

Dominica

Revised version, August 2006.

Principles and general objectives of education

The Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica is convinced that an effective education system is indispensable to development. Specifically, the Government recognizes that an educated human resource base is essential for economic productivity, political stability and social well-being.

A fundamental guiding principle of the education system is the view that all citizens, regardless of gender, class, culture or ethnic origin have the ability to learn and should be accorded the opportunity to develop that potential to the fullest.

It is hoped therefore that in the process of education, ethical and moral values are established and reinforced. At the same time, the system must engender the capacity for all the people to develop leadership skills, stimulate and empower the quest for fundamental values of justice, equality, respect and truth—all prerequisites for building a strong democracy.

Concomitantly, the main goals are to develop the individual's intellectual skills, a capacity for independent thought and critical analysis and the productive capacity for socio-economic development. There is also an underlying principle or objective that seeks to develop appropriate values and behaviour that are consistent with the country's cultural identity and heritage.

Current educational priorities and concerns

The 1990s have been a period of considerable difficulty for Dominica. The changes to the Banana Protocol within the European Union (EU), the weakening of the pound sterling in which banana prices are denominated, the decline in concessionary financial flows and adverse weather conditions all impacted negatively on economic performance.

Growth of real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) during 1991-1996 averaged 2.3% as compared with 5.2% during 1986-1990, with per capita GDP at US\$3,224 in 1997. With the downturn in growth performance, unemployment increased to 23.1%. A profile of the unemployed reveals that women and youth are the groups most acutely affected.

The government recognizes that it must accelerate diversification while rapidly increasing the efficiency of banana production. The success of this desired economic transition will depend in part on human resource development to create the labour force required for an increasingly competitive international economy.

It is generally accepted that to secure the requisite modern labour force, standards of education and learning must be raised significantly. This has necessitated



major reforms in the education sector, which focus on enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the system. Equally important has been the issue of equity of access to educational opportunities.

The major socio-economic and political impact of these changes has been the realization that a trained human resource base is a critical requirement for achieving economic advancement. Consequently, emphasis on education has been maintained with average recurrent expenditure at 17.1% between 1993 and 1996.

Recently this emphasis has been further accentuated with the implementation of a Basic Education Reform Project utilizing IBRD/IDA loan funds. These reforms were introduced largely due to the reduction in inflows, poor condition of physical plant and deteriorating standards of achievement, particularly in the core subject areas of English language and mathematics.

The major areas of concern that require urgent attention and remedial action are the following:

- high percentage of untrained staff (60% of primary teachers untrained in 1996/1997);
- persistent under-achievement of secondary level graduates, particularly in English language (41.5%) and mathematics (34.7%);
- poor physical plant;
- inequality of access to secondary schools, particularly in rural areas;
- inadequate supervision of instructional delivery and shortages of equipment and supplies;
- inadequacy of secondary school places (only 32.6% of those passing the Common Entrance Examination 'CEE' secured places in 1988/1989; about 34% in recent years);
- insufficiency of tertiary educational opportunities;
- weak local institutional capacity to plan, manage or monitor performance of a system that will respond to varying needs.

In this connection, the major characteristics and objectives of recent reforms are: increasing access to secondary education; improving the quality of teaching and the management of the sector; and improving the supply of materials and maintenance services to schools.

There are also cultural considerations that impact on access and the quality of education. In the Carib Territory, for example, with four primary schools, access to textbooks is very limited with considerable weaknesses manifested in the low



percentage pass in the CEE. In 1994, only 11% of students gained places at secondary schools compared with 32% nationally.

There are also disparities between Roseau-based schools and others, where schools in the capital Roseau consistently return better percentage passes in the external examinations of CXC/GCE compared to others. Significantly, these Roseau-based schools attracted a higher percentage of graduates than the rest.

Reforms in early 1990s included: the creation of a Curriculum Unit charged with developing curricula, teaching materials and tests; the introduction of School Library Extension Scheme towards correcting the poor reading situation; and increasing the teacher-student ratio from 1:17 to 1:30, which has been designed to transfer financial resources from the payment of salaries towards supplies and equipment.

The issue of wider access has been the subject of considerable debate, as access to secondary and tertiary education is viewed as a prerequisite to socio-economic advancement. Thus, reforms that are more recent have focused on a multiplicity of objectives. These reforms are driven by two major projects.

The first project is a sub-regional initiative, the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)/Eastern Caribbean Education Reform Project, funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). This initiative was developed from an OECS Education Reform Strategy and seeks to provide the basis for educational and national development. Its principal objectives are to:

- improve access to and the quality of basic education;
- enhance the relevance of education for students and employers;
- improve gender equity in the education system.

Another major medium for the education reform strategy is the Basic Education Reform Project, jointly financed by the World Bank and the Government Dominica. The principal objectives of this project have been noted above. The project focuses on quality enhancement, capacity building institutional strengthening and increased access to education.

Within that framework, several initiatives are being pursued. These include:

- strengthening of education management and planning;
- restructuring the management of the Ministry of Education and the training of senior staff, particularly at the post-graduate level;
- enhancing the quality of teachers through upgrading basic teacher training and strengthening in-service training for teachers;
- providing a better supply of instructional material;



- establishing an educational testing and measurement capacity to monitor students performance;
- providing an additional 725 secondary school places under the World Bank Project, and increasing secondary schools places at Grand Bay and at selected primary schools;
- developing an educational materials production capacity in the Ministry of Education.

Various other activities are currently being pursued. These include:

- in-service training and orientation programmes for teachers and principals in areas such as public health and community relations;
- preparation and production of supplementary reading materials;
- provision of supplies and other resources required for effective operation of schools;
- computerization of secondary schools on a phased basis;
- review of the primary school curricula to remove the overload.

Laws and other basic regulations concerning education

The **Education Act No. 11** of 1997 was passed in the House of Assembly (Parliament) on 10 October 1997. It is based on the Harmonized OECS Education Bill. This Act provides the regulatory framework for the delivery of educational services at all levels.

Subject to the availability of resources, the Act states that all persons are entitled to receive an educational programme appropriate to their needs. Section 27 of the Education Act provides for compulsory attendance at school between the ages of 5 and 16 years.

There are several new and improved provisions, which cater to those with special education needs, as well as those students who are challenged, physically or mentally. The role, functions and responsibilities of the Chief Education Officer are clearly defined. So, too, are the rights and responsibilities of students, teachers and parents.

Much greater involvement is prescribed in the Act for the management of government-assisted schools. Corporal punishment has been restricted to the principal and deputy, with the Minister given the power to abolish such punishment by Order published in the Official Gazette subject to an affirmative vote in Parliament.

This new legislative enactment also calls for further transparency in the management and utilization of resources. Special provisions have been made for



annual audits by the Director of Audit, or an officer authorised by him/her. Also, under the 1997 Act (Section 70), the Minister has been given the power to appoint the Board of Management of assisted private secondary schools.

Administration and management of the education system

The Education Act (1997) confers a wide array of powers on the Minister of Education and also imposes a considerable range of duties and responsibilities on him/her for the administration of education in Dominica.

The Law requires the Minister to establish a relevant, varied and comprehensive education system that is characterized by excellence. The Minister also has power for framing educational policy. Essentially, the administration and management of the education system is vested in the Minister and the **Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth Affairs**.

The Minister has power to appoint an **Education Advisory Board** as well as **School Management Boards**. Under the Act, the Advisory Board shall advise the Minister on educational matters, respecting the performance of any of his/her responsibilities; and on any matter relating to the promotion of education.

All secondary assisted, as well as private schools, have management boards. These Boards have responsibility for policy formulation, financial management and infrastructural development. Although the new law makes provision for boards at government secondary schools, these have not been commissioned.

More than 50% of primary schools have established Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), while all secondary schools operate with functional PTAs. These bodies have been particularly useful in submitting advice to government and providing assistance with policy formulation on matters of discipline, institutional and infrastructural development.

Recently a **Council** was established on Early Childhood Education. Although early childhood education is not within the scope of the Education Act, there are several establishments in the island providing early intervention in core areas for the 3-5-year-olds.

There are three other public institutions that play a significant role in education. These are: the **Establishment, Personnel and Training Department (EPTD)**; the **Public Service Commission (PSC)**; and the **Ministry of Finance**.

The EPTD has responsibility for general management and control of the public service subject to the Constitution and the Public Service Act. These two instruments define powers of ministers and the role of permanent secretaries in public service management. Over the last decade, the EPTD had been implementing reforms aimed at greater efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of government services.

The Department has also introduced standards of performance and criteria of accountability amongst teachers and principals. Recently, these standards and the



Performance Appraisal System have been undergoing critical review for greater objectivity and acceptance.

Appointments in the public service are vested in the Public Service Commission established under Section 84 of the Constitution. The PSC is therefore an important institution as it is responsible to observe the policy decisions regarding entry and promotion within the teaching service.

All government expenditure is centrally controlled by the Ministry of Finance. The Ministry therefore regulates the size and influences quality of the teaching service through the allocation of expenditure. In recent times, particularly under the World Bank Reform Project, the Ministry of Education has exhibited a preference for submitting its requests for additional resources directly to Cabinet, whose decisions supersede those of the Ministry of Finance.

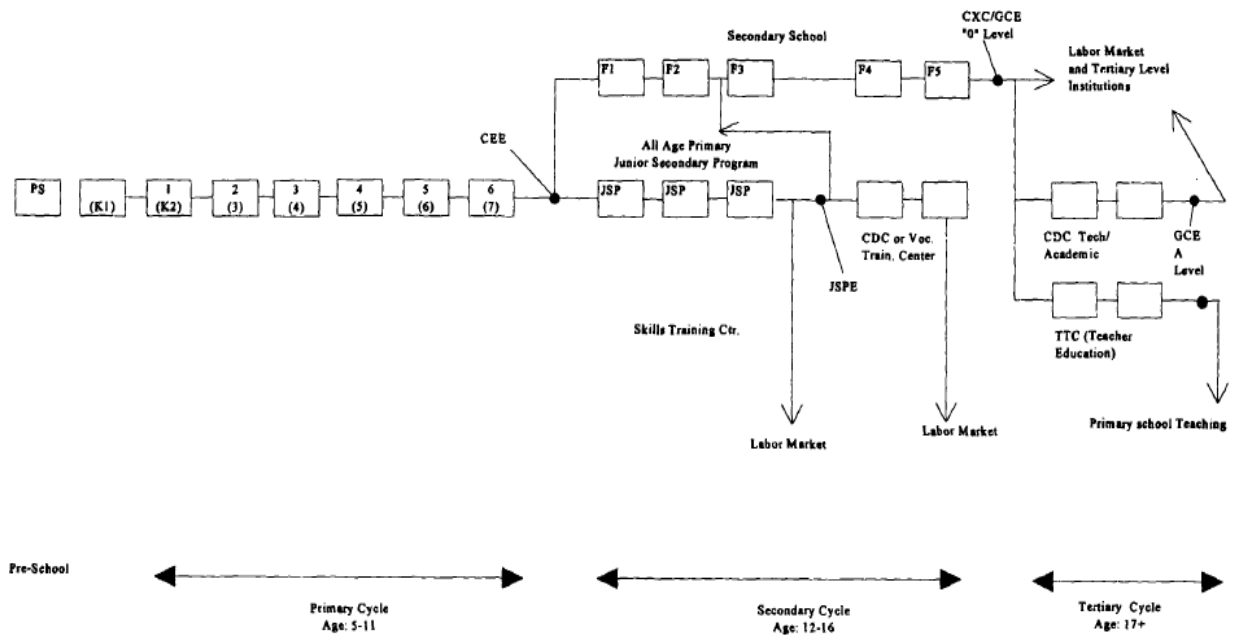
Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are also involved in education, though in a non-formal manner. The Christian Children's Fund works with disadvantaged children, and supports parents and children with materials, textbooks, and uniform and transportation allowances. The Fund also supports leadership training at the local level. The Social Centre and CALLS (the "Centre where Adolescents Learn to Love and Serve") provide skills training and life skills primarily for adolescents, young mothers and unemployed youth.

The Small Project Assistance Team (SPAT) and several other less formal groups focus on community programmes for participatory decision-making. Several other NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs) offer evening classes for external examinations such as CXC and GCE Ordinary- and Advanced-level subjects. These programmes are all aimed at enhancing youths' skills and increase their chances of obtaining jobs.

Significant contributions are also made by private companies through sponsorship of sports, particularly cricket and soccer leagues organized by the Ministry of Education through its Sports Division.

Structure and organization of the education system

Dominica: structure of the education system



Source: World Bank 1995.

Pre-school education

Early childhood care and education (ECCE) is optional and is offered through a variety of facilities, largely by non-governmental organizations. A few nurseries exist and cater to the youngest children. ECCE caters to children between the ages of 2½ and 5 years.

Primary education

Primary education is compulsory and usually begins at age 5, although some infants enter at 4½. Pupils move through kindergarten and Grades I–VII (a two-year infant stage followed by a five-year regular stage) where the Common Entrance Exam (CEE) is taken at 11+. Those who do not obtain places by age 12½ enter the junior secondary programme, where they stay until the age of 16.

Secondary education

Secondary education is free at public schools and government-assisted schools (although some levies may apply at the latter) for all who pass the CEE. As a general rule, secondary education last five years. In Form V, students sit the Caribbean Examinations Council/General Certificate of Education (CXC/GCE) Ordinary-level examinations. The Ministry of Education also administers a National School Leaving Examination for junior secondary students. Students who obtain a Grade I certificate



are eligible to enter Form III of a secondary school, but this is subject to the availability of places.

Tertiary level education is offered in a variety of institutions. The main centre is the Clifton Dupigny Community College. There is also a teacher training college operated by the Ministry of Education and a nursing school attached to the Princess Margaret Hospital.

The University of the West Indies (UWI) provides opportunities through its School of Continuing Studies. These include first-year programmes of the Faculties of Arts and General Studies, Law and Social Sciences. Certificate programmes are also offered.

Primary as well as secondary schools follow the same school year, which, on average, comprises thirty-eight to forty weeks of classes. However, in Form V of secondary education, classes usually end by mid-May to facilitate the final preparation and taking of external examinations. Generally, classes begin on the first Monday in September and end on 30 June, with breaks at Christmas and Easter.

The financing of education

The education system is largely financed by the State. Primary education is predominantly financed by the Government with the exception of a religious denomination, which operates four primary schools, while another denomination operates five such schools but heavily assisted by the State.

Under the financing system, government-owned and controlled secondary schools are fully financed by the State. Assisted schools receive grants and subsidies for payment of salaries, pensions and gratuities for teachers where the latter two are applicable.

Capital costs for construction and expansion is the responsibility of denominational or private schools.

These denominational or government-assisted schools co-exist with fully financed state institutions and private schools. Private schools are a relatively new development. One private denominational school provides an individualized learning environment and prepares students for the CEE. The 1997 enrolment was 81 students.

A recent pioneering effort seeks to combine pre-primary and primary education. It was opened in September 1997 with the principal seconded from the primary school system. The fees are relatively high since financing and governance are vested in the promoters/owners.

There are three other private schools catering to the needs of pre-primary and primary pupils whose parents or guardians are convinced that such setting would challenge their children and provide a more rewarding learning experience. The evidence suggests that some parents are prepared to pay for private education. The total enrolment is approximately 119 pupils.



Central government financing mainly covers to the following: teachers' salaries of all government and government-assisted schools; secretarial support; maintenance of physical plant; textbooks; supplementary material; supplies; and school feeding. There are two categories of assisted schools, those mentioned above and others where the government makes a grant equal to 25% of staff costs.

Also included in the government's budget is the training of nationals at tertiary institutions overseas. This assistance has grown from 0.9 million Eastern Caribbean dollar (EC\$) in 1994/5 to EC\$2.27 million in 1997/1998.

Dominica depends heavily on external sources to finance construction and equipping of schools, training at overseas institutions—particularly at the degree and post-graduate levels—and the provision of support to needy children. Most of that support for this category of pupils is channelled through the Education Trust Fund. In 1997/1998, pupils collectively received EC\$177,000 for materials, uniform and transportation.

Several international agencies provide financial support to the education sector. It is not surprising therefore that many of the policies and programmes are externally driven. These agencies include: the World Bank, CIDA, the World Food Programme (WFP), the British Development Division (now the Department for International Development—DFID), the European Union and the Government of Taiwan.

Significant investment has been made through the provision of training awards. In recent years, the Government of Cuba has granted an average of twenty scholarships annually in the fields of medicine, dentistry, engineering and agriculture. The European Union, the World Bank, the Caribbean Development Bank (BNTF), CFTC, OAS, the British Government and the Commonwealth Scholarship Fellowship Plan have all made impressive contributions towards human resource development and capacity building in the country.

In the 1970s, CIDA made considerable investments in physical plants at the primary level. The last two decades were also a period of major investment in training. However, both CIDA and USAID have shifted the emphasis to programmes of technical assistance and building of local in-house capacity rather than institutionalized programmes at external colleges or universities.

Besides the World Bank Project and the OECS Education Reform Project, the MOE is currently implementing a British DFID-funded Secondary Education Support Project. This project has six components, namely:

- construction of the Grand Bay Secondary School to accommodate 525 students at a cost of EC\$7.5 million;
- rehabilitation of the Grand Bay Primary School at a cost of EC\$575,000;



- introduction of an associate degree programme at the Dominica Teacher Training College, which will seek advanced placement in various faculties of UWI;
- curriculum development and provision of long-term technical assistance to the Curriculum Unit aimed at developing nationwide curricula for Forms I–III;
- fellowships tenable in the United Kingdom, which include guidance and counselling and learning support;
- technical assistance for the establishment of school boards for government-owned schools.

Sponsorship grants from private institutions and NGOs comprise a major element of private expenditure on education. To this must be added household spending on uniforms, learning materials, transportation and meals. These two elements, along with the government contribution through budgetary allocation and external agency support constitute the major source of private expenditure on education.

Below is a list of the main international aid agencies and the value of their assistance in United States dollars. (*Source: Estimates of revenue and expenditure, 1993/1994-1997/1998*):

International Aid Agency	Contribution US\$
– Caribbean Development Bank (BNTF)	1,944,182
– European Union EDF/Lome	744,441
– World Food Programme	2,300,740
– British Government BDDC/DFID	4,215,554
– World Bank (IBRD/IDA)	5,971,000
– Taiwan	2,000,000
– United Nations Drug Control Programme (UNDCP)	141,481
– Organization of American States (OAE)	97,091
– French Government	51,852

Recent trends in educational financing indicate that government expenditure has remained fairly constant at approximately 15% of total national recurrent expenditure. However, expenditure on education has shown modest increase during 1995-1998, due largely to the higher levels of capital expenditure from project funds.



Although a few private sector initiatives have resulted in the opening of two schools, it is unlikely that there will be any significant shift in the public/private sector mix.

The educational process

Pre-primary education

The main objectives of pre-school education are:

- to equip young children aged 3-5 with the necessary skills to adjust successfully to the primary school;
- to provide an environment that stimulates the development of these children socially, intellectually, spiritually and creatively;
- to create a partnership between teachers, parents and the community, and to reinforce the critical role played by the community, parents and caregivers in the lives of these young children.

Early children education is not compulsory in Dominica. Traditionally, this role has been played by NGOs and private individuals. The Social Centre—a Catholic-sponsored NGO—has been the leader in providing pre-primary education. For several years, the Centre obtained generous funding from the Bernard Van Leer Foundation, a European NGO that supported administrative staff costs and teacher training. There are seventeen establishments around the island supported by the Centre.

All the major population centres offer early childhood care and education.

On average, children spend between twenty-four to twenty-six hours per week at these centres. There are no formal evaluation methods and most programmes are designed to prepare children for entry into primary school. However, it is generally agreed by parents, community and education officials that these early interventions impact positively on the children.

The average time spent in activities is as follows:

- Pre-academic (language arts, mathematics, science, social studies): eight hours per week;
- Personal care/social activities: seven hours per week;
- Singing, story telling, physical education: five hours per week;
- Play time, creative acts: three to five hours per week.

The school year extends from September to June. That month is observed as pre-school month annually and is used for guided tours to businesses, national institutions, etc.



In 1996, there were 72 such schools with total enrolment of 3,215 children served by 112 teachers. In 1997, there were 82 pre-schools with a total enrolment of 2,584 children. The enrolment was projected to increase to more than 2,900 children by the year 2005.

Government's financial contribution in 1997/1998 was EC\$49,000 to assist with salaries, rental of premises and supplies.

Primary education

The main goals and objectives of primary education are to:

- provide pupils with requisite competencies for successful secondary education and to instil knowledge, values and attitudes necessary for meaningful and fulfilling lives;
- foster the social, cultural, intellectual, and spiritual development of every child;
- develop national pride and an appreciation for the democratic way of life;
- provide a basic education which is cost effective for gainful employment.

Primary education is compulsory (no fees are charged) and normally begins at age 5 although children are accepted at age 4½ especially in denominational government-assisted schools. There were 65 primary schools in 1990 and 63 in 1997. This number will be further reduced as the small multi-grade schools are being phased out.

The focus of the curriculum is on literacy and numeracy with exposure to social and natural sciences, and technical and vocational education. The Ministry of Education, through the Chief Education Officer, has responsibility for initiating curriculum changes or reform.

Pupils-teacher ratio was 23.2:1 in June 1998. Consequently, several schools showed excess capacity. The average size of schools (number of students) was given by the MOE as 236 pupils in 1985/1986, 213 between 1989/1993, and 216 pupils in 1997/1998. Eighteen primary schools had excess capacity of less than 20%, fourteen schools had excess of 20-40%, nineteen schools had excess space of between 40-60%, and the balance had excess of 60% capacity.

This wastage has partly influenced the Reform Programme. According to the World Bank, adjustment in the student to teacher ratio (30:1 at the primary and 25:1 at the secondary level) should have yielded savings of EC\$3.8 million by 2000-2001. These savings would then be guaranteed to strengthen sector management, improve support to schools in terms of materials and supplies, and also help improve the maintenance of physical plant.



The following subjects are taught:

- Language arts;
- Mathematics;
- Social studies;
- General science;
- Health and family life education;
- Agriculture;
- Physical education.

Each teaching period lasts thirty-five minutes. Mathematics and language arts receive focused attention with an average of six hours each per week. School classes are from 9:00 to 12:00 and from 13:30 to 15:30 with morning breaks. Contact hours average twenty-one to twenty-three hours weekly.

The Common Entrance Examination (CEE) and the National School Certificate—both designed and administered by the Ministry of Education—are the main system of evaluation. The CEE is taken at 11+ or 12+ and was introduced in the early 1960s to replace individual secondary school examinations as the primary route for access to high schools, though a Grade I in the National Certificate (taken at 14+) is also used. Continuous assessment is undertaken in all schools for promotion to higher grades.

The promotion rate averaged 35% between 1991 and 1995, and 46% in 1995/1996. The transition rate from primary to secondary school was 60.5% in 1998.

The enrolment has remained fairly constant—about 13,600 pupils from 1990 to 1997—although enrolment figures reached 14,300 between 1993 and 1995. Female participation at primary and junior secondary schools (age group 5-16 years) averaged 48% between 1985/1986 and 1997/1998.

In 2004, total enrolment in primary education was 9,872 students, representing an 87% net enrolment rate. The pupil/teacher ratio was 19:1. The total number of new entrants to primary schools was 1,098, and the transition rate from primary to secondary from 2003-2004 was 94%. The total number of repeaters in 2004 was 429, representing 4% of the primary school population, and the survival rate to the last grade of primary was 84%.

Secondary education

The principal goal of secondary education is to provide students with knowledge, skills, attitudes and values for developing their employment potential thus preparing them for the world of work. It is also an objective of secondary education to provide



the basis for further education and lifelong learning, while simultaneously instilling in students a deep sense of national pride.

Secondary education consists of two cycles: junior (Forms I-III) and senior (Forms IV and V). In the senior cycle, students enter into streams, which emphasize science, business or arts and general studies. Some schools also provide a technical/vocational component. The streams are the following:

- Sciences: mathematics, agricultural science, biology, chemistry, physics and information technology;
- Business studies: principle of business, office procedures, typewriting/word processing, integrated science and principles of accounts;
- Arts and general studies: foreign languages, geography, history, social studies, and integrated science;
- Technical/vocational: agricultural science, technical drawing, woodwork, food and nutrition, and home management.

English language and mathematics are compulsory, although through a process of assessment a pass mark of 40% (minimum) is required for entry as a school-sponsored candidate in the Caribbean Examinations Council/General Certificate of Education (CXC/GCE) terminal examinations. The curriculum is the responsibility of central government and additions and deletions require the approval of the Chief Education Officer at public and assisted schools.

Local authorities cannot alter the curriculum, although some variation exists especially with religious education in church-operated schools. All secondary schools are either public or government-assisted. However, two schools in the latter category receive 25% of estimated running costs while other assisted schools receive subsidies sufficient to cover staff costs.

There are approximately twenty-two and a half hours of contact teaching per week. The breakdown is as follows:

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| • English language | 3.5 | hours/week |
| • Modern languages | 2 | hours/week |
| • Science (per subject) | 2 | hours/week |
| • Mathematics | 3.5 | hours/week |
| • Social studies | 2 | hours/week |
| • Integrated science | 2 | hours/week |
| • Business (per subject) | 2 | hours/week |
| • Assembly | 0.75 | hours/week |

Teaching periods are forty minutes in duration. The average class was 25 during the last two years with a student-teacher ratio of 17:1 from 1993.



Wastage rate (i.e. drop-out and repetition rates) was 9.1% in 1986/1987, 12.6% in 1989/1990 and 10.3% in 1994/1995. The percentage of repeaters in 2004 was 8%.

Total enrolment in 1985/1986 amounted to 3,288 students, and reached 4,475 in 1991/1992 and 5,772 students in 1998/1999. Throughout the period females have dominated, with an average of 57% for all forms. In 2004, total enrolment in secondary programmes was 7,477 students with 50% being female. The pupil/teacher ratio was 17:1.

All secondary schools use end-of-term and year-end tests as the evaluation system for promotion. The CXC and GCE are the terminal examinations, with certificate awarded for subject(s) passed. These certificates give access to tertiary level institutions.

Assessing learning achievement nationwide

Presently there are no testing or measurement programmes for continuous assessments. The Ministry of Education designs and administers the CEE and the JSPE. The tests are printed and scored locally. A team of teachers marks the scripts and the marks are processed at the Government Computing Centre.

Under the Basic Reform Programme, a Testing and Measurement Unit has been created and charged with the responsibility to design a testing system to improve the CEE and to expand the testing programme nationally. This should provide for one national test within the primary cycle (two years prior to the CEE) and another one within the secondary cycle (in Form III) aimed at facilitating the diagnosis of learning and teaching problems in time for corrective action.

Higher education

The Clifton Dupigny Community College is the major tertiary level institution in Dominica. It is government-owned and managed and has two divisions—academic and technical/vocation. The academic section offers GCE Advanced-level courses in a wide range of subjects and a secretarial programme.

The technical/vocational section offers certificate- or diploma-level craft courses leading to local awards or City and Guilds of London Certificates in the areas of engineering, electronics, refrigeration and air conditioning, mechanics, agriculture and building construction and maintenance.

In 1990/1991, there were 91 students enrolled in the academic division, of whom 55% were female. The enrolment increased to 170 in 1994/1995, and to 199 students in 1997/1998 (70% female). In addition, 30% of students enrolled in the natural sciences, 43% in the social sciences, 14% in the arts and 13% in the secretarial programmes.



The intake varied in 1997/1998, with 27% of students in the natural sciences, 31% in the social sciences, 32% in the arts, and 10% in the secretarial programmes. GCE A-level passes have varied from 62% to 83% between 1988 and 1997.

Male students far exceeded females in the technical division. In 1995/1996, out of a total of 223, forty were females with 82% male intake; the 1996/1997 enrolment was 244 students of whom 38 were females, while the trend showed a small female increase in 1997/98 (80% male entrants). A complement of twenty-seven full-time teaching staff delivers the College's programmes under the supervision of two directors—one for the academic, the other for the technical division.

Other tertiary level institutions are the Dominica Teacher Training College and the Princess Margaret Hospital (PMH) Nursing School. The Teacher College in 1997/1998 had eleven teachers and a principal. They are all university graduates with training in education. The PMH Nursing School is also publicly funded and trains approximately twenty nurses for RN status and another fifteen every two or three years for Level II status. Midwifery programmes are also offered regularly, with an average intake of twelve nurses.

The Teacher Training College has trained 284 primary school teachers since 1987, with a 90% completion rate except in 1987 and 1994, when the drop-out rate averaged 20%.

The Ross University School of Medicine, an offshore medical school, operates on the island. The 1997/1998 enrolment amounted to 910 students. Students pursue the basic sciences on the island and complete studies in the United States, where students sit the Board Certificate Examinations for admission to practice medicine in the United States.

The University of the West Indies is a regional university with campuses in Jamaica (54% of enrolment), Trinidad (35%) and Barbados. Dominica is a contributor and participates in the management through the Council.

A school of continuing education operates locally as part of the university system. The University has Faculties in Agriculture and Natural Sciences, Arts and General Studies, Education, Engineering, Medical Sciences, Law, and Social Sciences. Students can pursue the first year in Dominica in various fields.

In 1997/1998, the government contributed EC\$1.35 million to the University and supported several private students with an average of EC\$10,000 per year from its training, scholarship and higher education budgetary allocation of EC\$2.2 million.

Special education

There are no documented policies on education for persons who are physically challenged or with special needs. However, the government operates a school for the hearing-impaired with an enrolment of thirty pupils aged from 5 to 15 years. There is



a principal and a staff of five teachers. There were twenty-four pupils enrolled in 1997/1998.

The programme is aimed at providing the pupils with an opportunity for realizing their potential and to make them more independent.

The Alpha Centre is privately-owned and caters to the needs of children who are physically challenged. The government meets the cost of one specialist teacher and supports the Centre's programmes through technical assistance. All other funding is raised privately.

Private education

Initiatives in private education are new. Although denominational schools, both primary and secondary, have existed during the last one hundred years, the government has met the staff costs for more than two decades.

One Christian denomination operated four primary schools, while two others operate one each. These schools had a combined enrolment of 595 pupils in June 1998. The staff complement ranged from three to nine teachers, with a percentage of trained teachers between 38% and 75%. Two private schools were recently opened. The total enrolment is 87 pupils. Fees are relatively high (US\$125 per month per student) while uniforms, transportation and incidentals cost US\$450 per student.

These are pioneering efforts with considerable emphasis on language arts, mathematics and development of skills for a global economy. The curriculum resembles that of public or assisted schools with variations. The new Education Act stipulates that all private institutions must be licensed and the curriculum approved by the government.

Means of instruction, equipment and infrastructure

Instructional material is provided by parents—particularly at the secondary level. In 1995, this averaged between US\$100 and 370 per student. At the primary level, materials are in short supply and this partly explains the wide disparities between urban and rural schools in performance at the CEE. In 1995, only 1% of the recurrent education budget was spent on supplies.

Corrective action is being taken under the Reform Project through the creation of a Materials Production Unit. It is also hoped that some savings from the improvement in pupil-teacher ratio could be redirected to that area. But such transfers must be supported by the Ministry of Finance.

A free textbook delivery system was introduced in 1996. During the last academic year, an amount of EC\$613,000 was allocated for that purpose in the capital estimates. There is no policy on computerization in public schools. However, several schools have received gifts from private sources and international agencies. Approximately 110 personal computers are available at the secondary and tertiary levels.



Adult and non-formal education

There are no establishments providing adult and non-formal education. However, the Adult Education Division of the Ministry of Community Development organizes literacy programmes throughout the country. The work is done through fifty rural committees in seven zones.

During the last three years, the government spent approximately EC\$500,000 annually on adult education. The aim of the programme is to eradicate illiteracy in Dominica and to enable each adult to participate meaningfully in the social, economic and cultural development of the country.

Various estimates were given for illiteracy ranging from 12% to 17%. No official data is available.

Teaching staff

Four GCE/CXC O-level subjects are required to teach at the primary level. Until recently, any four subjects with English language would satisfy education officials. This minimum was consistent with requirements for entry into the public service.

As of 1997, the Ministry requires four subjects, which includes English language, mathematics, science, and social studies at stipulated grades. These subjects reflect the streams taught. All teachers are appointed by an Independent Public Service Commission.

There are four categories among the teaching staff. These are:

- Specialist teachers have received teacher training plus specialist training, e.g. woodwork, home economics/management or counselling.
- Graduate teachers have obtained a university degree with or without specialized education training.
- Qualified teachers have received teacher training with a certificate or diploma, usually two years post O-level.
- Unqualified teachers have their O-level without formal teacher training.

Full-time courses at the Teacher Training College last two years and include several weeks of practical teaching in the classroom. The content focuses on core subjects together with areas of psychology and other social sciences.

Secondary school teachers must have GCE A-level pass(es) in the subject(s) to be taught. University degrees are preferred. However, in 1995 only 28% of secondary school teachers had degrees. A university degree is a prerequisite for teaching at tertiary institutions. Teachers at technical and vocational institutions enter with a variety of qualifications.



Total primary school enrolment at the end of school year 1997/1998 stood at 13,636 with 587 teachers; 353 were trained from a low of 25% to a high of 100% in five small schools, for an average of 60%. Nine of the fourteen secondary schools have exceeded their capacity (higher enrolment) with percentage ranges from 2% to 33%. (Data refer to June 1997). In 2004, there were 519 teachers in primary schools, 64% of whom were trained.

In June 1998, there were 293 teachers for 5,455 students enrolled in secondary schools, 64.8% of whom were trained. Continuing education programmes are offered by the College during the school year as well as in the summer. Programmes are also offered through Distance Teaching Programmes of the regional University. In 2004, there was a total of 445 teaching staff in secondary schools, 36% of whom were trained.

Teachers' workloads vary considerably. Primary school teachers on average spend thirty hours per week in classroom preparation and teaching activities. Secondary school teachers spend approximately ten to fifteen hours per week in classroom teaching.

Salaries and conditions of work are based on relativities within the public service with reviews every three years. Promotion tends to be limited after one has reached the level of principal, although some may pursue further studies and move to administration, college teaching or more technical areas like curriculum development.

Educational research and information

There are no formal research programmes in Dominica. The major institution engaged in research is the School of Education at the UWI. Teachers who receive scholarships or fellowships are encouraged to select an area of relevance for completing dissertations or theses.

Under the Basic Education Reform Project, an Education Planning Unit has been established. It is expected that research work will be co-ordinated by this Unit. Meanwhile, data gathering and analysis is undertaken by the Central Statistical Office, the Chief Education Officer and various units within the Ministry. These are supplemented by various consultancy assignments and reports.

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