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**MESSAGE FROM  
THE HONOURABLE ANDREW HOLNESS  
MINISTER OF EDUCATION**

I take this opportunity to commend the National Council on Education on the completion of another year of support to the education system. The Council plays a critical role in providing policy advice on educational issues as well as the appointment of members of school boards.

The appointment of school boards is of particular importance in light of the direct relationship between effective school governance and student outcomes. Research has shown that students are well served and their learning enhanced by the provision of responsive and effective governance in schools. Schools operate in very dynamic external environments in which constituents compete with varied interests and value systems. An effective educational governance system must mediate among these competing demands in order to translate them into priorities, with supporting strategies, for the achievement of educational goals. Such a system functions best in an organizational setting which is stable, well-coordinated, coherent and cohesive. This is critical to ensure flexibility and responsiveness to the changing demands of the global environment. As the management of the education system becomes more complex, critical decision-making is required to improve the performance of schools.

The appointment of school boards therefore, must be approached in a pragmatic and developmental way, consistent with the thrust toward increased autonomy and accountability. We must work assiduously to raise the profile of school boards and promote voluntarism in this area as a worthwhile civic exercise. The quest to increase the participation of private and community interests in the education sector must also be aggressively pursued, as we seek to develop a sense of shared responsibility and stewardship for educational institutions among community members.

Honourable Andrew Holness  
Minister of Education



## **MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN**

### **MR. RUEL REID**

I am pleased to present to you the Council's Annual Report for the period 2008-2009. The Council was established in 1993 to promote consensus in educational policies to facilitate a more coherent and consistent system of education. Over the years, the Council has played a critical role in informing the education process. It has been the catalyst for the development of the comprehensive "Task Force on Educational Reform, Report, 2004". The future of the country's education system rests on the implementation of this report which defines minimum targets up to the year 2015. I would like to commend the former Chairmen of the Council, for the work done over the years and for building an organizational framework in which the present Council can effectively operate.

As Chairman of the new Council, which was duly appointed in 2008, I would like to continue along this path of educational development with a more aggressive and focused approach. This becomes even more important as we recognize the central role of education to our hope of a brighter future and the development of a society that invests in the creative potential of each citizen.

The Council should not only be a repository of ideas and information but also a conduit of these ideas to support the improvement of learners in Jamaica. Our strategic focus therefore, must be engendering greater national participation in the education process. National participation can only be achieved through increased awareness of the role and functions of the Council as well as the role of education as an agent of change. Emerging issues in the education system should be debated to generate consensus for workable solutions. The Council, through its work, must facilitate a meeting of minds on educational issues to be better able to inform the public policy process and support the effective management of our educational institutions.

The year 2009-2010 will no doubt present challenges, however with the guidance of the Council and the continued support of the Secretariat we are determined to achieve our objectives. We are thoroughly motivated and committed as we look forward to another year of rigorous work and success.

Ruel Reid  
Chairman



## **REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (ACTING)**

**MS. PAULINE MULLINGS**

The year 2008/2009 was as interesting as it was challenging. It was during this period that a new Council was appointed. This new Council, led by Mr. Ruel Reid, was charged by the newly appointed Minister of Education to provide ‘the best policy advice possible’. Assisted by a Secretariat, operating within a flat organizational architecture, the Council began immediately to focus on charting a new strategic direction.

A major achievement was the presentation by the Chairman to Parliament in 2008. This was in response to a request for the Council to consider amendments of the Education Act and all Regulations and Codes, bearing in mind a number of issues inclusive of the necessary remedial programmes to prevent underperformance and the role of Boards in setting standards in the education system.

Another major milestone was the hosting of the Council’s Retreat in August 2008. The purpose of this retreat was to assist with the refinement of Council’s strategic direction to ensure that the agency remains responsive and relevant to current and emerging issues in the educational landscape. A significant outcome of the retreat was the development of a vision and a revised mission statement.

In December 2008, the Council hosted an awards ceremony in recognition of the contribution of the 14 member Task Force on Educational Reform, 2004, and other major contributors. The function, which received extensive press coverage, also sensitized the general public of the role of the National Council on Education.

The Council continued the production of its flagship document; *“Performance of the Jamaica Students in the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC)”*. The publication, although available in soft copy only, continued to heighten public awareness, interest and discussion on the performance of our students in the CSEC examinations at the

grade eleven level of the Education System. The data from this report continue to demonstrate the urgent need for the overhauling of the system. Another publication, “*Star Performers - Performance of Jamaican Students in the Grade Four Literacy Test*”, was also produced and well-received by the general public. In terms of Policy Research, the Council prepared and presented, to the Honourable Minister of Education, a position paper on the “*Re-introduction of Compulsory Education*”. In the execution of its core function to design and implement training programmes for School Board Members, the Council hosted six workshops in Region III.

I would like to extend sincere appreciation to the Chairman, members of the Council and the dedicated staff of the Secretariat for their overwhelming support during the year 2008/2009. I also look forward to forging new partnerships and establishing synergistic relationships in an effort to improve school governance and ultimately the quality of educational services in our country.

**Pauline Mullings**

**Executive Director (Acting)**

## **OVERVIEW OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON EDUCATION**

The National Council on Education (NCE) was established by an Act of Parliament in March 1993. It is a statutory body responsible to the Ministry of Education (MoE).

The establishment of the NCE was born out of the need to have a non-partisan, national and strategically placed organization that would 'address a wide range of issues impacting the education process'. This attempts to ensure continuity in educational policy development. It is also intended to contribute to greater community involvement in the management of educational institutions.

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

Our mission is to promote consensus in educational policies in support of the nation's pursuit of a coherent and consistent system of education.

### **PRIMARY FUNCTIONS OF THE COUNCIL**

- Advising the Minister on policy matters relating to education in Jamaica
- Nominating candidates for appointment to Boards of Management of public educational institutions
- Assisting in the preparation of plans and programmes for developing and maintaining an effective and efficient educational system
- Monitoring and evaluating the implementation of these programmes and making appropriate recommendations to the Minister
- Stimulating the development of education in Jamaica
- Managing the National Education Trust Fund

## COUNCIL MEMBERS AND NOMINATING ORGANIZATIONS 2008-2010

**Mr. Ruel Reid** – Chairman  
Governor General's Nominee

**Mr. Robert Gregory** – Vice Chairman  
Governor General's Nominee

**Ex Officio Member, MoE**  
**Permanent Secretaries**

**Mrs. Maria Jones (Up to May 2008)**  
**Ms. Barbara Allen Actg. (May – October 2008)**  
**Mrs. Audrey Sewell (November 2008 onwards)**

**Mr. Sylvester Anderson**  
National Parent Teachers Association

**Mrs. Marie Berbick-Graham**  
Press Association of Jamaica

**Mr. Hugh Blackwood**  
Jamaica Agricultural Society

**Dr. The Hon. Rae A. Davis**  
Governor General's Nominee

**Prof. Hyacinth Evans**  
Governor General's Nominee

**Mr. Byron Farquharson**  
Jamaica Teachers' Association

**Dr. Carolyn Hayle**  
Government Representative

**Mrs. Marie Hitchins**  
Private Sector Organisation of Jamaica

**Prof. Zellynne Jennings-Craig**  
University of the West Indies

**Dr. Dahlia Repole**  
Jamaica Council of Churches

**Mr. Everton Jones**  
Educator

**Miss Kemesha Kelly**  
National Secondary Students' Council

**Prof. Maureen Samms -Vaughan**  
Governor General's Nominee

**Dr. Grace-Camille Munroe**  
Governor General's Nominee

**Ms. Marva A. Phillips**  
Ja. Confederation of Trade Unions

**Dr. Dorothy Raymond**  
Jamaica Teachers' Association

**Reverend Philip Robinson**  
Jamaica Council of Churches

**Ms. Prunella Vassell**  
Institute of Chartered Accountants of Ja.

**Mrs. Desrene Williams-Taylor**  
Opposition Party Representative

**Dr. Don Wilson**  
Educator

### Secretariat

Ms. Pauline Mullings  
Executive Director (Acting)

## **MEMBERS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES 2008-2010**

### **POLICY & PLANNING**

Dr. The Hon. Rae A. Davis–Chairman	Prof. Zellynne Jennings-Craig
Mr. Sylvester Anderson	Miss Kemesha Kelly
Prof. Hyacinth Evans	Dr. Grace-Camille Munroe
Dr. Carolyn Hayle	Dr. Dahlia Repole
Mrs. Marie Hitchins	Prof. Maureen Samms-Vaughan

### **SCHOOL GOVERNANCE AND PUBLIC RELATIONS**

Mr. Hugh Blackwood – Chairman	Dr. Dorothy Raymond
Mrs. Marie Berbick-Graham	Reverend Philip Robinson
Mr. Byron Farquharson	Ms. Prunella Vassell
Miss Kemesha Kelly	Mrs. Desrene Williams-Taylor
Ms. Marva A. Phillips	Dr. Don Wilson

### **FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION**

Mr. Robert Gregory – Chairman	Dr. Dorothy Raymond
Mrs. Marie Hitchins	Ms. Prunella Vassell
Mr. Everton Jones	

## ***CORPORATE ACTIVITIES OF COUNCIL 2008 - 2009***

### ***PRESENTATIONS TO COUNCIL***

An important aspect of the Council's programme is collaborating with external partners with a view to sharing information on emerging issues within the Education Sector. This information is critical to inform policy development as well as to assist in identifying workable solutions to educational issues. In this regard the Council invited presenters to its general meetings held every other month. Summarized below are some of the major presentations made during the period 2008-2009.

#### **PRESENTATION 1: VISION 2030, NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

**DATE: TUESDAY, JULY 22, 2008**

Mr. Steven Kerr, Manager, Human Resource Development Unit, Planning Institute of Jamaica presented on the Vision 2030 National Development Plan. Mr. Kerr's presentation highlighted the following two components of the Plan;

- Education Development Sector Plan
- Training & Workforce Development Sector Plan

He outlined that one of the objectives of the Education Development Sector plan is to train graduates to become critical and reflective thinkers who are informed and could be creative in using information at their disposal. He stated that the ideal graduate, according to one of the recommendations from the Task Force on Educational Reform (2004), is the "Educated Jamaica". He added that if the education system could produce this kind of graduate, then it would be easier to get the wider society to embrace the VISION.

## **PRESENTATION 2: REVISION OF THE EDUCATION REGULATION 1980**

**DATE: TUESDAY, MARCH 24, 2009**

Ms. Haydee Gordon, Legal Consultant, Ministry of Education, informed that the Task Force on Educational Reform Report, (2004), had put forward some recommendations which would require extensive amendments to the Education Act and its Regulations. Ms. Gordon informed that some of the recommendations of the Report may require legislations while others could be included in the revised Regulations. A new thematic approach to the amendment of the Regulations would be pursued in order to expedite the process. This would facilitate the separation of contentious and non-contentious issues.

The four thematic areas include;

1. School Security and Safety;
2. Terms and Conditions of employment of Teachers, including performance management and accountability framework;
3. Improving governance and accountability of Boards of Management;
4. Financial Regulations.

To date the following have been achieved with respect to school security and safety –

1. Review of the proposed amendments to the Regulations on school security and safety completed.
2. Executive Management of Ministry sensitized about proposed reforms.
3. Policy guidelines on Security and Safety completed and disseminated to schools for feedback.
4. Policy and Legal Work Stream established with the assistance of UNICEF to complete reform process.

## ***CORPORATE ACTIVITIES OF COUNCIL 2008 - 2009***

### ***SPECIAL EVENT – TASK FORCE AWARDS FUNCTION***

The National Council on Education, in keeping with its mandate to recognize and reward individuals for outstanding service in the field of education in Jamaica, hosted an Awards Dinner under the theme, “*In Pursuit of a Coherent and Consistent System of Education*”. The Dinner was held to show appreciation to the Members of the Task Force for their contribution to development of the comprehensive report entitled “*Task Force on Educational Reform, Jamaica - A Transformed Education System, (2004)*”. The Report was commissioned in February 2004, by the then Prime Minister, The Most Honourable P.J. Patterson. A 14 member Task Force was appointed to prepare and present an action plan consistent with the vision to create a world-class education system. This system is intended to generate human capital with the requisite skills necessary to compete effectively in the global economy.

The document included the following:

- Background on the State of Education in Jamaica
- Key Issues Affecting the Realization of the Vision for Education and Recommendations to Address these Issues
- Contextual Framework for Transforming Education
- Performance Targets for 2015
- Short, Medium and Long Term Action Plans
- The Financial Investment Required to Implement the Recommendations and to Achieve the Vision.

## **EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION, CARE AND DEVELOPMENT SECTOR REPORT**

In response to several calls for a Report on the Early Childhood Sector, the Prime Minister also commissioned the Task Force to prepare and present a Report on the Early Childhood Sector. *The Early Childhood Education, Care and Development Sector Report* was prepared and presented to The Most Honourable P.J. Patterson in March, 2005.

### **MEMBERS OF THE TASK FORCE**

The Task Force, headed by Chairman, Dr. The Honourable Rae A. Davis consisted of the following members:

- (i) Dr. Nigel Clarke
- (ii) Mr. Eric Crawford
- (iii) Mrs. Elaine Foster-Allen
- (iv) Mr. Wentworth Gabbidon
- (v) Mr. Lloyd Goodleigh C.D.
- (vi) Mr. Donald Hall
- (vii) Mrs. Pamela Harrison O.D.
- (viii) Mrs. Marie Hitchins
- (ix) Reverend Franklyn Jackson
- (x) Dr. Dennis Minott
- (xi) Mr. Junior Rose
- (xii) Mrs. Joan Spencer-Ernandez
- (xiii) Ms. Joan Tucker

The Awards Dinner was held on Wednesday, December 3, 2008 at the Mona Visitors' Lodge, University of the West Indies. Mr. Frank Weeple, Executive Director, Education Transformation Team (ETT) delivered the Keynote Address. Mrs. Audrey Sewell, Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Education and Senator Basil Waite, Opposition Spokesman on Education addressed the function. Mr. Ruel Reid, Chairman of Council provided an overview of the Council as well as the importance of the work of the Task

Force. Also in attendance was Senator Dwight Nelson, Minister without portfolio of the Ministry of Finance and Public Service. Mr. Anthony Young, from KLAS FM Radio was Master of Ceremonies.

### **SPECIAL AWARDEES**

The NCE also honoured individuals/organizations who played a significant role in the preparation of the Report but who were not members of the Committee. The Special Awardees include:

- (i) Mrs. Maxine Henry Wilson M.P.
- (ii) Dr. Omar Davies M.P.
- (iii) The Most Honourable Edward Seaga O.N., P.C.
- (iv) Mrs. Marguerite Bowie C.D.
- (v) Mrs. Ruth Morris
- (vi) HEART Trust/NTA

The awardees each received a plaque while the “Special Awardees” received an Acrylic Torch.



**Awardees**

**Seated Left to right: Mrs. Ruth Morris, Mrs. Elaine Foster-Allen, Ms. Joan Tucker, Mrs. Joan Spencer-Ernandez, Mrs. Marguerite Bowie, Mrs. Maxine Henry Wilson**

**Standing: Left to right: Mr. Eric Crawford, Mr. Lloyd Goodleigh, Reverend Franklyn Jackson, Mrs. Paulette Dunn-Smith and Mr. Junior Rose**

**Absent from Picture:**

Dr. Nigel Clarke, Mr. Wentworth Gabbidon, Mr. Donald Hall, Mrs. Pamela Harrison, Mrs. Marie Hitchins, Dr. Dennis Minott, Dr. Omar Davies and The Most Honourable Edward Seaga.



Senator Dwight Nelson, Minister without Portfolio, MFPS, Senator Basil Waite, Opposition Spokesman on Education, Mr. Justine Peirre, Managing Director, Caribbean TVET Consultants Ltd.

## **MEDIA COVERAGE**

The function received extensive coverage from the media. The Chairman, the Executive Director (Acting) and other members of Council were interviewed by the media before, during and after the event. This provided the Council with the opportunity to sensitize the general public about its role and functions.

### **Pre-Media Coverage**

NCE's Chairman, Mr. Ruel Reid, and Council Member, Ms. Grace-Camille Munroe facilitated an Interview on Tuesday, December 2, 2008 on Hot 102's Drive Time Live.

### **Media Coverage During the Event**

NewsTalk FM provided on going coverage of the event and conducted interviews with Mr. Ruel Reid, Chairman, Ms. Pauline Mullings, Acting Executive Director and an Awardee. Cable News and Sports also provided a Live Broadcast of the event.



**Mr. Reid, Chairman, NCE, being interviewed by NewsTalk media host,  
Ms. Anne Shirley**

### **Post Publicity**

The following media houses reported on the function:

- (i) RJR Communications Group – Thursday December 4, 2008.
- (ii) The Jamaica Observer - Friday December 5, 2008.
- (iii) The Jamaica Information Service – Friday December 5.
- (iv) Sunday Herald – Sunday, December 8, 2008.
- (v) Television Jamaica – Sunday December 8, 2008.

## ***COUNCIL'S RETREAT***

The NCE hosted a one day Retreat under the theme 'In Pursuit of a Coherent and Consistent System of Education' on Saturday, August 23, 2008 at the Hilton Kingston Hotel.

The Objectives of the Retreat were to:

1. Refine the Council's strategic direction and focus to ensure that it remains responsive and relevant to current and emerging issues in the Education sector in Jamaica.
2. Finalize the action plan that would guide the organization for entire the tenure of the newly appointed Board.
3. Build the awareness and capacity of Council to provide strategic leadership to the management of the Secretariat.

A report was prepared outlining issues, concerns and recommendations for improving the capacity of the Board. The decisions taken which would inform the Corporate and Action Plans for the period 2009/2010 were also highlighted.

## ***CORPORATE ACTIVITIES OF COUNCIL 2008 - 2009***

### **School Governance and Public Relations Department**

#### **Cyclical Appointment Of School Boards By Regions**

##### **Region 3 (Western and Central St. Mary, St. Ann and Trelawny)**

Of the 151 Schools in Region 3, 147 or 97 percent of the Boards were appointed. The Boards were appointed to serve for the period January 1, 2008 – December 31, 2010.

##### **Region 6 (Clarendon and St. Catherine)**

Of the 230 schools in Region 6, 215 or 93 percent of the Boards were appointed. The Boards were appointed to serve for the period April 1, 2008 – March 31, 2011.

##### **Region 1 (Kingston and St. Andrew and Western St. Thomas)**

Of the 180 schools in Region 1, 79 or 43 percent of Boards were appointed. The Boards were appointed to serve for the period January 1, 2009 – December 31, 2011.

The School Boards are appointed on a cyclical basis as indicated in table 1 below.

**Table 1** **Schedule of Cyclical Appointments by Regions**

#### ***BLOCK A***

<b>REGIONS</b>	<b>PARISHES</b>	<b>TENURE OF BOARD</b>
<b>1</b>	Kingston, St. Andrew and Western St. Thomas	January 1, 2006 to December 31, 2008
<b>2</b>	Eastern St. Thomas, Portland, Eastern and South Eastern St. Mary	April 1, 2006 to March 31, 2009

#### ***BLOCK B***

<b>4</b>	St. James, Hanover and Westmoreland	January 1, 2007 to December 31, 2009
<b>5</b>	St. Elizabeth and Manchester	April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2010

***BLOCK C***

<b>3</b>	Western and Central St. Mary, St. Ann and Trelawny	January 1, 2008 to December 31, 2010
<b>6</b>	Clarendon and St. Catherine	April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2011

**SCHOOL BOARD TRAINING**

**Region 3**

NCE conducted six (6) workshops for Chairmen and Members of School Boards in Region 3, comprising Western and Central St. Mary, St. Ann and Trelawny. Four Hundred and Thirty-Two Board members from 147 schools in the region participated.

Board members were trained in the following areas:

- Modernization of the Ministry of Education
- School Governance Machinery
- Roles and Responsibilities of Boards of management (Primary, All Age, Primary & Junior High and Infant Schools)
- Legal Framework of the Public Educational System in Jamaica (High Schools)
- Managing School Finances
- Synergistic Decision-making

**Directory of School Boards**

A directory of school boards was updated with the newly appointed Boards of Management in Regions 3 and 6.

## **POLICY AND PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

### **PRESENTATION TO PARLIAMENT**

The Policy and Planning Committee researched and prepared a document on Social Promotion of Students in the Education System. This report was presented by the Chairman, Mr. Ruel Reid, to Parliament on Wednesday, July 30, 2008. The report was prepared in response to a request to consider the amendment of the Education Act and all Regulations and Codes to ensure:

- that promotion is based on mastery at each grade level is practiced as a normative standard in the public school system.
- that the necessary remedial programmes and supervised assistance are in place to provide opportunities to remedy and prevent underperformance; and
- that the role of boards in setting standards in the education system are clearly defined.

### **HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PRESENTATION**

The presentation recommended inter alia the following strategies:

- (i) Individualized instruction tailored to the learning style of the student.
- (ii) Smaller class size in order to improve learning especially in the primary years.
- (iii) Seeking alternative educational settings which may include summer school or after school programmes which are learning laboratories with hands-on techniques to support effective learning.
- (iv) Provision of consistent guidance counseling support for at-risk students to promote student success.
- (v) Delaying high-stake achievement tests which although are important in identifying weaknesses in the school curriculum and possible areas where the child needs assistance are often taken out of context of other information and used as the deciding factor for grade placement.

- (vi) Early literacy development and effective intervention are critical to prevent student failure.
- (vii) Increasing the participation of parents in their children's education is critical to success.
- (viii) Extending teaching-learning time can significantly help/prepare students academically and developmentally to move to the next grade level.
- (ix) Improving the capacity and competence of school boards to effectively manage the school's resources and create a student-centred environment.

## **Conclusion**

It is the Council's recommendation that the successful implementation of these strategies, with a focus on building the school-community's capacity to effectively manage themselves and meet the needs of their students, will contribute to the transformation of the education system that is now underway. The end result is the development of a well-rounded student highly equipped for nation building.

## ***CORPORATE ACTIVITIES OF COUNCIL 2008 - 2009***

### ***CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE***



#### **Performance of Jamaican Students In the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (C.S.E.C.) 2008**



The National Council on Education in carrying out its mandate to monitor educational plans and programmes, continued to track the performance of several critical minimum targets as enunciated by the Ministry of Education in its White Paper “Education: The Way Upward”.

One of the major emphases for some time has been the monitoring of student performance in the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC). This exercise, to date, has resulted in the publication of eight editions of “The Performance of Jamaican Students in the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (C.S.E.C.)”.

The publications provide data on student performance in the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) at the General Proficiency Level by individual schools in the following four subject areas and twenty subjects:

- (1) **Arts & Humanities:** English Language, English Literature, Spanish, Caribbean History, Social Studies
- (2) **Mathematics**
- (3) **Sciences:** Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Geography
- (4) **Technical and Vocational Education:** Principles of Accounts, Principles of Business, Office Administration, Information Technology, Electrical Technology, Building Technology, Mechanical Technology, Technical Drawing, Food and Nutrition and Visual Arts.

The publications have been well-received by stakeholders inclusive of policy makers, researchers, school administrators, teachers and parents. Many of these stakeholders have sought to use the data to prepare analyses for their specific purposes. Various reports in the media have been presented for public viewing as a result of the availability of this publication by the Council.

## **REVIEW OF THE COMPETENCE-BASED TRANSITION FROM THE PRIMARY TO THE SECONDARY LEVEL DOCUMENT**

Mrs. Ruth Morris, Senior Director, Human Resource Modernization Division shared with the members of the Policy and Planning Committee details of the document on “The Review of the Competence-Based Transition from the Primary to the Secondary Level”. This document sought to address the issues of social promotion whereby students are promoted to higher Grades after not being certified literate at the Grade Four level of the Education system. A policy document would be developed to address the challenges in the system if students are not promoted as well as to identify supporting strategies to ensure that students are certified literate before sitting the Grade Six Achievement Test (GSAT).

After the presentation the members of the Policy and Planning Committee shared their concerns/issues regarding the position paper. These concerns were articulated to the MOE.

### **The Policy Objectives are to:**

1. ensure that all new entrants to the secondary level are certified as literate
2. ensure early identification of children with special needs (challenged, gifted and talented) and target resources appropriately.
3. re-brand *literacy* as a critical outcome of the Ministry’s core services.
4. position the Grade Four Literacy Test (GFLT) as a critical focal point of the primary level.
5. raise the literacy rate of the school-age population to optimal levels.
6. secure parents involvement in the education of their children, beginning at the earliest levels of the system.

The GFLT will be administered nationally for the first time in June 2009 with a supplemental sitting in December of the same year. The second general administration will be in June 2010 with a supplemental sitting in December 2010. All students certified as literate will be registered for GSAT 2011. Provisional registration for GSAT, would be allowed for students sitting the December 2010 supplemental.

In an effort to ensure that the children are appropriately prepared for all stages of the education system the Ministry would:

- Establish an Assessment and Referral Agency.
- Introduce a programme to screen children entering Grade 1 to ensure early detection and treatment of children with special needs.
- Provide targeted interventions designed to improve the performance of low performing schools.
- Engage the services of literacy specialists to supplement the work of classroom teachers.
- Implement an extensive In-service Teacher Training Programme to expose teachers to effective instructional methodologies.
- Implement a dedicated programme, the Alternative Secondary Education Programme (ASEP) for children who are not certified literate, after four attempts at the Grade Four Literacy Test

## THE WAY AHEAD

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The National Council on Education embraces the new fiscal year 2009 – 2010 with renewed fervour as we seek to build partnerships and create supports to assist and guide public educational institutions in carrying out their essential tasks and responsibilities. Our focus will be on a new strategic direction which includes developing new tools to encourage innovation and fostering a culture of mutual responsibility. We are committed to engendering changes at the governance level so that the education of every child can be positively impacted.

### **Prospects for 2009-2010**

Activities planned for the period 2009-2010, include the following:

- Introduction of the Revised Procedures for the Appointment of School Boards. .
- Development of a revised training manual for school boards.
- Development and implementation of a comprehensive public education strategy.