alexandra School, on the grounds that the student had serious problems with her Chemistry teacher at Combermere School during the third year term, which ended in July 2002.

8.19 For the meeting, the Principal requested Mr. Browne to bring his daughter's report book from Combermere School so that he could assess the student's performance grades during her four years at Combermere School. The Principal said that he could not recall the exact details, stated that either he copied the grades of the student from the Combermere report book produced by the father or he might have written them down from a telephone conversation he had with Mrs. Joy Gittens,

Deputy Principal of Combermere School. The Principal admitted that the handwritten document BNL26 was his document which he gave to his secretary, Mrs. Sealy.

8.20 He categorically denied that he received any transcript from Combermere School for that meeting or at any time. In fact, there was none on the records of the Alexandra School. Accordingly, the student was admitted on transfer to the Alexandra School during the second week of the first term in September 2002.

8.21 The principal denies ever having seen or ever having signed the transcript, Exhibit BNL27, or having seen the Confidential Record Card of the student, BNL25.

8.22 **DISCUSSION**

The Commission considers in respect of that matter that what is important and what is relevant is that the Principal has admitted that the handwritten document Exhibit BNL26, is his document, with the exception of the insertion of the student's name and address, all the wording on the document is his.

- 8.23 Why did the Principal give the document he admitted is his document to his Secretary? The Principal's evidence is that he gave it to her and told her to type it. For what purpose? The Principal's evidence is that he did not express any purpose. He just told her to type it. The Principal said that the grades on Exhibit BNL26 have nothing to do with the Combermere School.
- 8.24 The Principal denies ever having seen or ever having signed the transcript, Exhibit BNL27, or having seen the Confidential Report Card of the student, Exhibit BNL25. The Principal stated that he never gave Mrs. Sealy a U.S.A address and never directed her to post any transcript involving the student to any address in the U.S.A. That the student was admitted to the Alexandra School after he saw the student's school report from Combermere School and thus there was no need for a transcript from Combermere School.
- 8.25 Mrs. Sealy gave evidence that she posted the transcript herself and recorded the fact, that it was posted in a book kept for the purpose at the School. No such book, relevant to the period when it was posted, was found at the School.
- 8.26 The Commission is of the view, after carefully considering the evidence, that there is considerable doubt surrounding this matter and therefore is unable to make a finding of misconduct against the Principal.

8.27 On this term of reference, particularly, in relation to the Principal, Junior Counsel for the Commission referred the Commission to paragraph 2 (the definition section) of the *Code of Discipline* in the Public Service set out in the Third Schedule to the *Public Service Act*.

8.28 In the Code "*misconduct of a serious nature*", includes the following:-

(a).....

(b).....

(c)

(q) ***failure to perform the duties assigned to the office.***"

8.29 Counsel submitted that if the Commission found that the Principal failed to perform the duties assigned to his office, on discovering that Mrs. Greaves had not been teaching for a whole term the matter could be referred to the Public Service Commission.

8.30 In relation to Mrs. Greaves, Counsel submitted that if the Commission found that Mrs. Greaves breached paragraphs 2(e) and (q) of the *Code of Conduct*, the Public Service Commission could itself take action under paragraph 4(4) of the Code.

8.31 The Commission finds, that in all the circumstances, these matters should not now be referred to the Public Service Commission to be dealt with.

- 8.32 There is no evidence before the Commission from which it could find that any other member of the teaching and non-teaching staff breached any relevant law or regulation.

CHAPTER 9

Discussion of Findings: (vii) Is the restoration of harmonious relations at the Alexandra School possible?

Concluding Remarks

- 9.1 Under item (vii) of the Commission's Terms of Reference, the Commission is required: *"to make such recommendations as the Commission may deem appropriate and necessary in all the circumstances so that the harmonious relations between the Principal, staff, pupils and parents of the Alexandra School, St. Peter may be restored."*
- 9.2 As drafted, this particular item of the Terms of Reference is premised on two assumptions. Firstly that relations between Principal Broomes, staff, pupils and parents of the Alexandra School had not disintegrated beyond the point of no return and secondly, that harmony at the school may be restored by taking such steps as the Commission may deem appropriate and necessary in all the circumstances.
- 9.3 Regrettably as clearly appears from the foregoing Chapters, the Commission has found that the weight of the evidence points overwhelmingly to the conclusion that the relationship between Principal Broomes and the majority of the staff at the Alexandra School is now completely beyond repair.

- 9.4 While the Commission found for purposes of the first Term of Reference⁴³ that the proximate cause of the most recent industrial unrest at the Alexandra School was the public criticism by the Principal at the Speech Day of December 2nd, 2011 of one of the school's teachers who he accused of not teaching for an entire term, the Commission also found that the Speech Day incident was not an isolated event and was, as many witnesses testified, the proverbial straw which broke the camel's back.
- 9.5 The Commission is satisfied that problems at the Alexandra School commenced within a matter of months of Principal Broomes' arrival at the school. In this regard, the Commission accepted the evidence of BSTU President, Miss. Mary-Anne Redman and former Presidents, Mr. Phil Perry and Patrick Frost who all testified about the challenges which the school had begun to face "*with the advent of the new Principal.*"
- 9.6 The Commission also considered the evidence of the BSTU witnesses concerning what they described as the Principal's untenable management style and the overwhelming evidence of the increasing and escalating instances of the Principal's discrimination and victimization of staff, lack of consultation and overall mismanagement.
- 9.7 The Commission considers that the terms of this particular remit is limited to making recommendations for the restoration of harmonious relations between the Principal, staff, pupils and parents only. As drafted, the remit does not extend to making recommendations for amendments to any legislation, including the *Education Act* and *Regulations* or the establishment of a Teachers Service Commission, irrespective of however desirable this may be.

⁴³ See Discussion of Findings in Chapter 3;

9.8 From the evidence led the Commission finds that if harmonious relations are to be restored then there must be a radical re-organisation of the major players at the Alexandra School beginning at the very top with the Principal.

9.9 (A) **The Principal – Mr. Jeffrey Broomes**

The Commission is in no doubt, based on the evidence, that the current Principal, driven by a crusading zeal and misguided notions of his personal “transformational management style”, arrived at the Alexandra School in 2002 with a personal mandate to reform the school. By his arrogance, his heavy-handed manner in dealing with the staff, his autocratic management style, Mr. Broomes, single-handedly alienated any goodwill which he may have had when he was appointed at the School.

9.10 In particular the Commission finds that:

- (i) he discriminated and victimised certain teachers;
- (ii) he mismanaged the School by denying relevant Heads of Department their statutory responsibility to be present at interviews of persons in their subject areas;
- (iii) he indulged in untenable managerial behaviour by his unorthodox hiring practices at the School;

- (iv) he was unwilling to deal with disciplinary matters in the school;
- (v) he indulged in bullying and workplace abuse;
- (vi) he interfered in the functioning of the various departments of the School and felt that he could do it alone;
- (vii) he tried to implement too many things at one time;
- (viii) actions and motives that are inconsistent with his are viewed as being subversive;
- (ix) he manipulates the students;
- (x) he shouts at the teachers and engages in demeaning and belittling behaviour towards the teachers in the sight and hearing of students; and
- (xi) he creates divisions amongst the staff.

9.11 His fractured relationship with the Chairman of more than one Board of Management, his treatment of the Deputy Principal, his disagreements with the Senior Staff and Heads of Department made his school an institution ripe for industrial unrest. His infamous speech on 2nd December 2100 was the culmination of his attacks on his senior staff.

9.12 When it suits the Principal he is known to flout the instructions and authority of the Chief Education Officer, but at other times he tries to solicit his assistance for example writing letters to the Chief Education Officer complaining of the actions of the Chairman of the Board of Management and letters to the Chief Education Officer complaining of Mrs. Amaida Greaves⁴⁴.

9.13 **Recommendations:**

In light of the above findings, the Commission recommends that if harmonious relations are to be restored at the Alexandra School, then the current Principal cannot remain in his position as Principal of the Alexandra School.

Immediate steps should be taken to invoke the provisions of section 5.5 of the General Orders of the Public Service to place the Principal on a leave of absence from the school in the public interest while more permanent arrangements are negotiated for his re-assignment elsewhere in the Public Service, or alternatively, for his compulsory retirement from the public service;

⁴⁴ See Exhibit JB 23, JB 25, JB 54 and Statement of Mary Redman

9.14 (B) **The Deputy Principal – Mrs. Beverley Neblett-Lashley**

Recommendation:

In all the circumstances and taking the best interests of the Deputy Principal into account, the Commission recommends that at a convenient time in the near future she should be transferred from her post at the Alexandra School to a similar post at another school.

9.15 (C) **Head of the Science Department - Mrs. Amaida Greaves-**

The relationship between Mrs. Greaves and some members of her department can be described as strained at best and at its worst, uncomfortable.

9.16 As far as her dealings with the Principal were concerned:

- (a) As head of the Science Department, she was not consulted when new teachers were assigned to her Department⁴⁵.
- (b) The appointment of Ms Renate Odwin to her Department was made without her knowledge or any consultation with her.
- (c) The Principal, without justification, did not support Mrs. Greaves when the matter of the late submission of SBA's was referred to the Ministry of Education⁴⁶.

⁴⁵ See pages 2625-2630 line 7

- (d) The Principal made an adverse report on Mrs. Greaves to the Ministry of Education when she applied for the position of a Deputy Principal at another school, then he refused to give her a copy of the report⁴⁷.
- (e) The Principal wrote to the Ministry of Education regarding Mrs. Greaves' absence from work on two occasions to attend funerals⁴⁸. The Principal also wrote letters to Mrs. Greaves dated 14th and 18th October 2008 in connection with the same matter. These letters gave Mrs. Greaves the impression that the Principal was targeting her.
- (f) As Head of the Science Department, Mrs. Greaves wrote to the Principal making suggestions for the filling of acting vacancy of the Science Department during her leave. These suggestions and recommendations were completely ignored by the Principal.

⁴⁶ See Exhibits AG1-AG4

⁴⁷ See Exhibit AG7

⁴⁸ See Exhibit AG6, 8

(g) As regards her relationship with some members of staff this can be observed in the evidence of Dwayne Bryan and Mrs. Woods⁴⁹.

9.17 However, the most serious charge made against Mrs. Greaves is the allegation made by the Principal in his 2nd December 2011 speech that a senior teacher has not taught a fourth form for a whole term. The Principal also stated that this state of affairs was brought to his attention by two fourth form students in the corridor.⁵⁰

9.18 This allegation has been found to be inaccurate. Mrs. Greaves produced a chart in her witness statement showing that she has taught up to week 7. Examinations commenced in week 8. In addition by letter dated 24th May 2011 the Principal wrote to Mrs. Greaves:

“I was just informed by two fourth form students that you have not turned up to teach their class on any day for the past five weeks, although you were available.....”

⁴⁹ See transcript pages 2894-2918

⁵⁰ See transcript pages 2894-2918

9.19 This is quite a different situation from “the term” referred to by the Principal in his 2nd December 2011 speech. The evidence to the Commission clearly shows that Mr. Greaves did teach some classes during the third term. The written statement of Mr. Damian Waithe, the Lab Assistant, indicated that he saw her teaching. Ms Odwin gave evidence that her brother a student told her that Mrs. Greaves taught the single periods during the term but not the double periods.

9.20 There is no doubt that Mrs. Greaves was given a lawful instruction by the Principal to teach. There is also no doubt that due to the chaotic atmosphere in her department, she did not teach some periods. During this period she went to the Chairman’s office to discuss the matter. Mrs. Greaves gave evidence that the Chairman in her presence spoke on the phone with the Chief Education Officer. She was awaiting instructions from the Chief Education Officer as how to proceed. It was clear from her evidence that Mrs. Greaves was in breach of paragraph 2(q) of the Code of Discipline in that she failed to perform the duties assigned to the office. This amounts to misconduct of a serious nature.

9.21 The Commission finds, however, that there are extenuating circumstances surrounding the conduct of Mrs. Greaves. She has forty (40) years in the teaching service at Alexandra School. She complained bitterly to the principal about the time tabling and substitutions in her department where in some instances unqualified teachers were assigned to her department with little or no input from her and finally, having drawn the confusion to the attention of the Ministry of Education, she was awaiting their instructions as to how to proceed, which instructions never came.

9.22 **Recommendation**

It would suffice if Mrs. Greaves is given a written reprimand. However, in view of her position as a public officer, this is a matter for investigation and determination by the Public Service Commission.

9.23 **(D) Mr. Roger Broomes – part-time Physical Education Teacher**

Mr. Roger Broomes is a first cousin of the Principal. He came into prominence when he was Resident Beat Officer in the Royal Police Force, assigned to the Deacons Farm Area and was later dismissed from the Force.

The hiring practices of the Principal when he employed his cousin, his cousin's girlfriend, his daughter (temporary vacation job) caused one Board Chairman to accuse him of nepotism.

9.24 Roger Broomes has been engaged in a number of activities at the school which make him in the Commission's view unfit to be employed in a school environment,

- (a) The first incident involved Physical Education Teacher Ms Sophia Ifill when she sent a student to a class being taught by Mr. Roger Broomes to get another student whom she wanted to be coached to take a volleyball examination. Mr. Broomes refused. Eventually Miss Ifill went to the classroom herself and Mr. Broomes is alleged to have said to her "*woman get out the room, you stinking up the place.....*". A complaint was made to the Principal who the Commission was told conducted an unsatisfactory investigation into the matter. The matter was subsequently referred to the Board of Management, but nothing happened.

- (b) The second incident involved a Physical Education Examination set by Roger Broomes in which the students had prior knowledge to the answers and to the questions. When this infraction was brought to the attention of the Principal, he supported his cousin, and said that similar action is common in the United States. At this point the question was asked as to what values are we teaching our students. It was around this time that the Principal was heard to remark "*Roger Broomes is my cousin, and as long as I am Principal, he will have a job at this school*".
- (c) During the course of the testimony of the Guidance Counsellor evidence was given involving the said Roger Broomes and a young female student, the ward of a Mrs. Chung. When Mrs. Chung came to the office of the Principal to make her complaint, the Principal was heard in a loud voice shouting and escorting the couple (Mr. and Mrs. Chung) off his (the school) premises.

(d) Finally, there is the action taken by Roger Broomes, on the instructions of the Principal, who himself provided the scissors, that Roger Broomes should hold down a young male student and cut his hair. After the boy's parents complained of this simple assault the matter was referred to the Ministry of Education where it was eventually resolved.

9.25 The activities of Roger Broomes cannot be a credit to an institution of learning such as the Alexandra School and can do nothing towards the restoration of harmonious relations.

9.26 **Recommendation**

The Commission recommends that the Ministry of Education and the Board of Management should take steps to terminate his appointment.

9.27 **(E) Mrs. Vernell Woods and Ms. Abena Williams**

These are both young, bright, articulate and dedicated teachers in the English Department who support the new initiatives being introduced by the Principal. They are not part of the "Old Scholars" and because of their support for the Principal, are referred to by Ms Redman as "Yes people".

- 9.28 Between them, they have won several awards in the short time they have been at the school which enabled them to travel overseas sometimes with the Principal and students, sometimes accompanying students, and for which the school pays. The BSTU has cried favouritism in respect of both these teachers. Perhaps justifiably so, but the Commission does not agree with the characterization of them as entirely "Yes people".
- 9.29 They emerge as the leaders of the junior teachers most of whom are not appointed permanently and are therefore dependent on the favourable assessment of the Principal for their continued employment at Alexandra School. They do not engage the seniors in their critical comments about the Principal and, of course, did not participate in the strike action of 2012. Regrettably, they refuse to interact with the senior teachers.
- 9.30 Both have been unjustifiably critical of the Deputy Principal. Mrs. Woods has attacked the Deputy Principal for her poor managerial and professional skills and Ms Williams for burdening the junior staff with a heavy load of substitutions. On close examination by Counsel both teachers have found to be wrong in their assessment of the Deputy Principal. Mrs. Woods previously taught at St. Lucy Secondary School where she was a Senior Teacher and came to Alexandra for whatever reason as a Junior Teacher. Ms. Williams previously taught at Lodge School.

9.31 The influence which these two competent teachers have over other junior teachers and their support for the principal is likely to have a polarizing effect in the future which does not necessarily contribute to harmony at the School.

9.32 **Recommendation**

Either one or both of these teachers should be transferred to other public secondary schools in the teaching service at a convenient time in the near future.

9.33 (F) **Mr. Dwayne Bryan** gave evidence before the Commission on 2 August 2012. His transcript appears at pages 3213-3393 of the record.

9.34 In his evidence, he launched an attack on his Head of Department, Mrs. Amaida Greaves - unjustifiably so. The Commission was of the view that because of his close association with the Principal he felt comfortable attacking Mrs. Greaves in his evidence before the Commission. From the evidence led before the Commission he came to the School on two occasions with alcohol on his breath. Mrs. Greaves spoke to him. He has borrowed money on two occasions from Mrs. Greaves. On the third occasion she refused him a loan.

9.35 **Recommendation:** The Commission recommends that it is in his best interest of the school that Mr. Bryan be transferred from Alexandra School.

9.36 Based on the evidence it has heard, the Commission has accepted that the staff at the Alexandra School have endured many years of an unhealthy and unhappy working relationship with the current Principal. Apart from the recommendations it has already made for removing some of the more important players in this unhappy saga, the Commission recommends that the Ministry take urgent steps to implement recommendations 3 and 4 of the Inspection Report which in April 2011 called for an immediate injection of funds for professional expertise to: i) help the staff to rebuild trust, collegiality and good inter-personal relationships; and ii) to find modalities for improving effective communication between the various stakeholders.

CHAPTER 10

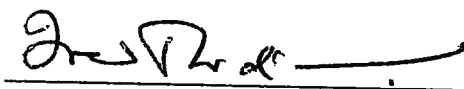
SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Number	Recommendations	Chapter
1)	The <i>Education Regulations</i> and the <i>Public Service Code of Conduct</i> should be appropriately amended to ensure that any public criticism of teachers or their work by a Principal is expressly forbidden by law. In the interim, a Ministry of Education Circular to this effect should be issued to the Principals of all public educational institutions.	3.52
2)	A review of the <i>Education Act</i> and its Regulations should be undertaken under the auspices of the Ministry of Education to identify and address any areas of ambiguity or uncertainty which could give rise to conflict;	4.60
3)	Consideration should also be given to the strategic re-organization of the Ministry of Education and the refocusing of its staff with the aim of ensuring that the Ministry operates proactively and is more responsive to the issues faced by the Boards of Management, the Principal and the staff and other stakeholders of every public secondary school. Members of the Ministry's senior staff should also be trained in alternative dispute resolution.	4.60
4)	The <i>Education Regulations</i> should be amended to make it mandatory for both the Principal and the Deputy Principal to attend all Board of Management meetings.	4.60
5)	The Ministry of Education should take urgent action to ensure the implementation by the Board of Management of the Alexandra School (and of any other school where Special Fund Accounts are operated) of the six recommendations issued by the Auditor General in his Review Report of 2006-09-05.	4.60

Number	Recommendations	Chapter
6)	The interplay between regulations 5(a) and (b) and regulations 17(a) and 44(5) and the areas of responsibility allocated to the Board and the Principal respectively should be clarified by way of an amendment to the Regulations.	5.5
7)	The requirement for consultation between the Principal and Heads of Department should be more clearly expressed by an appropriate amendment to the Regulations.	5.6
8)	As harmonious relations cannot now be restored, it is not in the best interests of the Alexandra School that the current Principal should be permitted to remain in place at the school as its Principal.	9.9
9)	Immediate steps should be taken to invoke the provisions of section 5.5 of the General Orders of the Public Service to place the Principal on a leave of absence from the school in the public interest while more permanent arrangements are negotiated for his re-assignment elsewhere in the Public Service, or alternatively, for his compulsory retirement from the public service;	9.9
10)	At a convenient time in the near future, the Deputy Principal be transferred from her post at the Alexandra School to a similar post at another school.	9.14
11)	Mrs. Greaves should be given a written reprimand. However, in view of her position as a public officer, this issue of her not teaching is a matter for investigation and determination by the Public Service Commission.	9.22

Number	Recommendations	Chapter
12)	The Commission recommends that the Ministry of Education and the Board of Management should take steps to terminate the appointment of Mr. Roger Broomes..	9.26
13)	Consideration should be given to transferring Mrs. Vernell Woods and/or Ms. Abena Williams to other public secondary schools in the teaching service at a convenient time in the near future.	9.32
14	It is in the best interest of the school that Mr. Bryan be transferred from Alexandra School.	9.35
15)	It is recommended that the Ministry of Education take urgent steps to implement recommendations 3 and 4 of the Inspection Report which in April 2011 called for an immediate injection of funds for professional expertise to: i) help the staff to rebuild trust, collegiality and good interpersonal relationships; and ii) to find modalities for improving effective communication between the various stakeholders at the school.	9.36

DATED the 21st day of September , 2012



Frederick L. A. Waterman, CHB, QC
Commissioner

APPENDIX 1
RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ALEXANDRA SCHOOL
INSPECTION REPORT 2010

1. There is an urgent need to find some mechanism and strategies to heal the rifts that are militating against the continued development of the school. All the data collected show divisions between the Principal and some members of the administrative team; between the Principal and some members of the teaching staff and the students, and among the teachers themselves. The differences seem to exist even between some members of the office staff and the Principal.

2. In the present atmosphere at the school, where the various divisions have taken seemingly immovable positions, it is difficult to see how there could be professional co-existence. For the benefit of the continued progress of the school, this situation should not be allowed to continue.

3. The problems at the Alexandra School are real and the need for corrective action is imperative. Corrective action should include an immediate injection of funds for professional expertise in helping staff to rebuild trust and collegiality among themselves, so that this can be filtered down to the students.

4. Communication and interpersonal relationships need urgent attention. Lack of effective communication at all levels of the school has led to misunderstanding and mistrust. The various stakeholders need to be persuaded that continued ineffective communication, failed strategies of management and administration must be replaced for the good of the school.
5. Perhaps the most devastating result of the rifts and miscommunication is the effect that these have on students' perceptions, and eventually the teaching/ learning activities. Strategies need to be developed to, as far as possible, insulate the students from the differences that exist between the various sectors of the school's management and teaching staff, and other staff. It seems unwise for any teacher or management team member to discuss the perceived problems in the school with students.
6. There is a need to rationalize the roles and functioning of the Board of Management staff and the other areas of administration of the school. The apparent level of vagueness that not exists should be handled carefully but quickly.
7. The school has a well documented history of high achievement at all levels and in many different spheres. The results at CXC examinations are excellent, especially in the last few years, the achievement in sports and aspects of culture are also noteworthy. The school boasts of its input into the development of cricketers like Kemar Roach and others. All these must be maintained and further enhanced in the years to come.

8. Some well tested mechanisms for developing problem solving skills should be designed and implemented. The expertise and experience of the Principal and other members of staff could be used for such activities.
9. Courses in educational management should be planned and delivered to the administrative team as well as some members of the teaching staff. Clearly, some of the comments made during the inspection from some members of the management and teaching staff, show insufficient knowledge and skills in effective management.
10. There should be official minutes of all meetings of staff, Head of Department, and Year Heads. These minutes are especially critical for keeping a check on what is decided, who should follow up on what, and so on. The draft minutes should be circulated to all concerned before the next meeting, allowing adequate time for their perusal. The minutes should be subjected to confirmation, and there should be discussion on matters arising etc. to form part of the permanent record of proceedings. The item Any Other Business (AOB) should be part of the agenda, to facilitate the inclusion of ideas from all those present at the meeting, and to allow for more staff involvement. This recommendation should help to minimize misinterpretations and misunderstandings.
11. There are aspects of the school's functioning (e.g. the number of curriculum initiatives as such as RLO which need to be evaluated) revealed in this inspection which should be studied in more depth to facilitate improvement in this and other schools.

APPENDIX 2
LIST OF WITNESSES

<u>Name</u>	<u>Status/ Interest</u>	<u>Date of Evidence</u>
Guildford Alleyne	Former Permanent Secretary (Ag.)	July 2, 2012
Laurie King	Chief Education Officer	July 3 & 4, 2012
Gail Atkins	Chief Personnel Officer	July 4 & 5, 2012
Evelyn Humphrey	Permanent Secretary	July 5, 2012
Carl Benskin	President, Parents Teachers Association	July 9, 2012
Stephanie Charles- Soverall	Principal Personnel Officer	July 9, 2012
Betty-Ann Williams	Principal's Secretary (retired)	July 10, 2012
June Yearwood	Secretary Treasurer (retired)	July 10, 2012
Vaneisha Cadogan	Senior Education Officer	July 11, 2012
Keith Simmons	Chairman, the Alexandra School Board	July 11, 12 & 13, 2012
Velma Newton	Chairman, the Alexandra School Board, (resigned)	July 17, 2012
Julian Hunte	Member, the Alexandra School Board	July 18, 2012
Cyrlene Willoughby	Guidance Counsellor,	July 18, 2012
Sophia Ifill	Special Grade Teacher (Physical Education)	July 23, 2012
Leslie Lett	Teacher, Head of English Department	July 25, 2012
Margo Clarke	Retired Teacher, Head of English Department	July 25 & 26, 2012
Amaida Greaves	Teacher, Head of Science Department	July 27, 28, 29 & 30, 2012
Vernell Woods	Teacher	July 30 & 31, 2012
Dwayne Bryan	Teacher	August 2, 2012

Mario Lashley	Teacher	August 2 & 3, 2012
Greg Ford	Former Part-time Teacher	August 3, 2012
Abena Williams	Teacher	August 7, 2012
Renate Odwin	Teacher	August 8, 2012
Adrian Allman	Teacher	August 8, 2012
Roger Broomes	Teacher, Physical Education	August 8 & 9, 2012
Carl Padmore	Former Part – time Teacher	August 9, 2012
Beverley Neblett- Lashley	Deputy Principal	August 10, 13 & 14, 2012
Merlise Sealy	Principal's Secretary (retired)	August 13, 2012
Patrick Frost	Advisor, Barbados Secondary Teachers' Union	August 14, 15 & 16, 2012
Mary-Ann Redman	President, Barbados Secondary Teachers' Union	August 16 & 17, 2012
Joan Williams	Past Chairman, the Alexandra School Board	August 17 & 20, 2012
Gail Streat-Jules	Teacher, Head of Fine Arts Department	August 20, 2012
Jeffrey Broomes	Principal, the Alexandra School	August 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, & 27, 2012
Robert Grimes	Porter/Messenger, Alexandra School	August 24, 2012

**LIST OF WITNESSES WHO GAVE EVIDENCE FOR PURPOSE OF REBUTTING
PROVISIONAL FINDINGS OF MISCONDUCT**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Status/ Interest</u>	<u>Date of Evidence</u>
Leroy Browne	Parent	24 August, 2012-09-10
Beverley Neblett-Lashley	Deputy Principal	24 August, 2012-09-10
Merlise Sealy	Retired Secretary to the Principal	24 August, 2012-09-10
Jeffrey Broomes	Principal	24 th to 27 th August, 2012

**LIST OF WITNESSES WHO GAVE WRITTEN
STATEMENTS BUT NOT ORAL EVIDENCE**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Status/Interest</u>	<u>Date Statement Received</u>
Sherla Cummins	Executive Officer (Feb 01 /1997 – Current) Alexandra School	29 June, 2012
Phil Perry	Retired Teacher (1984 – 2003) Alexandra School	3 July, 2012
Wendy Griffith-Watson	Retired Chief Education Officer, Ministry of Education and Human Resource Dev.	4 July, 2012
Atheline Haynes	Retired Permanent Secretary Ministry of Education and Human Resource Dev.	4 July, 2012
Anthony C. Layne	Retired Permanent Secretary Ministry of Education and Human Resource Dev.	4 July, 2012
Evelyn McClean	Music Teacher – Special Grade Alexandra School	9 July, 2012

Antoinette Jemmott	Teacher, Alexandra School	10 July, 2012
Gillian Perry	Library Assistant Alexandra School	10 July, 2012
Nzimgha Nyhathu	Teacher, Alexandra School	11 July, 2012
Mia Sealy-Howell	Teacher, Alexandra School	11 July, 2012
Stasia Boyce	Secretary/Treasurer (Ag.) Alexandra School	16 July, 2012
Suzanne Lovell	Senior Teacher-Year Head Alexandra School	16 July, 2012
Joy-Ann Nurse	Teacher, Alexandra School	16 July, 2012
Jerry Hall	Teacher –Woodwork & Tech Drawing, Alexandra School	18 July, 2012
Debra E. Springer	Head of Dept. Home Economics Alexandra School	20 July, 2012
Alanda Sandiford	Head of Foreign Languages Alexandra School	24 July, 2012
Celina Roach	Former Teacher (Sep 04-Aug 06)	2 August, 2012
Rosemary Yearwood	Parent	2 August, 2012
Rudolph Yearwood	Parent	2 August, 2012
Joy Adamson	Deputy Chief Education Officer (Ag.) Ministry of Education and Human Resource Dev.	13 August, 2012
Betty (Ann) Williams	Retired Secretary to Principal Additional Statement Alexandra School	17 August, 2012
Margo Clarke	Retired teacher Additional Statement Alexandra School	17 August, 2012
Hallam H. King	Retired Principal of Coleridge and Parry School	21 August, 2012
Rasheed Sandiford	Clerical Officer	22 August 2012

	Ministry of Education and Human Resource Dev.	
Rhylicia Grant	Clerical Officer Ministry of Education and Human Resource Dev.	22 August, 2012
Aletha Mayers	Executive Secretary Ministry of Education and Human Resource Dev.	22 August, 2012
Julia Boyce	Secretary Alexandra School	22 August, 2012
Neville Cato	Night Watchman Alexandra School	22 August, 2012
Rudolph Maynard	Security Guard Alexandra School	22 August, 2012
Gillian Bowen	Clerical Officer Ministry of Education and Human Resource Dev.	22 August, 2012
Orlando Brathwaite	Clerical Officer Ministry of Education and Human Resource Dev.	22 August, 2012
Marlene Thomas	Secretary Ministry of Education and Human Resource Dev.	22 August, 2012
Erwin Greaves	Deputy Chief Education Officer (Planning & Development) Ministry of Education and Human Resource Dev.	22 August, 2012
William Phillips	Artisan Ministry of Education and Human Resource Dev.	22 August, 2012
Necole Johnson	Clerk/typist Alexandra School	22 August, 2012
Carolson Hope	Groundsman Alexandra School	22 August, 2012
Geoffrey Cumberbatch	Groundsman Alexandra School	22 August, 2012

Julian Bowen	Former P/T teacher Alexandra School	23 August, 2012
Ryan G. Clarke	Former teacher Alexandra School	23 August, 2012
Victor S. Johnson	Retired Senior teacher Alexandra School	23 August, 2012

APPENDIX 3

Commission's Misconduct Notice to Jeff Broomes

16th August, 2012

*Mr. Jeffrey Broomes
The Principal
The Alexander School
Queen Street
Speighstown
St. Peter*

*The Commission of Inquiry into the Administration of the Alexandra School
Pursuant to provisions of the Commission of Inquiry Act Cap 112 of the Laws of
Barbados*

*Whereas allegations have been made that you Mr. Jeffrey Broomes as Principal
of Alexandra School falsely produced or caused to be produced as academic
transcript of a student of the Alexandra School in the following manner;*

*a) Recording that the said xxxxxxxxxx attended the Alexandra School for the
period of 1998 to 2002 when the said xxxxxxxxxx was not a student for that said
period but attended Combermere School.*

*b) Producing or causing to be produced an academic transcript for the said
xxxxxxx recording grades that the said xxxxxxxxxx did not obtain at the
Alexandra School.*

*c) Further it is alleged that you, Jeffrey Broomes knowingly kept or caused to be
kept in the records of the Alexandra School, a transcript of the said xxxxxxxxxx,
which said transcript was false.*

*And whereas it appears to the Commission that the above are allegations of
misconduct which have been made against you, Mr. Jeffrey Broomes in the
discharge of your duties as Principal of the Alexandra School, The Commission
pursuant to Section 23(1) of the Commission of Inquiry Act 112 of the Laws of
Barbados hereby gives you, Mr. Jeffrey Broomes that you are entitled to
contest the allegations by calling evidence in rebuttal of the said allegations or
by cross-examining any witness or by any other means.*

*Hon. Frederick Waterman QC
Commissioner*

APPENDIX 4

Letter of Response to Commission's Misconduct Notice to Jeff Broomes

20th August, 2012

*The Honourable Frederick Waterman, CHB QC
Commissioner
The Commission of Enquiry
The Administration of the Commission of Enquiry Act
Cap. 112 of the Laws of Barbados
Prime Minister's Office
Government Headquarters
Bay Street
St. Michael*

Dear Sir,

As Counsel on record at the Enquiry into the Administration of the Alexandra School acting in association with Mr. Cecil McCarthy, Q.C. for and on behalf of Mr. Jeffrey Broomes, the Principal of Alexandria School, who has forwarded to us the letter dated the 16th August, 2012 written by your honourable self, we note the suggested allegations of wrong doing.

I must express my surprise that you should write such a letter to our client without copying the same to his counsel on record.

I wish to draw to your attention that the suggested allegations in relation to our client in your said letter have not been substantiated in the transcripts of evidence adduced up to now before the commission on the following grounds:

(a) The transcript admitted in evidence of the principal's Secretary, Mrs. Sealy, does not represent or conform with the written instructions given to her by the Principal.

(b) The same transcript dated the 3rd April did not exist before the preparation of the statement of Mrs. Neblett-Lashley dated 3rd August, 2012 and submitted to the Commission of Enquiry.