

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION & HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

EDUCATION Matters



September 2014

Preparing citizens to demonstrate skills and competencies in the 21st century workforce through TVET.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION & HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

EDUCATION Matters

September 2014

Vision

Each Child Succeeds

Mission

*To educate and prepare all students to live productive
lives in a complex and changing society.*

Education Matters is the official magazine of the Ministry of Education & Human Resource Development. It is published annually.

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*Goodwill Secondary School third-former, Josiah Laville, at work as part of the
Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) pilot in garment production.*

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EDITOR'S NOTE



Dear Reader,

I am delighted to welcome you to this edition of *Education Matters*, the official publication of the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development.

The main focus of this issue is *Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)*. TVET is a broad topic but the issue attempts to give a comprehensive view of the work that is ongoing at both the ministerial and school levels, to advance programmes in garment production, cosmetology, food preparation, crop production, plumbing and auto mechanics.

Over the past academic year, the Ministry has done significant work to prepare the education system to provide students with skills development for employability. The Government of Dominica recognizes that TVET can play an essential role in promoting economic growth, with potential benefits for individuals, their families and communities. In order to successfully contend with the challenges posed by the structural changes of economies, Dominica must begin to create a highly skilled workforce to meet both economic and societal demands. The Ministry is moving to achieve this goal with a fully-functional TVET system in our secondary schools, with vocational teachers trained to deliver effective instruction.

Education Matters examines the systems that have been put in place to facilitate the implementation of TVET programmes, and highlights the impressive efforts of principals, teachers and students to grow existing programmes, and in other cases, pilot new ones.

The magazine also takes a look at other important initiatives of the Ministry over the 2013-2014 academic year. The work of the Special Education Department and recent developments in Health and Family Life Education are highlighted. *Improving Teaching and Learning* will feature in every issue as the magazine must also serve as a resource for school administrators, teachers and students.

Do enjoy reading this edition of *Education Matters*. We look forward to your feedback and are happy to consider your suggestions, comments or ideas for improvement.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dionne Durand'.

Dionne Durand

Message

Hon. Petter Saint-Jean

Minister for Education and Human Resource Development

Charting The Way Forward With TVET



The Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development welcomes this opportunity to present its accomplishments, plans and programmes to the general public through its publication- *Education Matters*. I congratulate the Editor and contributors for another edition of the magazine, which, this time around, focuses on efforts to revive Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET), in our secondary schools.

During the 2013-2014 academic year, the Ministry of Education took purposeful measures to re-introduce TVET to Dominican schools. This is part of our efforts to initiate and promote educational practices that cater for individual differences, endorse inclusive education and differing learning styles to create equitable access. TVET is critical to advancing the skills of our students who have shown less aptitude for traditional academics and are more technically inclined. TVET, therefore, is a priority for the Government of Dominica as we provide the opportunity for our young people to acquire life-long skills for success in a competitive global environment.

As local and regional industries are re-structured to use more advanced technology and automation, higher skills will be required. To respond to this challenge some of our Secondary Schools have been equipped with the resources and facilities to expand training in the areas of garment production, crop production and cosmetology. There have also been investments in other areas of technical study, such as woodwork and plumbing. The Ministry's objective is to make the education system responsive to the requirements of an economy and society that are largely based on the rapid development of new knowledge and where skills and competence have become the 'new currency'.

The introduction of the Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) Pilot at the Goodwill Secondary

School (GSS) and the North East Comprehensive School (NECS) puts Dominica in the company of other regional states that have adopted a common approach to training, assessment and certification. The CVQ, which encompasses knowledge, skills and attitudes in its training modality, will facilitate the employment of citizens across CARICOM member states. CVQ competency, we hope, will improve the quality of the workforce and enhance the productivity of our people in various professional endeavours. We are proud of the progress being made in garment production at the GSS and crop production at the NECS, where students are showing heightened interest in skills training and are in the initial stages of attaining CVQ competency.

In support of the Ministry's focus on TVET, we have also embraced the concept of Competency Based Education Training and Assessment (CBETA), which promotes competency-based education. The Ministry of Education subscribes to the notion that there must be sufficiently skilled workers in varied technical and vocational areas to contribute to economic growth.

The development of TVET is of paramount importance to the future of education in Dominica. The Government remains committed to the transformation of the local economy through the empowerment of our human resource. The Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development will facilitate effective teaching and learning to prepare our youth to become major players in a knowledge-rich, skills-based economy.

Message



Marcella Powell: *Permanent Secretary, Ag.*

The Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development is pleased to present another edition of *Education Matters*, which promotes the efforts of the Ministry to improve the learning experiences of the nation's children.

The magazine highlights both the efforts of officers within the Ministry of Education as well officers-teachers and principals- within schools, who work tirelessly to chart a clear path for student learning.

As we reflect on the future of our education system, there are core beliefs that have guided our policy and will continue to determine the actions we take to provide the best learning environments for our children. Among these, is our belief that every child can learn and that our responsibility must be to help all students, in our charge, find success in learning.

The Ministry of Education acknowledges the importance of ensuring that our children are well

prepared for the challenges of work and life. To this end, we are broadening our curricular to offer a range of interesting programmes to expose students to different domains of learning. Our aim is to develop a diverse programme for secondary schools, with subjects that interest students and allow them to apply knowledge and develop life skills. During the past academic year, we have developed new curriculum guides for all core subjects, as well as new guides for the implementation of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in our secondary schools. This is critical in ensuring that our citizens are able to effectively perform in any work environment.

On behalf of the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development, I express deepest appreciation to our teachers and principals who have displayed commitment to the training of our children. The Ministry of Education pledges continued support for the efforts of educators and other stakeholders who are working to secure brighter futures for our children.

Message

From the Desk of the Chief Education Officer **Melena Fontaine**

“As Ministry we are endeavouring to create an education system that is relevant to the changing times. We will continue to develop the knowledge and skills of our principals and teachers at all levels of the system from early childhood to tertiary.”



The Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development has been working to improve its public relations and establish better rapport with all stakeholders- parents, teachers, and students- in the best interest of our children's development. This demonstrates our ongoing commitment to enhance every area of education that impacts quality outcomes for students. *Education Matters* is one such way the Ministry is seeking to establish more effective communication channels with its stakeholders.

This issue of *Education Matters* is heavily focused on Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET). With Universal Secondary Education in full effect, more of our children are being served by an education system that must respond to new demands in a technologically advanced environment. Issues of competence and quality are now in sharper focus as the need to equip our citizens for survival in a competitive marketplace becomes more pressing.

At the ministerial level, we have heightened our focus on the study of technical and vocational subjects at secondary level while we attend to other facets of education. During the academic year 2013-2014, we worked on preparing three of our secondary schools to begin programmes in Food Preparation, Garment Production and Crop Production. These schools have been equipped with industry standard equipment to facilitate effective instruction that prepares students for the workforce. Under the Education Enhancement Project, we have also procured equipment to facilitate the TVET programmes in all our public secondary

schools. We must now consider our teachers' ability to adapt to new expectations and transform their classroom practices to meet the demands of contemporary society. As we move ahead with TVET, a core group of teachers has been trained in Competency-Based Education and Training (CBET) and as Assessors and Verifiers to enable us to effectively deliver the programmes leading to the award of Caribbean Vocational Qualifications (CVQs) by the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC).

The Ministry has also done significant work, in the past academic year, in special education. This was possible because of the addition of staff with specialized skills to the office for special education. Important work is being done in diagnosis, intervention and monitoring as we seek to give all our students equal opportunities to access quality education regardless of academic or behavioral challenges. We engage in the practice of inclusive education as far as our resources will permit and in consideration of the best interest of the child. The Ministry of Education will, therefore, continue to develop the student support system within our schools so that learners with challenges can have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Since 2009, we have been working on the implementation of Child Friendly School principles and practices within our schools. We have made much progress with access to education and are now giving focus to quality education. Under the Child Friendly School initiative, we are emphasizing quality teaching and learning, quality tools and quality environments so that both students

and staff are in an enabling environment that promotes success for all. During the 2013-2014 academic year, we concentrated on the implementation of the initiative at the secondary level and for the 2014-2015 academic year, we expect all schools, both primary and secondary to be engaged in the CFS principles and practices geared towards building more effective schools.

As Ministry we are endeavoring to create an education system that is relevant to the changing times. Under the Dominica Education Enhancement Project and with support from other partners such as the OECS Secretariat, UNICEF and Child Fund Caribbean and friendly governments, we will continue to develop the knowledge and skills of our principals and teachers at all levels of the system from early childhood to tertiary. We depend on the support of all stakeholders as we collectively take on the challenges of this new era of education, providing our students with the best opportunities to succeed.



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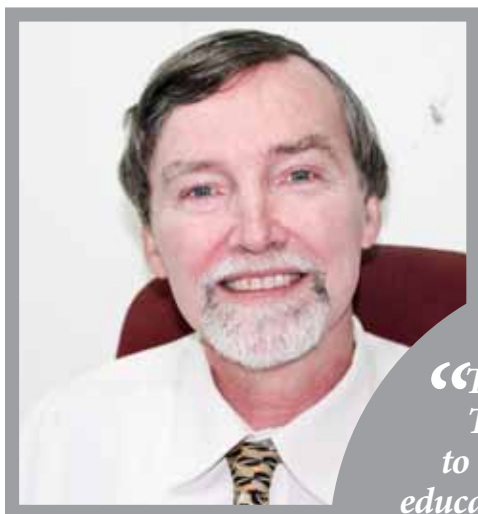
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TWENT

AND THE CHANGING SECONDARY CURRICULUM





**by Nicholas
Goldberg**

*Senior Education Officer-
Curriculum, Measurement
and Evaluation*

“These initiatives in TVET have the potential to transform secondary education in Dominica while meeting the needs of potential local and regional employers. TVET must not be seen as second-rate education; it is essential education for the twentieth century.”

The advent of 2005 saw the first year of complete universal secondary education, where all grade 6 students moved automatically to secondary schools. While this change did not come overnight, changes to the school curriculum to meet the new challenges were initially slow.

In the old system, secondary schools had a mainly ‘academic’ curriculum with students writing Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) examinations after five years. Junior secondary students had three years education that comprised of a mix of four ‘academic’ subjects and three technical subjects. Students who performed well on the academic component in the Junior Secondary examinations were often given a chance of two or three further years at a recognized secondary school. In view of this system that placed such little emphasis for the technical component of education, it was small wonder that most parents wanted their children to attend secondary schools.

However, universal secondary education (USE) had many critics. It was claimed that many students were ‘not ready’ for secondary school and that they would ‘bring down’ the quality of education by impeding the

progress of more able students. In fact, the increased opportunity to learn led to a rapid increase in the numbers of students who were able to obtain CSEC awards as they no longer had the hurdle of needing to pass the Common Entrance Examination which restricted secondary entry. The increase in the numbers obtaining CSEC awards, together with the formation of the Dominica State College (DSC) has led to a more highly educated potential workforce which, in turn, leads to economic benefits for the country.

The new secondary curriculum to cater for the diverse secondary population was, as indicated, slower in coming. Most secondary schools consisted of classrooms with a lab or labs for the sciences and a converted classroom for computers. Few, outside of the most recently constructed schools, had the facilities or equipment to allow students to engage in technical and vocational education and training (TVET). Further, many persons were of the opinion that TVET subjects were only for those who were not ‘academically inclined’, so that schools faced opposition to curriculum change, sometimes from within their own staff. Even the DSC had, at one time, cut back on its technical vocational offerings, and a once vibrant plumbing course had been eliminated from the programme.

The popular traditional view has been that everyone wants their children to go to school and, if successful, they will become doctors, lawyers or perhaps engineers. This is shortsighted, for a modern society cannot function with just a few professionals. Society also needs plumbers and electricians, masons and upholsterers, carpenters and tile layers to mention just a few. The growing tourism industry needs all these and tour guides, housekeeping attendants, food and beverage servers and managers and chefs (not just cooks). It is the task of the education system to provide the education and training to cater for these demands.

Today, there is a greater awareness of the issues, though old attitudes still persist. Secondary schools



have broadened their curricula options as they seek to provide suitable courses that provide for the interests and needs of all their charges. To this end, the Dominica Education Enhancement Project (DEEP) had as its key objectives to improve the quality of education in secondary schools through the provision of TVET equipment and the training of teachers in these critical areas. The project was intended to promote curriculum diversification so as to better meet the needs of the new secondary population. The project has allowed schools to introduce new subject areas such as garment making, food preparation, crop production and cosmetology to the curriculum. It has also provided a greater impetus for many students by permitting more schools to engage in carpentry (woods), electricity, technical drawing and auto-mechanics.

While the CXC's CSEC certifies students in some traditional TVET subjects such as building technology (woods), electricity and food and nutrition and the like, it has a heavy emphasis on theory and a relatively small practical component. Key skills that may be desired by industry or other private sector employers, such as communication in the workplace, team work and on the job safety are not examined. To meet this critical need, a new examination, the Caribbean Vocational qualification (CVQ) was established in 2006.

Dominica has now begun to equip schools through the DEEP with the human and physical resources to begin CVQs. Three schools to date, Goodwill Secondary – garment making, North East Comprehensive – crop production and Dominica Grammar School – food preparation are making a start, with others to begin in

the next few years in such diverse areas as auto repair, furniture making, plumbing and cosmetology.

These initiatives in TVET have the potential to transform secondary education in Dominica while meeting the needs of potential local and regional employers. Further, schools need to embrace safety at the school and, in particular, in laboratories and workrooms. TVET must not be seen as second rate education; it is essential education for the twentieth century, so much so that Jamaica now mandates all secondary students to leave school with one CVQ. Additionally, the Ministry of Education will need to put in place equipment maintenance policies to safeguard the investment in equipment. If these essentials can be met, Dominican students will be better placed to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

PHOTO: Garment Making Class in Session at the Goodwill Secondary School

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What is the CVQ?

The Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) is based on a competency-based approach to training, assessment and certification. It is an award that represents the achievement of a set of competencies. These competencies define the core practices of an occupational area consistent with the levels within the Regional Qualifications Framework (RQF).

The CVQ is therefore, the regional certification for occupational skills and is used to allow the movement of workers in the Caribbean under the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME). The CVQ assesses students' technical skills, work skills and critical employability skills or soft skills so desired by employers. Persons with CVQs have the pre-requisite skills qualifications that allow them entry to jobs that may have been previously denied to them. For example, many skilled Dominicans are ineligible to participate in local or regional construction projects for the want of such formal certification. Candidates are expected to

demonstrate competence in attaining occupational standards developed by practitioners, industry experts and employers. Those standards, when approved by CARICOM, allow for portability across the region.

Currently, CVQs are planned to reflect a Qualification framework of five levels. These are:

- Level 1: Directly Supervised/ Entry –Level Worker
- Level 2: Supervised Skilled Worker
- Level 3: Independent or Autonomous Skilled Worker
- Level 4: Specialized or Supervisory Worker
- Level 5: Managerial and/or Professional Worker

CVQs are awarded to those candidates who meet the required standards in all of the prescribed units of study.

The CVQ is examined in practical situations over the period of training. Students have to show

evidence of competency in each area assessed. Specially certified assessors and verifiers carry out assessment. There is no formal written examination, though written tests may form part of the assessment. To ensure quality, standards have to be adhered to. These include the requirement for facilities that meet standards, regional inspections and qualified assessors.

CVQ prepares students for a place in an increasingly competitive global economy by empowering them with skills training in both institutional and on the job settings.

The Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development is of the view that in an information based economy, driven by technology, every TVET student must be provided with opportunities to acquire and demonstrate competencies and skills with greater understanding and application of technology.

Secondary Schools Increase TVET Offerings

Dominican secondary schools are offering more options for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). An injection of equipment and materials procured under the Dominica Education Enhancement Project (DEEP) has assisted schools to, either jump-start or improve previously existing programmes.

At the Dominica Grammar School, preparations are being made for the Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) pilot in food preparation. The school has also revived its agricultural programme, tending to plots of tomatoes which are sold to local supermarkets.

The Castle Bruce Secondary School has an ongoing programme in cosmetology, which the Ministry of Education is hoping to expand to allow students to work towards the CVQ. Other TVET related subjects are also being developed at schools including woodwork at the North East Comprehensive School and Auto Mechanics at the Pierre Charles Secondary School.

The Dominica Community High School (DCHS) has a vibrant agriculture programme. Principal Celia Nicholas, along with her staff, is continuing to develop the programme with the procurement of a greenhouse for increased production. The DCHS is also engaged in poultry and rabbit rearing and boasts hundreds of broilers and layers for eventual sale to the community.



DGS room outfitted for CVQ pilot programme in food preparation



Animal husbandry at Dominica Community High School



Composting at Dominica Community High School

NECS Begins CVQ Pilot in Crop Production

The North East Comprehensive School (NECS) has run a vibrant agriculture programme since its establishment. However, in September 2013, the school began the Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) pilot in Crop Production.

Since then, students have engaged in a more structured programme run by teachers, Deva Baron and Benoit Hunter. With access to a wide expanse of farming land, the participants are able to grow a variety of crops including melons, carrots, tomatoes, celery, parsley and other fruit and vegetable types. Their onion and bell pepper crops are especially popular with villagers in surrounding communities, where they enjoy high sales. They have also fostered sale agreements with

neighboring guest-houses and hotels that purchase the produce on a regular basis. Teachers and students of the NECS are also able to purchase produce for their homes at competitive prices.

Ms. Baron tells *Education Matters* that while the programme has experienced teething problems,

they are intent on ensuring that the pilot conforms to CVQ standards. Students, she says, are being prepared for actual careers in agriculture by learning the basics of crop production, including planting, pest management, irrigation, drainage and harvest.



ITSS Develops Agriculture Programme

The Isaiah Thomas Secondary School (ITSS) in St. Joseph is making productive use of its generous farming plot to grow tomatoes, cabbage, lettuce and melons. Agricultural Science Teacher, Brendan Roberts has every intention of growing the programme so that his group of young men can continue to benefit from engagement in a worthwhile activity.

Roberts, who is fully supported by ITSS principal Shirley Samuel, says the programme has been a welcome offering for students who were otherwise idle during after school hours and on weekends. The students are passionate about the venture, spending hours on Saturdays tilling the soil, weeding, planting and composting.

Roberts tells *Education Matters*, that with a small investment approved by Principal Samuel, he has already realized profits from previous crops of tomatoes and melons sold to teachers, students and villagers on the West Coast. A second melon crop was expected to yield over \$15, 000 in profits earlier this year. . The student farmers were due to receive 15% of the profits to share among themselves, as further incentive for continuing with the programme.

Roberts says his goal is to improve the agriculture programme at the ITSS to provide the school with much needed funds for other projects as well give students the avenue to develop their skills in agricultural production.



HEADLINE PHOTO: Agricultural Science Students at the Isaiah Thomas Secondary School
PHOTO: Agricultural Science Teacher at ITSS - Brendan Roberts

Success With CVQ Programme at Goodwill Secondary School

Garment Production Pilot Programme Gets Underway with Fifteen Participants

The Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development is registering success with the CVQ pilot programme in Garment Production at the Goodwill Secondary School (GSS).

At the start of the 2013-2014 academic year the Ministry introduced the CVQ (Caribbean Vocational Qualification) programme at the GSS as part of a renewed focus on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Dominican schools.

Teachers, Joan Jean-Jacques and Vilna Samuel, trained assessors with Trinidad's National Training Agency, are responsible for the programme's implementation at the GSS.

There, fifteen (15) students are being trained in the use of heavy duty, industrial grade equipment as they learn the basics of the tailoring trade.

The top of the line sewing machines, seats and other sewing materials were procured under the Dominica Education Enhancement Project (DEEP).

According to the instructors, the aspiring tailors and seamstresses are receiving training, according to industry standards, in preparation for employment within the region's clothing and textiles industry and have shown a keen interest in learning the new skills. In early 2014, the students put their new skills to test by sewing ninety (90) costumes for the Goodwill Secondary School Carnival Band, which participated in the road parade on Carnival Monday.

The Ministry expects similar success for CVQ pilot programmes in Food Preparation at the Dominica Grammar School and Crop Production at the North East Comprehensive School.

Special Education Programmes in Focus

*by Octavia Timothy
Speech and Language Therapist*

The Office for Special Education is responsible for providing services to schools and individuals with special education needs. Presently, the department operates with a staff of five persons; Octavia Timothy is a Speech and Language Therapist with specialization in deaf education and is presently acting as the Coordinator of Special Education; Techar Cuffy, a clinical psychologist provides assessment and therapeutic services; Nutrice Francis is a special education teacher specializing in educational assessment and intervention; Naome Abraham is a special education teacher for students with moderate to severe mental challenges and Annette Thomas is trained to work with students who are visually impaired. The office has the capacity to provide assessment, diagnosis and intervention to support students with special needs.



PHOTO: Special Education Teacher Naome Abraham
Observes Session at Goodwill Primary School

SCHOOL SUPPORT

Schools are visited by the team or individuals from the unit for assessment, intervention and monitoring of progress. Schools that require the services of the special education office to communicate their concerns, whether it is with an individual child or a group of children. All schools with concerns are visited and students are assessed where applicable. Follow up reports and recommendations are made to the school for implementation and specialised intervention provided if necessary and within the resources available.

Under the Education Enhancement Project, resources were procured and included reading intervention tools, namely, Scott Foresman Early Reading Intervention, Foundations and the Wilson Reading System have been distributed to 12 schools to help improve literacy. Some of these schools include Roseau Primary, Goodwill Primary, Massacre Primary, Newtown Primary, St Martin Primary, Tete Morne Primary, and North East Comprehensive. Officers from the department visit these schools to do progress monitoring and to assist teachers in administering these interventions.

Support and supervision is also given to the special education class within the Goodwill Primary and Roseau Primary Schools and at the Alpha Centre. Sign language sessions are being held with the Roseau Primary School teachers to accommodate a deaf student at that school. The Isulukati Special needs schools also receive support from the office.

Staff at the office is presently working on establishing programmes at targeted primary and secondary schools for students who are struggling. This includes assessment (individual and groups), development of intervention programmes and

Individual Education Plans (IEPs) based on assessment results and the training of teachers to deliver the programmes. Work is also ongoing on a referral process that will encompass a multi-disciplinary approach to the services provided. Training in different areas of special education is done at both national and school level based on requests from the schools and on identified need.

ASSESSMENTS

Individual students are assessed in different areas. Psychological assessments, educational assessments, and speech and language assessments are tests conducted at the Ministry of Education. As far as possible, a multi-disciplinary approach is used to assess and facilitate decision making in regard to each student. A variety of assessment tools are being used by the specialists in the different fields.

The staff, with support from the other education officials and retired educators, has also been using Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM) to assess the early literacy and numeracy levels of the students in kindergarten and grade 1. CBM is used to measure student's progress in basic literacy and numeracy skills during each term. Teachers use the results to guide their delivery of the curriculum and provide early intervention where necessary.

The Special Education Office strives to ensure that each child succeeds in accordance with his/her potential and that all resources available are utilized to the maximum benefit of all children with special needs. The expansion of the unit has made it possible to increase the services available to children and therefore the office welcomes concerns from all stakeholders who work with children and will seek to provide solutions as far as possible within its capacity.

Attention Deficit Disorder With or Without Hyperactivity (ADD or ADHD)

by *Melena Fontaine*
Chief Education Officer, Ag.



We are starting off with a question. How does the school-based professional – the principal, the teacher, the counselor – deal with the problem of ADD or ADHD? The historical perspective shows that previously, the condition has been and is still being treated by the clinic-based professional such as the pediatrician and the child psychologist. However, as the condition continues to be studied, it is clear that clinic-based treatment is insufficient and that school professionals must have the knowledge and skills to work with children who have attention problems. Why? Children with attention problems are at high risk for chronic academic difficulties because they are unable to pay enough attention to acquire the knowledge to which they are being exposed. They are also at risk for the development of anti-social behaviors, problems in relationships with peers, parents and teachers.

Children in their early stages of development are expected to be active, energetic, and

exuberant. They will explore their environment by flitting from one activity to the next and getting bored easily. This is part of their normal development. However, when these behaviors far exceeds that of their age group, when they are unable to pay attention or control their impulses when expected to do so, then we need to investigate further to find out what is happening to them and how they can be helped.

DEFINITION

Attention problems have been studied for over a hundred years and while there is no one definition to describe ADD or ADHD, there are three main behavior problems which remain consistent throughout. Children who are diagnosed with these conditions display behaviors of **inattention**, **impulsivity** and **hyperactivity** sometimes referred to as over-activity.

Inattention is the inability of the child to sustain attention. This means that the child has difficulty in responding to task or following through

on instructions, rules and regulations. He or she is more disorganized, distracted and forgetful. Children in that group do not seem to listen as well as they should, cannot concentrate, do not finish assignments/homework and sometimes seem to be daydreaming.

Children who exhibit impulsivity do so in a variety of ways including frequent calling out without permission, have difficulty awaiting their turn, talking with classmates at inappropriate times and becoming angry when confronted with reprimands or frustrating tasks. They also make careless mistakes on their assignments.

Hyperactivity or over-activity includes such behaviors as children frequently leaving their seats without permission, playing with inappropriate objects not related to the tasks at hand, repetitive tapping of hands and feet, fidgeting in seats, all of them to the extent that the behaviors significantly disrupt classroom instruction.

ASSESSMENT



Professionals such as the Pediatrician, Clinical or School Psychologists' assessment of children exhibiting attention problems is done through multiple methods. These methods include determining whether the child exhibits a significant number of behavior symptoms according to reports from both teacher and parent/guardian. Behaviors must be observed in different settings across different times. Is the frequency of the behavior significantly greater than that demonstrated by children of the same gender and age group? At what age did the child first start exhibiting those behaviors? Attention disorders typically begin early in life before the age of 12 years and in many cases persist throughout the individual's life. If you are concerned about a child exhibiting any of the behaviors described in this article, you need to refer the child for an evaluation by a pediatrician or

a psychologist.

TREATMENT

Treatment is varied and includes medication administered by the medical doctor. If a student is on medication for attention disorder, it is important that there is ongoing monitoring of the student's response to the medication within the classroom. That information should be communicated to the parents who will report back to the medical practitioner if required.

What then can be done in classroom? Strategies to be used in the classroom will depend on systematic observations of the behaviors being exhibited by the child as well as a thorough understanding of the behaviors. This article is unable to address all of those and therefore it is hoped that the reader will go on to seek more information from different sources. The strategies presented here are to assist the student with the problem of impulsivity or hyperactivity contributed by an inability to self-control sometimes referred to as self-regulation.

Self-Control or Self-Regulation is the response by the individual that are directed at himself or herself that will allow a change of the behavior. For example, the student wants to remember a telephone number and will

repeat it several times to be able to remember later. Then, there is a response that directly aims at altering the environment around the individual so as to allow a change in response. For example, an object is removed from the room so that it does not get mixed up with others to be taken away.

Children with ADHD require help to self-regulate. They need to rely on external prompts, cues, reminders and sometimes physical props to get them to complete tasks in a timely manner. The following is a list of activities that can be used:

1. Post signs about the classroom that are related to the rules of the class.
2. Type the rules on a card and tape it to the child's desk.
3. Have the child verbally state the rules to himself before he or she begins individual work.
4. Tape record reminders onto a cassette tape and have the child listen through an earphone while working
5. Reduce or eliminate those elements of a task that are not absolutely necessary. For example, reduce the number of activities within an

assignment, instead of giving 10 mathematical problems, give 5. Instead of giving two weeks to write a book report, ask the student to remain with you after school (parent can help as well) to first read five pages of the book. Once this is completed, he then must write two or three sentences based on what was read. Reward the student's effort.

6. When you are unable to reduce time, instead of telling the student that he or she has 30 minutes to do a task, externalize time by writing on a card the amount of time that the student has to complete the task and place a timer on his or her desk, so he/she can monitor the time left, on his own.
7. Use a reward system to motivate the student. For the student with

attention disorders, it must be continuous, available within relatively short periods of time and must be sustained for long periods of time. As the students mature and develop the capacity for self-motivation, their reliance on external sources of motivation can be diminished.

Attention Disorders, as with ADD and ADHD, are not of the individual's own doing. Research is pointing to hereditary and brain dysfunction as contributing factors to the group of disorders. Medication therapy is one type of treatment for the condition, however; it must go hand in hand with other types of treatment that focus on the presenting behaviors. Mash and Barkley (2003) believe that *"key to understanding ADHD may be the notion that it is actually a disorder of performance rather than skill; of how one's intelligence is applied in everyday effective adaptive functioning rather than intelligence itself; of doing what*

you know, rather than knowing what to do; and of when, rather than how, in the performance of behavior generally" (p.124).

The intention of this article is to help you gain some understanding of the group of children who are experiencing attention disorders. If you are aware of a child exhibiting some of those characteristics listed, do seek help for him or her, through a pediatrician or the Office of Special Education in the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development at Cornwall Street. The earlier intervention begins the better it is not only for the child but for the significant others in his or her life.

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Ministry of Education Offering On-going Training in HFLE

by Renna Jno-Charles: E.O - HFLE

“There is no doubt that HFLE must be taught. Its implementation makes the education system in Dominica more holistic. It embraces the social, emotional and spiritual well-being of the child and completes the education of the child by teaching necessary life skills.”

Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) is a comprehensive life-skills based programme which focuses on the development of the whole person. It fosters the development of knowledge, skills and attitude that promote healthy family life. HFLE also provides opportunities for children and youth to demonstrate sound health-related knowledge, attitudes and practices. It increases children's ability to practice responsible decision-making about social and sexual behavior. It aims to increase the awareness of the fact that the choices they make in everyday life profoundly influence their health and personal development into adulthood. HFLE enhances the potential of young people to become productive and contributing citizens. It also promotes an understanding of the principles that underlie personal and social well-being.

HFLE is a curriculum initiative that reinforces the connection between health and education. It uses

a holistic approach aimed at bridging existing gaps that enable young people to attain high levels of educational achievement and productivity. There are four thematic areas in HFLE: self and personal relationships, sexuality and sexual health, eating and fitness and managing the environment. The life skills and values fostered by HFLE help children to cope with the challenges and demands of everyday life.

Historically, HFLE has had its challenges in the CARICOM region, including Dominica. Although it is a subject in its own right, with its own syllabus, in many cases, it is not given the same weight that other subjects receive. Unlike other subjects, it is not tested in the traditional way. A tremendous amount of pressure is placed on schools to focus on academic areas such as Mathematics, English, Science and Social Studies in preparation for the Grade Six National Assessment and Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) exams. In light of this, even though HFLE is

time tabled in all public schools (in Government Assisted and Private Schools it is most times, integrated into other subjects), many times it is postponed in preference of other core subjects.

Additionally, HFLE may not be taught in schools because some teachers complain that they do not have the necessary skills or comfort levels to teach the subject. This is especially so with the Sexuality and Sexual Health Strand. Teachers have reported that the strand is difficult to teach because of issues relating to age appropriateness of information and boundaries. For example, how much information and what kind of information does one give to a child without prematurely exposing the child to issues relating to sexuality?

Teachers are also not comfortable teaching HFLE because of how they were brought up, taboos around sexuality and fear of being placed on the spot in the classroom with those challenging questions children ask.

Another challenge relates to teachers' lifestyle and the fear of public exposure. Some teachers report that because of Dominica's culture and the small communities in which they live, their lifestyles can easily be questioned and placed under public scrutiny.

Therefore, in addressing these challenges, alternative arrangements are sought by schools. For example, another teacher is given the assignment or resource persons are brought to the classroom to deliver the lesson. Also, the Ministry of Education continues to offer training to teachers on an on-going basis to ensure that HFLE is taught as time tabled and to remedy the problem of teacher's discomfort.

In addition to the annual National HFLE Workshop for principals and teachers both in primary and secondary schools, in July 2013, the Ministry of Education, in collaboration with UNICEF, sponsored a five day training for approximately seventy-six teachers from around the island. The objectives of the train-

ing were to increase teacher skill, provide different methods of classroom delivery and to increase teachers overall comfort level. A wide array of topics were covered and particular emphasis was placed on the Sexuality and Sexual Health Strand, including HIV/AIDS, STI's and Gender. The Ministry of Education elicited the assistance of a variety of community agencies and professionals to facilitate the training of teachers,* including the National AIDS Response Programme, Bureau of Gender Affairs, Welfare Division, Drug Prevention Unit, Health Promotion Unit, Dominica Planned Parenthood Association, Nurse Practitioners, the Magistracy, Teachers, Counsellors and other professionals. Teachers received a Certificate of Participation upon completion of the programme.

The joint venture with UNICEF also sponsored six teachers to the University of the West Indies for a One Year Diploma Course in HFLE. Finally, there were numerous workshops on the Sexuality and Sexual Health Strand covering the Eastern District by the end of school year 2014. It is anticipated that the training will increase teacher skill, confidence and passion for HFLE and that they will utilize the training as demonstrated in the classroom.

The Ministry of Education's efforts should not go unrecognized. There is no doubt that HFLE must be taught. Its implementation makes the education system in Dominica more holistic. It embraces the social, emotional and spiritual well-being of the child and completes the education of the child by teaching necessary life skills like problem solving, effective communication, critical thinking, decision making and other important skills that enable children to cope and manage their lives productively. In essence, HFLE complements the academics. Schools should continue to encourage the teaching of HFLE, fostering an environment where it is seen as a right of the child, recognizing its benefits and contribution towards the overall development of the child.

CFS-Making the Move to Secondary Schools

The Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development has since 2009 implemented the principles of Child Friendly Schools (CFS) in all of Dominica's primary schools and has begun the process of implementation in secondary schools. The programme is being implemented in collaboration with UNICEF.

The Ministry embraces this global initiative that seeks to ensure that students are educated in a safe environment, which is inclusive, protective and respectful of gender differences and cultural diversity.

CFS is based on the principles of child-centeredness which is concerned with educational practices that are in the best interest of the child; democratic participation where stakeholders are given a say in the school's curriculum and participate in student government; and inclusiveness which stresses the child's right to an education, regardless of race, ability, gender or ethnicity.

In Dominican schools, CFS coaches enforce positive behaviors and develop structures that place focus on family life education, inclusive, learning ready classrooms and student participation. Since the implementation of CFS, schools are reporting a decrease in behavior problems, reduced violence

at schools and a significant drop in the rates of detentions, suspensions, expulsions and drop outs.

As the CFS programme is extended to secondary schools, CFS coaches, principals and teachers will continue to work towards ensuring that students thrive in an environment that is physically safe, emotionally secure and psychologically enabling. Effective implementation will also require continued collaboration among all stakeholders, including parents, who have an important role to play to secure the programme's success. The Ministry will continue to encourage participation and creativity, and promote the health, safety, security and psychological well-being of every child within the school system in keeping with its vision for education: *Each Child Succeeds*.

The Ministry of Education is eager to roll out the programme in Dominica's sixteen high schools and secure the commitment of principals and teachers who will play an integral role in its success at the secondary level. The Ministry will continue to provide support as the programme is developed to ensure that the standards of CFS; child-centeredness, democratic participation and inclusiveness are maintained.

PHOTO: Secondary School Principals and HFLE Co-ordinators Meet to Plan CFS Implementation



MoE, UNICEF Launch Sports Empowerment Programme at NECS

The Ministry of Education & Human Resource Development launched UNICEF's Student Empowerment Through Sports (SETS) initiative at the North East Comprehensive School (NECS) in May.

Sixteen students were chosen to participate in the programme that equips students with literacy and numeracy skills and knowledge while building their appreciation for various sporting disciplines.

Chief Education Officer Melena Fontaine told the launching ceremony the programme was part of efforts to implement appropriate and creative programmes to create a suitable learning environment for learners.

"We know that you are very good at sports. You have emerged national champions in both male and female categories on numerous occasions and we are proud of you for doing that.

"We, however, need more of you involved in sports, to not only get into the games but to be engaged in the part where your life skills are developed in preparation for your venture into society as an independent person," Fontaine told the students.

Elaine King represented UNICEF at the official launch.

"We are working with the Ministry of Education and the staff of the North East Comprehensive School to help teachers develop skills to work with you to find strategies to meet the learning needs of every student here.

"This particular programme is focusing on sports and using sports-based strategies. Students learn differently and teachers need to employ a range of strategies to help students learn the best they can," King said.

The Ministry of Education is promoting positive behavior management through SETS resulting in increased self-discipline and confidence as well as improved academic performance.



HEADLINE PHOTO: NECS SETS Launched
PHOTO: Participants of NECS SETS



New Primary School for Newtown

**Work Ongoing on State-of-the-Art Newtown Primary School,
Funded by the People's Republic of China.**

Work is ongoing on the new Newtown Primary School to accommodate up to three hundred students and seventeen teachers.

The school, projected to cost six million dollars, is funded by a grant from the People's Republic of China.

The Dominica and Chinese governments signed the contract for the construction of the school last year.

The new school will boast fourteen classrooms and will include a library, science laboratory, art laboratory, principal's office, secretary's office, staff room, kitchen, a sickbay and washroom facilities.

Improvements to the roadway, and the construction of a parking lot and hard court are also part of the project.

The new three-storey high school will also include an elevator to provide access for physically challenged students.



Ministry of Education Nears Completion of New National Curriculum

The Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development is near completion of a complete review of the National Curriculum for Dominica.

A number of curriculum development workshops were held in the period 2013 – 2014 which continued the secondary curriculum development process that commenced in earnest in 2012. Funded under the Dominica Education Enhancement Project curriculum component, several workshops were facilitated by consultant Dr. Jeffrey Orr from EduNova.



Small teams of specialist secondary subject teachers led by an education officer worked on the draft curriculum guides.

Print ready copies are now available in all the core subject areas at forms 1-3:

- Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Sciences
- HFLE
- VPA
- Modern languages

Additional curriculum development workshops held over the last year have aimed to develop guides for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) for forms 2 and 3. Guides are being developed in Cosmetology, Food Preparation, Garment making, Electricity, Woods and Business. Curriculum guides for agriculture at Forms 1-3 are also in the works.

The TVET guides are expected to be finalized by December 2014.

Training for principals and teachers in the use of new curricula is expected to take place in September 2014.

Implementation and monitoring of the National Curriculum at secondary schools will follow.

DEEP Continues to Impact School Development

The Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development is continuing to furnish schools with equipment and learning materials necessary for effective teaching and learning under the Dominica Education and Enhancement Project (DEEP).

During the past academic year learning materials and teacher resource materials valued at approximately EC\$440,000.00 were procured for use in all government primary schools. The learning materials will be available for use at schools in the academic year 2014/15.

Printing equipment valued at EC\$148,000.00, has been delivered to the Castle Bruce Secondary School, Eastern District Education Office, Goodwill Secondary School, Goodwill Primary School, Northern District Education Office and the Curriculum Unit in the Ministry of Education.

Under DEEP, forty-six (46) teachers have received schol-

arships and as of December 31, 2013, twenty-six (26) teachers had completed their programmes and are back in the classroom. Seventeen (17) teachers are currently pursuing studies at the certificate level, first-degree level, Post Graduate Diploma level, and Masters level.

The project has procured tools and equipment valued at over \$3.2m to support the implementation of the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programmes at secondary schools. Equipment was procured for studies in crop production, information technology, furniture making, food preparation, cosmetology, plumbing, work place safety, physical education, mathematics, garment production, electrical/electronics, music and VPA, automotive repair and special education.

Consultancies in numeracy, early screening and diagnosis, maintenance, multi-grade and curriculum development have also been completed under DEEP.



Information Technology Teachers Participate in Certificate Course

Forty teachers and Ministry of Education IT personnel have completed a nine-month certificate course with the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, in the Teaching of Information Technology at the CXC Level.

The programme was funded under the Dominica Education Enhancement Project (DEEP)

The training facilitated by Coreen J. Leacock, addressed the issues and challenges currently faced by teachers in teaching Info Tech, and provided other hands on IT

skills used in the classroom.

The programme also aimed to raise awareness of issues relating to the change process in teaching practice and exposed participants to strategies that can be used to manage technological change in their schools. They developed skills useful in the use of technology for instructional purposes as well as for routine administrative tasks in the school environment.

Dr. Joel Warrican of the UWI Cave Hill coordinated the programme.

Guidance Counsellors, HFLE Coordinators, Receive Training



Guidance counselors and Health and Family Life Educators are now better prepared to provide timely interventions for students at risk.

The educators participated in in-service training during the summer, focusing on 'Workplace and Student Peer Mediation' and 'Working with Youth at Risk.' The workshop, sponsored jointly by the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States and USAID was facilitated by peace corp. volunteers as well as local

facilitators.

The training was hosted by the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development with support from the Ministry of Social Services, Community Development and Gender Affairs.

The training aimed to equip teachers with requisite skills in the art of mediation for solving problems and preventing escalation of disputes. Participants were expected to develop a plan

for implementation of training within their institutions.

Another area of focus, 'Working with youth at risk', sought to sharpen the skills of guidance counselors who offer support to young people with emotional and behavioral difficulties. Participants are now expected to implement interventions that will make a difference in the lives of the young people with whom they work. Their new expertise is also expected to benefit the school, families and wider society.



Junior Achievement Partners With Ministry of Education

by **Natasha Yeeloy-Labad**
Executive Director: Junior Achievement



The Junior Achievement Program (JA) was initiated by a task-force with a small plan to make a big difference in the lives of Dominica's youth.

A year later JA is now a strategic partner with the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development in efforts to tackle youth underachievement head on.

The agency, started as a pilot programme, is now a registered non-profit charity. It functions as a fully supported operating centre, and is a registered member nation with Junior Achievement Worldwide. Currently, JA employs two full time operating staff in addition to the Executive Director. The agency also has an ongoing human resource commitment from the National Employment Program.

Youth empowerment through economic success is at the center of the vision articulated by the executive team who make up the JA Dominica Board. Indeed, the need to empower Dominica's youth is a very important element of the agency's mission, which is strongly advocated by the team of volunteers and local champions.

Junior Achievement is very proud of the involvement of its valuable partners who offer significant assistance in its efforts to add value to the experiences of Dominican youth. Earlier

this year a formal partnership and strategic Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the Ministry of Education & Resource Development.

JA Dominica views the MOU commitment to foster the expansion and development of enrichment programs as a very meaningful display of willingness to provide the real world focus that is needed in education.

Since formal registration as a Non-Profit Charity in March of 2013, Junior Achievement has served six hundred and forty seven students. JA has also given support to more than 200 students, from eleven company clubs, to start entrepreneurial ventures while still in high school. In 2013, eleven schools informally registered six school-based companies. JA also provided international travel scholarships to five students, who have represented JA Dominica in Uruguay and Mexico at the Company of The Year Challenge.



HEADLINE PHOTO: Junior Achievement Signs MOU with Ministry of Education
PHOTO: Members of Junior Achievement Executive

Creating Young Entrepreneurs at the Dominica Grammar School

DGS Students Launch Skin Care Product-Natural Erase

The entrepreneurial spirit at the Dominica Grammar School is vibrant and students are proud of their product-Natural Erase. The skin care product was developed to assist persons who suffer from skin conditions such as acne, blemishes and dark spots. After conducting market research among the DGS school population, the 4th form students concluded that several of their peers were affected by these skins issues and needed relief. 'Natural Erase' was designed and developed to eradicate and remove the impurities of the skin.

The initiative was also due to the intervention of Junior Achievement

led by Natasha Yeeloy-Labad. According to Labad the biggest challenge facing the JA's support is limited finance. As such, the students have been unable to produce in large quantities, and as a result, the products are pricier. To generate additional capital the students made available for sale a limited number of shares in the company at a minimal cost of \$10.00 per share. The shares were offered to their fellow students at the DGS and to members of the public.

Students say the program has been beneficial to all involved particularly in the subject areas of Principles of Business and Accounting. They



now have a better understanding of business structure and of production and costing.

The club represented by Mainika Jno. Baptiste and Kaihil Charles secured second place at a recently held local competition and were also successful at a regional level competition receiving a cash prize of \$1,000.00 each.

PSS Making Strides in Entrepreneurship

The Portsmouth Secondary School is growing its entrepreneurship programme with assistance from Junior Achievement JA. Students with a keen interest in entrepreneurship are being given the opportunity to further their business ideas. A group from the PSS participated in the Company of the Year competition (COY 2013) in Cancun Mexico with the support of JA. There, they competed against twenty one countries and presented four products

including lip balms, coconut oil moisturizer, coconut body splash and a massage cloth.

The PSS entrepreneurship group began as a classroom project, which has blossomed into a vibrant entrepreneurial venture that focuses on sensitizing students about business ownership. Students hope they will ultimately be able to improve their lives and by extension the Dominican economy.

In 2013 the group participated in the Buy Dominica Easter Shopping at the Roseau Market. This led to increased exposure and an order for virgin coconut oil from Green's Wholesale.



Improvement in Mathematics at National Assessments

Robert Guiste: *Education Officer
Measurement and Evaluation*



The Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development reported a “steady increase” in student performance in Mathematics at the Grade 2 National Assessment (G2NA) and Grade 4 National Assessment (G4NA) during the 2013-2014 academic year.

Measurement Officer Robert Guiste told *Education Matters*; in 2013 the Ministry recorded a five percent (5%) increase at grade 2 from 42.5 percent in 2012 to 47.5 percent of students working at or above grade level.

At the grade 4 level there was an increase of six percent (4%) from 44 percent in 2012 to 48 percent in 2013.

The Ministry of Education began national assessments in 2000 at grades 2, 4 and 6 and according to Guiste has recorded “steady increases” in mathematics achievement over the past 14 years.

“When the students were tested in 2000 only 24 percent could work at or above the grade 2 level. That number has since doubled where we see 47 percent of our students in 2013 working at or above grade level.

“At the grade 4 level the 2000 students were tested in 2002 and that number moved from 24 percent to 34 percent. Again we have seen a steady increase in the performance of students where in 2013 we see 48 percent of our students working at or above grade 4

level,” Guiste said.

He attributed the improved performance in 2013 to the Ministry’s efforts in teacher education. Under the Dominica Education Enhancement Project (DEEP), the Ministry completed a numeracy consultancy in 2013, which involved the training of grade 2 mathematics teachers of all primary schools. The Ministry is hoping to replicate the training for all grade 4 mathematics teachers.

Materials for use in the primary schools have also been procured to include a number of laptops specifically intended to facilitate the teaching of Maths to primary school students.

“The Ministry is investing a lot of money in the training of teachers under the DEEP project and also in the resources sent to schools. We know that math is one of the areas we struggle in at grade 2, 4 and six and at the CSEC level.

“With these investments and now that we have seen improvements, this will guide the ministry in what steps should be taken to continue improving numeracy especially at the CSEC level,” Guiste said.

The Ministry is continuing to record creditable performances in literacy with 75 percent of students working at or above grade level.

The latest G2NA and G4NA assessments were administered in October 2013.

NBD - Supporting Education!

The National Bank of Dominica Ltd. (NBD) is strongly committed to the development of Dominica. The Bank actively supports education, sports, health and other community outreach and social programmes.

NBD believes that education is the foundation for a vibrant society and strong economic growth. The bank allocates a significant portion of its resources towards the development of education. NBD is in its 4th year of partnership with the **Roving Caregivers Programme (RCP)**, piloted by ChildFund Dominica. This initiative focuses on early childhood education for children ages 0-5 years, in underprivileged communities. RCP works with parents and children teaching stimulation exercises, assisting with child development and parenting through home visits and organized community sessions.

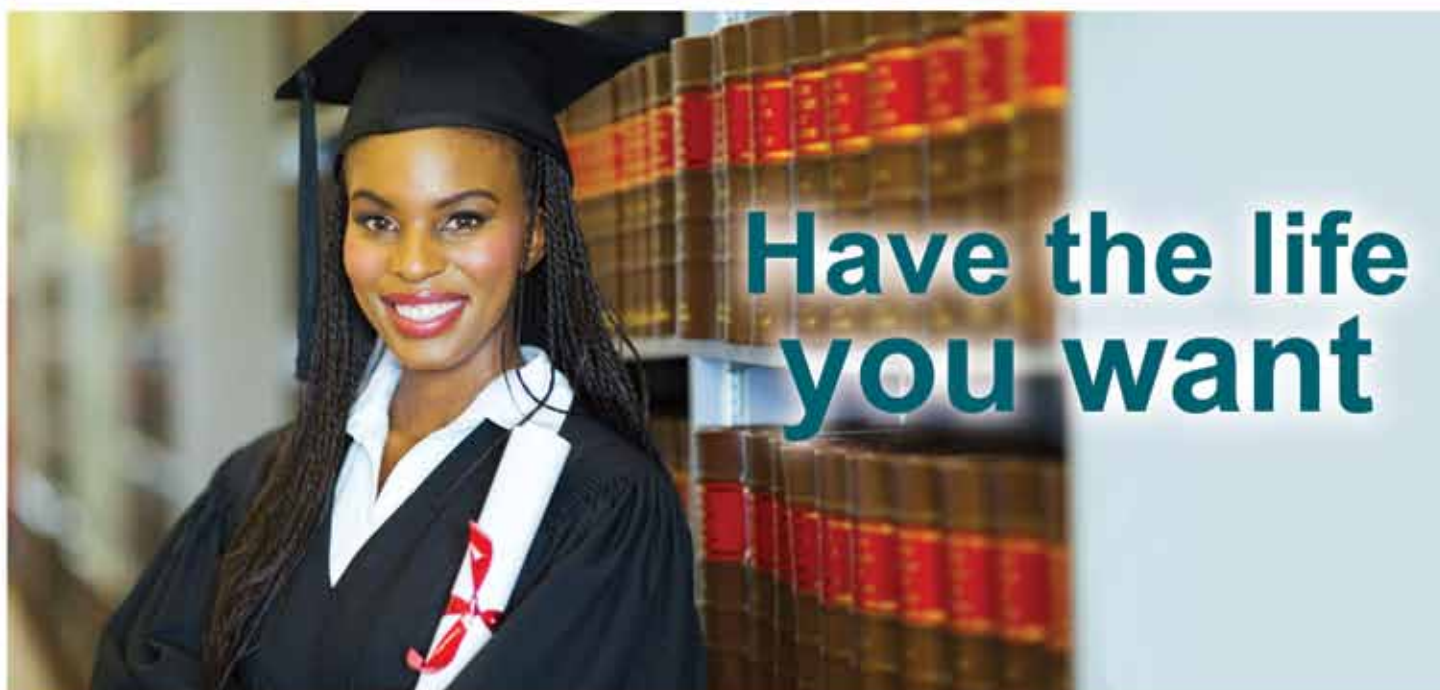
NBD works closely with the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development to host the **National Math Power Contest**. This contest is geared at improving numeracy while simultaneously popularizing mathematics among primary and secondary school students. The Bank recognizes the need for students to become more engaged in mathematics with a view to improving their performance and analytical skills. Additionally, NBD wants to help students develop discipline, leadership skills, good work ethics, and learn how to handle pressure. The winners are awarded trophies, cash prizes and certificates.

NBD also works with the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development to host the **Excellence in Education Awards**. This highly anticipated event, held biennially, is an ideal way of showing appreciation to teachers and principals for their significant, selfless efforts in educating our children. It aims to recognize, reward and encourage all teachers.

The Bank has developed a partnership with the University of the West Indies Open Campus Dominica (UWI) to host an annual **NBD/UWI Lecture Series**. These lectures aim to educate people about various issues affecting the Caribbean region and the world. The general public benefits from the opportunity to learn outside of the classroom at no charge. People can also enjoy the convenience of listening live via radio.

Every year, NBD contributes to the graduation and prize giving ceremonies of numerous schools on island. The Bank also contributes to education by providing scholarships for secondary school students. NBD also partners with relevant stakeholders to facilitate the **V.F. Inc Youth Series** and the **Nature Island Literary Festival**.





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SMA, St. John's Primary, Win Math Power Competition!

The St. John's Primary School is the champion in the primary schools category of the National Math Power Contest.

The Saint Mary's Academy dominated the secondary schools category winning at both the lower and upper secondary levels.

The competition was organized by the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development in collaboration with the National Bank of Dominica Ltd.

The Roseau Primary School placed second in the primary schools category with the St. Martin's Primary in third.

In the lower secondary category (Forms 1,2 and 3), Orion Academy was in second place and the Portsmouth Secondary, third.

Convent High School was second in the upper secondary category (Forms 4 & 5), while the Dominica Grammar School was third.

The National Math Power Contest was organized to raise interest among students and boost attainment levels in mathematics.



Deconstructing Literacy for Teaching and Learning

by **Nazarine William - Titre**
Learning Support Advisor

Defining Literacy

A world-wide endeavor, an ideal to be reached, a tool for social practice, a set of skills that enable communication in oral and written language, all define this gem of society: Literacy! The perceptions and approaches towards literacy learning are diverse and a plethora of literature and research on this topic is readily available. However generic literacy teaching and learning may seem, their conceptualization and implementation must be contextualized for any significant achievement or desired school outcome. Current research describes literacy as more than the skills of reading and writing but some things done in communities of practice and viewed as part of acculturation. Thus, the teaching and learning of literacy has situated meaning (Gee, 2011) that is both personal and social. Any curriculum intended for literacy teaching and learning must reflect a broad perception of literacy with multiple dimensions: the socio-cultural, linguistic/ psycholinguistic, cognitive, developmental, and critical aspects of literacy (Kucer, 2005).

Socio-culture and Literacy

Derived from the work of Lev Vygotsky, the tenets of the sociocultural perspective of literacy maintain that readers construct their own meaning from text based on their prior knowledge. The thinking is that individuals first interact socially or col-

lectively with others, and then use the knowledge gained personally. Learners' cultural experiences shape or influence the way meaning is constructed. In literacy teaching and learning, knowledge of the learner's cultural group and what knowledge of language and literacy practices that the learner brings to the classroom is significant. Teachers' valuing of learners, their identities, their language and their communities are important principles of the sociolinguistic perspective of literacy and bi-literacy.

It benefits both teachers and learners when time is invested in finding out what linguistically diverse learners know through reading interviews. The teacher can obtain in depth information regarding the reading strategies (sounding out, skipping a word) and processes that the learner are familiar with. Also important, are the learner's belief about reading as well as perceptions of themselves as readers. Students' interests, home and neighborhood literacies, likes and dislikes should inform curriculum, as these factors are integral to the construction of meaning.

Linguistics and Literacy

The linguistic dimension of literacy speaks largely to the production of language: encoding and decoding of written text. Comprehension has its emphasis on deciphering the writer's message encoded within the text.

Since literacy processes are perceived to occur in the learner's head, curricular focus of this perspective is on the linguistic and cognitive processing involved in reading and writing. This includes the bottom-up model with its letter sound correspondence, de-



coding and encoding skills inherent in phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, spelling text analysis, text types and genre. Teacher adeptness, selection of compatible material, systematic instruction, consistent and meaningful practice, and learner's needs and interests are also factors leading to mastery of linguistic skills and the mechanics.

Cognitive Development in Literacy

The Top-down model of cognitive processing deals mainly with the remembering of text, emphasizes text structure, story grammar, comprehension and its relation to background knowledge and schema. The cognitive perspective still weighs heavily on our current curriculum. Learners discover and verbalize how words combine to make sense as they interact with each other, the teacher and written text. Hence, the importance of instruction for development of oratory, lower and higher order comprehension skills, activation of

"...literacy pedagogy should be laden with demonstrations that afford students opportunities to observe products and processes in literacy. Thus, teacher modeling and exemplars of expected reading, writing, listening, speaking and representing must form part of the literacy curriculum."

prior knowledge, consolidation of the reading-writing connection as well as

the form-function of text.

Behavioral/ developmental dimension of literacy emphasizes stages in growth and development as being central to learning and reading. Reading and writing are perceived as conditioned behavior; the bottom-up model of reading seeks to teach phonics and skill-based reading and writing. Complementing such models with top-down and interactive models is likely to address the needs of students with varying aptitudes and intelligences.

Critical Literacy

An emergent dimension of literacy often neglected in the curriculum is critical literacy. It is not the typical critical thinking (analysis, synthesis, evaluation of text features) but is guided by critical theory which seeks to interrogate the relations of power through language. Critical literacy analyzes and questions texts in relation to fairness, equity, power, social inclusion and, exclusion; unearthing authors values, attitudes, beliefs and intent. Reflection on the text may lead to social action for change. Critical literacy teaches students to read the world and it can be taught by engaging students in questions such as: Who is the author? Why did she/he write the text? Which persons benefit from the text? Whose views are expressed? Whose views are silenced? What is another point of view? (Fairclough, 1989; Vasquez, 2004; Gee, 2011). Advocates of critical literacy encourage the engagement of learners as early as K.

Technological Developments and Literacy

In addition to the various dimensions of literacy to be considered at the primary and secondary level, the

integration of technological developments in communication is imperative. Emphasis must be placed on the multi-literacies that enable students to negotiate multiple linguistic and cultural communications. Empowering students with multi-literacies do not only equip learners to decipher traditional text but help them understand Meta-languages- languages that describe other languages. Digital and electronic media skills in the literacy curriculum introduce students to the interpretation of linguistic, visual, audio, gestural, spacial, multimodal ways of meaning. Real world discourse and simulations offer experiences for teaching multi-literacies.

Adopting Effective Literacy Pedagogy

Brian Cambourne says that literacy pedagogy should be laden with demonstrations that afford students opportunities to observe products and processes in literacy. Thus, teacher modeling and exemplars of expected reading, writing, listening, speaking and representing must form part of the literacy curriculum. Literacy pedagogy should also create spaces, which allow for student responsibility; learners making some decisions. There must be ample opportunities for practice of new literacy learning in authentic situations. Positive expectations and appropriate feedback from significant others (teachers, parents, peers) need to be communicated to learners. Teacher must also expect learner miscues and provide appropriate scaffolds. Other essential conditions include a purpose for learning, conscious involvement, risk taking, and reduced anxiety.

Evidence of literacy learning is collected through appropriate assessment. It is meant to determine the type of learning taking place and to

offer direction for program improvement. Assessment identifies the competencies displayed by students in different aspects of literacy in multiple settings and under varied conditions. Information regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the literacy program, the literacy environment, as well as the students' literacy development is captured. Learners' strengths and weaknesses in reading, writing, listening and oral language development are identified through the natural classroom routines and should be conducted throughout the curriculum rather than through specific acts of reading and writing.

Analysis of students' miscues is a significant part of the literacy assessment process. It does not suffice that teachers accumulate scores on the measureable literacy skills. In addition, there must be skillful identification and interpretation of miscue patterns, which can indicate students' thinking and their adeptness in the use of processes that learners employ as readers, writers and thinkers as they construct meaning. Data from literacy assessment should inform the planning, execution and assessment of literacy curriculum as well as staff development initiatives.

Any program that is serious about literacy development will integrate all the dimensions discussed above. Exclusive focus on any one dimension is likely to disregard some learners.



Reflection and Teacher Development

by: **Dr. Jeffrey Blaize**
Assistant Chief Education Officer



Teacher reflection represents a critical component of teacher development and improvement of craft knowledge. The premium placed on reflection within the teaching and learning process re-emphasises its substantive nature as an essential tool for teacher improvement. Reflection has been a subject of much discourse in the field of teacher education. However, many individuals are unsure of what the concept entails for classroom teachers. Reflection can be considered as one stage in a model of pedagogical discourse when teachers activate oversight functions in an effort to critically reconsider their day to day classroom actions and decisions.

John Dewey, one of the pioneers of reflection, made a distinct difference

between routine and reflective teaching. Dewey (1933) characterized reflective teaching as an active, persistent and careful consideration of means and ends and their relationship to social, educational and political contexts. Within this framework, he considered reflection as turning a subject over in the mind and giving it serious consideration, thereby enabling the teacher to act in an intentional and deliberate manner.

In the typical classroom, reflection can be either *retrospective*, *prospective* or *action-present*. Irrespective of the model of reflection, what really

defines true reflection is the establishment of a critical distance between the teacher and his/her practice in order to facilitate an impartial analysis of past, present and anticipated actions.

Schon (1983) offered the concept of reflection in action where the professional reflects on action during actual practice. This method of reflection is bound by *action-present* and during this period one's thinking serves to reshape practice during the practice itself. Reflection in action has the critical function of questioning our *knowing-in-action*. This method involves problem setting where interactively we name the things to which we will attend and frame the context in which we will attend to them. The underlying tenet behind this thesis is that by thinking about our actions and reactions during

practice, we can improve practice. Hence, when we begin to appreciate that our existing repertoire of knowledge (our knowing in action) is inadequate in helping us work in an efficient manner, reflection in action occurs. Although as professionals we can and often do reflect in action, we seldom reflect on our reflection-in-action.

It means, therefore, that as educators we need to question our practice from various vantage points. We need not only reflect on what we plan to do and what we have actually done in the classroom and within our schools, but we also need to reflect on

“When we begin to question our competence, we begin to appreciate our limitations and attempt to enact structures to facilitate improved methods of delivery and consequently greater efficiency in practice.”

our own reflections during practice. When we begin to question our competence, we begin to appreciate our limitations and attempt to enact structures to facilitate improved methods of delivery and consequently greater efficiency in practice.

Through the practical application of *reflection-in-action*, the teacher constantly attempts to improve on lesson delivery. Hence, the centre of focus moves from the teacher using students' inadequacies as the main reason for students' lack of understanding of a

concept to one where the teacher critically observes his or her own delivery with a view to making relevant amendments to facilitate student learning.

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Promoting School Effectiveness; the Principal as Instructional Leader

by Dr. Jeffrey Blaize:

Assistant Chief Education Officer

Research findings have confirmed a strong correlation between effective schools and principals who keep a high focus on the supervision of the curriculum and instruction. At its simplest, instructional leadership can be considered as 'leading the delivery of the curriculum'. It relates to the actions that a principal takes to promote student learning. Principals who adopt the principles of instructional leadership, make instructional quality the top priority of the school.

The role of an instructional leader differs from that of traditional school administrator in a number of ways. Whereas the traditional principal spends the majority of his/her time dealing with administrative matters, a principal who is an instructional leader redefines his/her role to strive for excellence in teaching and learning. As such, it becomes the principal's responsibility to work with teachers to:

- define educational objectives
- set school-wide goals
- provide the necessary resources for learning and

- create new learning opportunities for staff and students.

School effectiveness is facilitated by good instructional leaders. Instructional leaders make student performance the epicenter of school activities. In so doing, school-related activities are designed on the basis of their proximity to effective teaching and subsequently student learning.

In most successful schools one will observe a high quality of leadership by principals, parent involvement, the development of a school culture based on high academic achievement and a collegial relationship. Effective schools are judged on student achievement, which is often facilitated by strong leadership. The following factors are critical in determining effective schools.

- *Professional leadership which is firm and purposeful*
- *Shared vision and goals*
- *The school as a learning environment*
- *A focus on teaching and learning*
- *Strong emphasis on students*
- *Purposeful teaching*
- *Setting high expectations*
- *Positive reinforcement*
- *Monitoring progress*
- *Promoting students' rights and responsibilities*
- *A strong home-school partnership/parent and community involvement*
- *A focus on staff professional development/the school as a learning organization*
- *Positive school culture*
- *Creative problem solving approaches*

School effectiveness is facilitated by good instructional leaders. Instructional leaders make student performance the epicenter of school activities. In so doing, school-related activities are designed on the basis of their *proximity* to effective teaching and subsequently student learning. These leaders exhibit a clear sense of direction for their schools. They prioritize and focus attention on the things that really matter in terms of the work of students. These leaders focus on the quality of instruction; they know what is happening in the classroom and develop the capacities of staff by building on their strengths and minimizing their weaknesses.

Instructional leaders shape the culture of the schools in the direction of student achievement. Hence, school related activities are designed to positively impact on student performance. Such individuals are proactive and anticipate challenges

that may emerge along the way. Principals who are instructional leaders are fully aware of what is going on in the classroom. They make the time to '*walk the factory floor to see what is being produced*'. In so doing these principal are able to appreciate some of the problems teachers and students encounter on a daily basis and suggest ways to mitigate these challenges.

Instructional leaders utilize the potential of staff for the good of the school. They encourage and foster continuous professional growth and development. In addition, they provide opportunities for self-reflection and personal growth among staff. These leaders ensure that there is a clear line of communication among staff and all staff members are valued for their contribution to the school. They understand that teachers desire to be acknowledged and appreciated for a job well done.

Instructional leaders serve as an *instructional resource*. These leaders are '*tuned-in*' to issues relating to curriculum, effective pedagogical strategies and student assessment. Through their natural enthusiasm they serve as a source of motivation to members of staff. They maintain a visible presence within the school and create a school culture, which thrives on excellence; one which encourages students to succeed despite all odds.

It means, therefore, that the role of the principal is essential in ensuring school effectiveness. Consequently, principals must assume greater presence at the school and provide substantive input in the supervision of curriculum and instruction in order to ensure that students continue to excel.



ALPHA Centre Celebrates 40 Years- Government Pledges Support!

The Alpha Centre, a school for children with mental disabilities, celebrated its 40th anniversary in June.

The centre held a week of activities including an opening mass, the launch of an official, commemorative magazine and an exhibition. Other activities included a field trip for students to the Londonderry Livestock Farm and a fund-raising dinner under the patronage of the Most Reverend Bishop Gabriel Malzaire.

The Alpha Centre now boasts forty students on roll and offers a holistic curriculum of academics, life skills, woodwork, sewing, art & craft, cooking and backyard gardening.

Speaking at the launch of the week of activities, Hon. Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit said his government would assist the institution meet its operating costs, hence forth.

Government already makes an annual subvention to the institution, but the Prime Minister said a budget allocation would be made to further assist the centre.

“I want to say to the ALPHA Centre that come September, the challenges which you have had in putting together the resources to operate this very important institution will be something of the past.

“I have ensured that in the budget coming up in July you will have the full operating cost for the ALPHA Centre and this will be for as long as the ALPHA Centre exists in Dominica,” Prime Minister Skerrit said.



Donyelle Riviere Tops 2014 G6NA

Donyelle Riviere of the St. Martin's Primary School is the top performer in the 2014 Grade Six National Assessment.

Janae Rabess of the St. Martin's Primary School placed second and Aleisha Roberts of the Convent Preparatory placed third.

In fourth place was Ludovic Robinson of the Roosevelt Douglas Primary School and Kelsey Anthony of the St. Martin's Primary was fifth.

One thousand and fifty-seven students, that is, 515 boys and 542 girls, wrote the examinations.

The Government of Dominica awarded scholarships to all students who obtained four grade As or three As and one B or three As and one C or two As and two Bs. Bursaries were awarded to those students who obtained the equivalent of four Bs or better but did not qualify for the award of scholarship. On this basis 80 students were awarded scholarships and 116 were awarded bursaries.

Government also made the usual allocation to scholars and bursars for textbooks and stationery of \$500.00 and \$300 respectively.



CSEC TOP PERFORMERS 2014

11 ONEs & 2 TWOs

Al A. Parillon - SMA

10 ONEs

Kaele L. Benjamin - CHS

Tiffany D. Johnson - CHS

Tojya U. Vital - CHS

9 ONEs & 3 TWOs

Lou-Ann Laurence - CBSS

9 ONEs & 2 TWOs

Munirih V. Marie - CHS

Devon Malcom Brewster - PSS

9 ONEs & 1 TWO

Paloma K. B. St. Jean - CHS

Benjamin C. Pascal - DGS

9 ONEs

Kadisha M. Culpepper - CHS

Fifteen Teachers Successful in Music Exams



Fifteen teachers were successful at the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) exams held in June.

Assistant Education Officer-Music, Mervin Alexander said this was the first time that such a high number of teachers has sat the prestigious exam. Alexander said it was noteworthy that the teachers had excelled at such a high level, some never having

played a musical instrument before.

He said the teachers' new skills would be put to use at their schools to improve music education.

The results included four distinctions, seven masters and four passes.

The Ministry of Education and

Human Resource Development congratulates:

Josette Graham, Tracy Gail, Ursula Severin, Veronica Leblanc, Bernetta Seaman, D'nell James, Shernelle James, Faith Daniel, Lennisha Simon, Malcolm Roberts, Zephlyn Hamlet, Mathilda Toussaint, Janice Andrew-Magloire, Navillah Challenger and Bernadine Diana Augustine.



Literacy Week in the Southern District

The Bellevue Chopin Primary School was among several schools in the southern District which staged literacy activities in March. Activities there ended with an exhibition and rally held under the theme 'Literacy-The Gateway to Success.'

Principal Ericson Bertrand said, during the week of activities, the school focused on improving the listening skills of students. He said teachers also concentrated on developing reading and writing skills.

Students also participated in a Spelling Bee competition, in collaboration with the Pichelin

Primary School, and a Reading Day. District Education Officer (South) Ferne Laurent said Literacy Week activities were also held in several other schools in the Southern District to promote interest in reading and writing among students.

Laurent told the closing ceremony at Bellevue Chopin that the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development hoped to create critical thinkers and independent citizens through the development of literacy skills.

"So far our district focus has been on literacy for the reason that we need to create a society of independent thinkers

"We have done our bit in our district by making sure that when our children leave a grade they are able to function at that grade level," Brumant said.

Assistant Chief Education Officer Dr. Jeffrey Blaize encouraged students to read extensively to increase their chances of success in life.

"Read every day. When you go home, find a book and read. You will reap the benefits of your hard work in the future," Blaize said.

Literacy Week activities are held on an annual basis in the Southern and Western School districts.

Eastern District Hosts Primary Schools Festival

Primary Schools in the Eastern District participated in a festival at the Salybia Primary School in April to highlight student accomplishments over the school year.

The festival was held under the theme: ‘Critical thinking-planting seeds that blossom abundantly.’

The activity featured performances and exhibitions from the thirteen (13) schools in the district. Displays were based on achievements in numeracy and literacy and also included photos and videos of student successes during the period.

Students also participated in quizzes and competitions in Math and Language. A competition dubbed ‘Mind Quest’ was designed to test student knowledge in all areas of study.

District Education Officer for the Eastern District, Ernie Lawrence Jno-Finn, encouraged teachers to appeal to the critical thinking abilities of their pupils from an early age.

“Young children are naturally driven to learn because they are curious. This natural curiosity should be supported throughout their primary schools years, into the secondary. This can be done by giving them the tools that will enable them to think critically-to ask the right questions and actively engage themselves in activities with a purpose,” Mrs. Jno- Finn said.

“Teachers should see themselves as facilitators of learning, not the ‘masters of all knowledge’ dumping concepts into their students’ minds. We need to train them to become engaged in their own learning,” she added.

The Eastern District Primary Schools Festival is an annual event.

Numeracy Festival in Vieille Case



The Northern District team held a numeracy festival in May to help build student interest in the study of mathematics.

The activity, led by Education Officer, Northern District, Madura Walter, included a formal ceremony featuring drama pieces on the importance of Math and an exhibition.

The exhibition displayed the work of students, as well as, teacher materials, created to make teaching and learning more effective.



BRILLA BANK DONATES 52 iPADS TO JONES BEAUPIERRE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Brilla Bank Corporation, an international bank and trust, registered and incorporated in the Commonwealth of Dominica, donated fifty-two (52) iPads to the Jones Beupierre Primary School.

The iPads, valued at US fifteen thousand dollars (USD \$15, 000) were donated following representation made by Hon. Petter Saint-Jean, Minister for Education and Human Resource Development.

Saint-Jean told the handing over ceremony, his Ministry was pleased to partner with Brilla Bank to ensure the students received the opportunity to learn and explore through the use of technology.

“I believe that it is imperative in this day and age, with the advances we have made in technology, that every child be given the exposure at a very early age.

“The Ministry of Education recognizes that we must prepare our students to be global citizens. We are on a drive to equip all our schools with computers and computer labs,” the Minister noted.

Chief Executive Officer of Brilla Bank Corporation, David Brillembourg, encouraged students to take full advantage of the opportunity to explore the world through technology.

“Technology is something that allows you to really explore and learn life. I think it is something that you really have to embrace”. Brillembourg said.

Principal of the Jones Beupierre Primary School, Martha Stephenson expressed appreciation for the iPads and said they would be used to facilitate learning at the school.

Brilla Bank is part of Brilla; a financial group of companies specialized in offering individuals and institutions premier investment solutions through a comprehensive platform of products and services, including securities, capital markets and banking.



Education Trust Fund Receives Donations; Minister Appeals For Further Support

HEADLINE PHOTO: Education Minister Hon. Petter Saint-Jean & Chairman of the Education Trust Fund, Willie Fevrier Address a Press Conference in May.

The Education Trust Fund heightened its fund-raising efforts this year with a press event, which appealed to the general public for sustained assistance for students who have difficulty attending secondary school.

Hon. Minister for Education and Human Resource Development Petter Saint-Jean encouraged members of the corporate community to invest in the human resource of Dominica by contributing to their education today.

Several organizations and business continued their support of the Fund in 2013-2014.

The Dominica Electricity Services (DOMLEC) made a donation of \$5,000 to the Education Trust Fund.

Public Relations Officer of DOMLEC, Adina Bellot Valentine, said the company's annual donation to the Education Trust Fund was an indication of the company's interest in youth development in Dominica.

Malcolm Stephen & Sons also

donated six thousand dollars (\$6,000) to the Fund.

The company is a regular contributor to the Education Trust Fund and says it plans to continue this commitment.

The Police Organization for Youth Development (POYD) made a donation of EC \$1,580.00.

Former POYD members, Dr. Rhea Olivacee and Dr. Sophia George and POYD Leader, former Police Commissioner Desmond Blanchard made the presentation.

Zhu Zhonghua of Specialty Making Materials Limited, which produces windows and doors, made a \$5,000 donation to a director of the Education Trust Fund, David Phillip.

The Education Trust Fund was established in 1981 through an act of parliament to assist students experiencing difficulty meeting the costs of attending secondary school.

The Government of Dominica provides a yearly subvention to the Fund.





CSEC Performance Improves; Mathematics Pass Rate Increases

The Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development recorded an improvement in performance at the 2014 Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) Caribbean Secondary Education (CSEC) exams.

The overall pass rate was 76.1% compared to 74.6% last year.

On average, students attained passing grades in at least five (5) subjects.

A significant increase in Mathematics performance was recorded. Four hundred and thirty-seven students (437) or 50.8% of the students who sat the exam obtained a pass compared to three hundred and thirty-one (331) or 36% in 2013. This year, six secondary schools obtained a pass rate of over fifty percent in Mathematics. Only two schools achieved that result in 2013.

Except for three schools that maintained their averages of last year, all other schools showed some increase in percentage point. The St. Martin Secondary School and the Seventh Day Adventist School had the biggest improvement in passes in

mathematics with a 42 percentage point increase over their last year's performance. Dominica Grammar School and Dominica Community High School had a 29 percentage point increase.

Overall performance in English remains consistently high although there was a 3 percentage point decrease. This year, only two schools failed to attain a pass rate of over fifty percent.

Business studies continue to lead the subject entries with over fifty percent of students sitting Principles of Accounts or Principles of Business or both. Only about one-third of students choose a foreign language.

Sciences such as Physics and Chemistry account for less than 20% of the choices.

Less than ten percent of students sat for Technical and Vocational education and Training (TVET) related subjects.

Nine hundred and forty-two (942) students sat the exam this year compared to 1040 in 2013.

Four Awarded at Primary Schools Festival

Four people who have made significant contributions to the teaching and preservation of the French Language were awarded at the annual Primary Schools French Festival in March.

During the celebrations to mark French Week and Francophone Month, Dwayne Drigo a teacher at the Massacre Primary School, Elisa Guiste-Matthew a teacher at the St Martin Primary School, Ross Loramol, a former French teacher, and Dominica's Goodwill Ambassador Michele Henderson were awarded.

The Hon. Minister for Education & Human Resource Development, Petter Saint Jean, presented the awards.

The French Festival, in its third year, featured displays in art, drama, music, song and dance from students of fifteen primary schools.

Grand Fond Primary Hosts Girls Day



The Grand Fond Primary School held its first Girls Day in June.

Activities included a general assembly, which featured an address by Learning Support Advisor for the Eastern District, Carine Burnette who spoke on the important role that women play in society.

During the day, students participated in skills activities such as cooking, sewing, flower gardening and hair combing.

The Grand Fond Primary School has also hosted a Boy's Day for the past three years.

ITSS holds March Against Child Sexual Abuse



The Isaiah Thomas Secondary School (ITSS) held its second annual march against child sexual abuse in May.

Various secondary and primary schools, including the Portsmouth Secondary School, Campbell Primary School and the Kaleb Laurent Primary School, participated in the march, held under the theme 'Breaking the Silence'.

The students marched through the streets of St. Joseph in an effort to sensitize the public about child sexual abuse and to discourage its occurrence.

Parliamentary Representative for St. Joseph, Kelvar Darroux commended the school for its initiative, and encouraged members of the community to take responsibility for protecting children from child sexual abuse.

In Photos



West District Principals Meeting



Mme. Francophone Winner



Students View Display at Western District Literacy Exposition



Top Performers at Mme. Francophone



School Feeding Programme Training for Cooks



Jarret Jean-Jacques - Winner - DBS Reading Competition



Al Parillon Excels at CSEC 2014

Al Parillon emerged first on the list of top performers in this year's CXC Caribbean Secondary Certificate Education (CSEC) exams. He sat thirteen (13) subjects obtaining 11 grade ones and 2 grade twos.

The 17-year-old Saint Mary's Academy (SMA) student attributes his success to hard work and sacrifice. This formula seems to have worked for him before as, before his top performance at CSEC, Parillon had also distinguished himself in several other ways. He graduated from the SMA as 2014 Valedictorian. Earlier this year, Parillon and his partner dominated the Ministry of Education, National Bank of Dominica Ltd. Math Power Contest, winning the Upper Secondary School Category.

His interests also extend past the academic and he is an avid martial arts performer and the holder of a bronze medal from a Trinidad-held martial arts competition. Parillon is also a skilful footballer and a member of the Bath-Estate based Wayne George Football Academy.

In his preparation for the 2014 CSEC exams, he gave up much of his extra-curricular activities and devoted extended hours to homework and additional study.

"It took preparation, sacrifice, proper time management and many sleepless nights," Parillon told *Education Matters*.

"I was, however, determined to excel and I am happy with my success," he added.

His proud father, Albert Parillon, agrees that his son's work ethic led to his success, describing him as a "wonderful student, obedient and a hard worker."

The young Parillon credits his family, teachers and principals and his classmates at the SMA for support and encouragement, which he says, contributed to his success.

He advises other students to cultivate the important skill of listening in class if they desire to excel.

"Being attentive is important. You pick up so much that the teacher is saying which usually shows up in tests or exams," he noted.

Parillon is expected to continue on to the Dominica State College as he begins to prepare for a career in Software Engineering.



MoE-Looking Ahead!

The Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development has begun preparations for two major events on the 2014-2015 calendar. The Ministry will host the Excellence in Education Awards on October 1, and the annual National Youth Rally on October 30.

Other Important Dates (2014-2015)

September 1 - *Teacher Planning*

September 2 - *Teacher Planning, New Principals' Training*

September 3 - *Teacher Planning, New Teacher Training*

September 4 - *Teacher Planning, New Teacher Training*

September 5 - *Teacher Planning, Principals' Meeting*

September 8, 2014 - *School Reopens - Term 1*

December 17, 2014 - *End of Term 1 - Christmas Break*

January 5, 2015 - *School Reopens - Term 2*

April 1, 2015 - *End of Term 2 - Easter Break*

April 13, 2015 - *School Reopens - Term 3*

July 3, 2015 - *End of Term 3 - Summer Break*