



THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION

National Report of Jamaica

by

**The Planning and Development Division
Ministry of Education**

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1. The Education System Facing the Challenges of the Twenty-first Century: An Overview

1.1. Major Reforms and Innovations Introduced in the Education System

The present structure of the education system as set out in the Education Act of 1980 consists of four levels: - early childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary education. Management of the system is done through a central body and six regional offices. The activities undertaken in the regional offices are mainly administrative with authority being maintained at the centre, for the most part. In an effort to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery and positively impact the quality of the education product through greater accountability, the Ministry of Education has embarked on a process of transformation which also coincides with the Government's thrust to modernize the public sector.

The first step towards transforming the sector was the establishment of a Task Force which produced a report¹ with several recommendations in 2004. The reform of the education sector which includes the modernisation of the Ministry of Education is currently being undertaken with a view to the Ministry becoming Policy focused, supported by autonomous Regional Education Agencies and other Agencies which will be responsible for policy and programme implementation. The modernized Central Ministry will be responsible for policy formulation, monitoring and evaluation, standard setting and coordination of agencies. Included in the modernisation process is the greater use of Information Communication Technology to improve service delivery.

Changes to the current Education Act must be undertaken, as well as new legislations will have to be enacted for the modernized structure to be fully established. Among the agencies that are being established in the transformation/modernisation of the education system are the following which are outlined in the Table below.

¹ *Task Force on Educational Reform ,Jamaica
A Transformed Education System, 2004*

Table 1. Educational Transformation Initiatives of the MOE

Initiative	Description
<i>National Education Trust</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ This entity will facilitate the creation of a secure non-fiscal space that will make it possible for the education sector to operate and pursue important initiatives, especially regarding infrastructure, outside of budgetary constraints ✓ Funding for the Trust will be derived from different sources both local and international.
<i>National Parenting Support Commission to support the National Parenting Policy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The National Parenting Policy will support the development of an enabling environment for our nation's children. The policy will support parental rights; ensure equality for and inclusion of the most vulnerable families; and strengthen the systems of accountability of the state to fulfil its obligations. ✓ The National Parenting Support Commission (NPSC) is being established to lead the implementation of the National Parenting Policy
<i>Leadership Academy/Programme</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ This programme will be geared towards strengthening leadership and governance in the sector
<i>National Education Inspectorate</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ This entity will be established to improve the quality of the education system at all levels. It will evaluate the system, make recommendations for improving its effectiveness in delivering education and ensure the dissemination of results.
<i>The Jamaica Teaching Council</i>	<p>This entity will be established to undertake the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Raise the status and profile of the profession ✓ Provide professional leadership for teachers ✓ Maintaining and enhance professional standards ✓ Regulate, register and license the profession ✓ Review and oversee conditions of service ✓ Advise on teacher supply and deployment ✓ Provide strategic direction on training and professional development
<i>The Curriculum and Assessment Agency</i>	<p>This will provide an integrated curriculum and assessment framework to meet the needs of the education system. The Agency will develop and monitor the education curricula and the student assessment systems including analyzing and disseminating assessment information.</p>
<i>Regional Education Agencies</i>	<p>Existing Regional Offices will be transformed into Regional Education Agencies (REAs) to ensure the effective delivery of education. These will have greater autonomy and will provide quality support to the schools under their purview, in line with national policy.</p>

1.2. Main Policies, Achievements and Lessons Learned

Implementation of the recommendations of the Task Force on Educational Reform saw the establishment of the Education Transformation Team(ETT) to drive the process. Several workstreams have been established in conjunction with existing staff, each with responsibility for the different areas of concerns as outlined in the Report. The following are the workstreams established:

School Leadership and Management - This group focuses on leadership development, performance management, school improvement planning and special education.

Infrastructure and Facilities - Focus is on planning for the space requirements of the system, especially at the primary and secondary levels.

Curriculum, Teaching and Learning - Emphasis is placed on the creation of strategic framework to ensure sustained reforms, effective targeting of resources and achievement of improvement in all schools.

Behaviour Change and Community - The focus is on improving behaviour through the involvement of communities and other stakeholders, creating a whole school approach.

Community and Stakeholder Participation – The importance of involving stakeholders in the transformation process is the core of this group’s activities. They ensure information flow to and from the Ministry and the various stakeholders.

Modernisation - This focus is on the Ministry becoming a policy-based ministry with agencies for implementation of programmes and projects.

Most of the activities of the Transformation Team are focused on the primary and secondary levels as the early childhood level is coordinated by the Early Childhood Commission.

Early Childhood Development - This sector is concerned with the development of children up to age 8. Children enter educational institutions from age three/four, while those from birth to three access services at Day Care Centres and pre-school facilities. In 2006/2007, over 104,221 children were taught by some 5,183 teachers many of whom are

para-professionals, particularly those in Basic School. A training programme has been developed by the country's Technical/Vocational Basic schools are mostly community operated and are categorized as Recognized and Unrecognized. Recognized schools receive subsidies from government to supplement teachers' salaries, procure instructional materials and provide nutritional support.

The *Early Childhood Commission* is an agency of the Ministry of Education that was established by the Early Childhood Commission Act of 2003. Born out of the need for a long-term vision and plan for a comprehensive delivery of early childhood programmes and services, the Commission was established as the agency with overall responsibility for early childhood development (ECD) in Jamaica. Using an integrated approach, the Commission, brings under one umbrella, all the policies and standards pertaining to early childhood development. It also maximizes the use of limited resources by ensuring a more cohesive delivery of services.

The passage of the Early Childhood Act and its attendant Regulations (2005) established legal framework and standards by which the operations of Early Childhood Institutions (ECIs) in Jamaica are govern. The Act and Regulations outline the minimum operating standards that all ECIs must achieve in order to ensure that all children have equity and access to quality Early Childhood Development programs within healthy, safe and nurturing environments. The Early Childhood Act came into force November 30, 2007, and its first requirement has been that all ECIs should apply for registration within 90 days of the Act taking effect. In addition a curriculum has been developed for this level.

Previously, children entering grade 1 of primary level institutions were exposed to the Grade 1 Readiness Inventory, which as the name suggested, tested the children's readiness to access the primary level curriculum. This has been replaced by the Grade 1 Individual Learning Profile which identifies the child's weaknesses so that strategies can be developed to address them.

Primary Education

With concerns being raised about students' readiness to access secondary level education, a new policy is being developed to ensure that students are certified as being literate at the Grade 4 level before they transition to the secondary level. Every support will be provided at different stages to prepare these students to be competent.

The National Assessment Programme which is established at the primary level includes the Grade 1 Individual Learning Programme, the Grade 3 Diagnostic test, the Grade Four Literacy Test and the Grade Six achievement Test. Performance on the Grade 4 Literacy Test at first sitting has been improving over the years as several strategies have been implemented including establishing a support structure for schools with poor performance on the Test. Performance on the Test has been improving, increasing from 53 percent in 2002 to 71 percent in 2008.

Secondary Education

The main focus at the secondary level is the provision of five years of secondary education to all students who enter Grade 7. The provision of additional school places to accommodate this population is one of the main thrusts at this level. Enrolment at the secondary level has been increasing. Net enrolment increased from 74.8 percent in 2003 to 78.3 percent in 2007. Gross enrolment increased from 88.8 percent in 2001/2002 to 94.4 percent.

Quality of output has been a major concern at the secondary level, especially performance in the core subjects of English Language and Mathematics. In the 2008 Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) examination, a regional examination, approximately 54.4 percent of those who sat English Language attained passing grades while 43 percent attained passing grades in Mathematics. This compares favourably with 51.6 percent and 35.3 percent in English Language and Mathematics respectively, over the previous year.

Strategies to Guarantee Equal Access to All Levels of Education

The Government has introduced several programmes to ensure that all children have equal access to educational opportunities. Some of these include:

Programme of Advancement Through Health & Education (PATH)

The Programme is aimed at delivering benefits of cash grants to the most needy and vulnerable in society.

Among the overall goals of the PATH programme:

- to ensure that the vulnerable groups in society are assisted by the state
- to attain economies through implementation of a single system of benefits
- to increase transparency in the selection of beneficiaries

Specific Objectives are:

- to increase educational attainment and improve health outcomes among Jamaicans who are considered to be poor
- to reduce child labour by requiring an 85 percent school attendance among children between age 6 and 17 years
- to reduce poverty by increasing the value of benefits to the poor
- to serve as a safety net for poor families

School Feeding Programme

Students' capacity for absorbing what is being taught is directly related to the state of their health. Educators have long reported the strong correlation between the provision of a nutritious meal and the attendance patterns of students in schools. Many students, especially those located in the depressed areas and who are experiencing harsh economic circumstances; often times attend school without breakfast or may not attend regularly. The School Feeding Programme introduced by the Government of Jamaica in 1976 was implemented to provide needy students with nutritional support in order to enhance their learning capabilities. That Programme is now an integral part of the Ministry's Welfare Programme, the main objectives of which are:

- To encourage greater and more regular school attendance

- To alleviate hunger, and enhance the learning capacity of the pupils by providing a breakfast and/or mid-day meal
- To serve as a source of income transfer for participating families
- To educate children on the value of food nutrition education classes
- To encourage children to grow their own food by establishing school gardens
- To supply at least one third (1/3) of the child's daily nutritional requirements

Although the cost of this programme is now totally financed by the GOJ, it is progressively being expanded to reach more needy children as the Government strives to realize its stated policy for the improvement of basic and primary education.

Private Sector Organizations through the Adopt-A-School Programme also assist many schools in their school feeding programmes.

Scholarships

Scholarships are awarded by the Government and Private Sector organizations to students who have done exceptionally well in some exams such as the Grade Six Achievement Test (GSAT). These students are financially supported for the duration of their secondary level education. There are also private individuals as well as private sector organizations and NGOs that offer scholarships to private individuals including the more vulnerable who find it difficult to support their educational needs.

Support is also provided by the Government and private sector to students accessing tertiary level education. In addition, provisions are made for students to obtain loans to support their education at the tertiary level.

Abolition of Tuition Fees

Primary education has always been free. In 2007, however, tuition fees at the secondary level, through the Cost Sharing Scheme were abolished. Although the government still endorses parents' supporting educational institutions, its policy is that no child should be denied access to schooling on the basis of non-payment of fees. The abolition of tuition fees is a major step in ensuring that all Jamaican children can access secondary education.

Textbook Programmes

The MOE provides textbooks free of charge to primary schools. At the secondary level, with the abolition of fees, obtain textbooks under a loan programme.

Several **projects** have been and are being implemented to improve the quality of the education system. Among these are the following:

Primary Education Support Project (PESP)

The Primary Education Support Project (PESP) began in January 2001 and is aimed at contributing to the improved performance, efficiency and equity of the primary education system. The project addresses a number of concerns in the education sector as it seeks to improve the quality of the delivery and management of educational services at the primary level. PESP is designed as a package of improvement for the development of the qualitative, infrastructural and institutional aspects of primary education.

The main objectives of the project are to:

- improve performance through effective implementation of the Revised Primary Curriculum (RPC) and national assessment standards in schools.
- increase efficiency through the rationalization of teacher education and the strengthening of educational management capacity at all levels.
- enhance equity in the delivery of educational services to children from the lower socio-economic background through targeted interventions for improved literacy, numeracy and attendance.

The Reform of Secondary Education Project II (ROSE II)

ROSE II is currently being implemented and is a follow-up to ROSE I and is aimed at improving the quality and equity of secondary education through school-based initiatives and reform support; expanding access to upper secondary education in a cost effective manner and strengthening the capacity of the central ministry and regional offices to monitor and manage the reform. Consequently, initiatives have been devised to support literacy and numeracy and address students' learning problems as well as anti-social behaviour.

Staffing in the Education System

Teaching Staff at Primary Level

The difficulty of recruiting professionally trained staff has forced rural schools to employ a higher percentage of unqualified teachers than urban schools. Government, however, continues to intensify its effort to reduce the number of pre-trained teachers in the system. Data from the Statistics Unit of the MOE shows that since 1998/99, the number of pre-trained teachers at the primary level has been declining yearly by approximately 2 percent. In 1998/1999, about 20.8 percent of the primary level teaching force was pre-trained compared to approximately 8.3 percent in 2007/2008. (See table 2 for teacher distribution at the primary level). Efforts have also been made not only to attract but to retain better qualified teachers into the system. These efforts include:

- The strengthening of the Professional Development Unit which offers in-service training to teachers and other educational personnel.
- A Post-Certificate Diploma programme (through Distance Mode of teaching) which upgrades those teachers who previously held Teachers Certificate to Diploma Level.
- Projects funded by loans include training components and provide scholarships, fellowships and bursaries to local and foreign universities.

Table 1.

Distribution of Teachers at the Primary Level by Qualification 2007/2008

School Type	Trained University Graduate Teacher		Untrained University Graduate Teacher		Trained College Graduate Teacher		Untrained Tertiary Graduate Teacher		Trained Instructor		Untrained Secondary Graduate Teachers		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Primary	1943	26.8	130	1.8	4623	63.9	82	1.1	14	0.2	445	6.1	7237
All Age (1-6)	490	23.7	27	1.3	1398	67.5	29	1.4	7	0.3	119	5.7	2070
Prim. & Jnr. High (1-6)	379	26.4	18	1.3	954	66.5	10	0.7	—	—	73	5.1	1434
Total	2812	26.2	175	1.6	6975	64.9	121	1.1	21	0.2	637	5.9	10741

Source: Statistics Unit

Planning and Development Division

Ministry of Education, Jamaica

Teaching Staff at Secondary Level

Of the 13,273 teachers at the secondary level, only 18.1 percent are untrained with 12.8 percent of this category being tertiary level graduates. Of the total number of untrained teachers, 28.8 percent have only secondary level education.

One of the major challenges to the system is the recruitment and retention of Mathematics, Science and Information Technology (IT) teachers. The skills of these teachers are in high demand locally and internationally making it difficult to attract and retain these teachers.

The following table gives an indication of the quality and distribution of teachers at the secondary level.

Table I.
Distribution of Teachers at the Secondary Level by Qualification 2007/2008

School Type	Trained University Graduate Teacher		Untrained University Graduate Teacher		Trained College Graduate Teacher		Untrained Tertiary Graduate Teacher		Trained Instructor		Untrained Secondary Graduate Teachers		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
All Age (7-9)	218	33.2	22	3.3	365	55.6	19	2.9	2	0.3	31	4.7	657
Prim. & Jnr. High (7-9/11)	456	33.7	48	3.6	711	52.6	47	3.5	12	0.9	78	5.8	1,352
Secondary High	3,823	37.7	902	8.9	4,223	42.0	504	5.0	160	1.6	520	5.1	10,132
Technical High	377	34.3	93	8.5	462	42.0	65	6.0	41	3.7	62	5.6	1,100
Agricultural High	12	37.5	3	9.4	12	37.5	4	12.5			1	3.1	32
Total	4,886	36.8	1,068	8.0	5,773	43.5	639	4.8	215	1.6	692	5.2	13,273

Source: Statistics Unit,
Planning and Development Division,
Ministry of Education, Jamaica

Conditions of Teaching Staff

Teachers in the public system are:

- Appointed by individual school boards, subject to approval by the Minister.
- Paid by the Ministry of Education and receive salaries based on a centrally defined salary scale.
- Contractually obliged to the Ministry of Education, Youth & Culture as defined by the Education Act and Regulation as well as MOE memoranda and circulars.

- Tenured by the Central Ministry i.e. tenure in the service is continuous; however a teacher does not carry forward permanent status from one school to another
- Granted all categories of leave - study, vacation, sick, special and casual - by the MOEC. The Ministry processes all leave applications.
- Centrally mandated to provide a specified number of contact teaching hours per five-day week for a defined number of days per year

Vacation Leave

- Permanent teachers after five years of service are eligible for one term paid leave, accumulated up to ten years for a total of two consecutive terms as paid leave. This is in addition to regular school holidays;
- Principals with four years of service are entitled to one term leave, accumulated up to eight years for a total of two consecutive terms of paid leave;

Department Leave

- Teachers and principals are entitled to up to 12 days departmental leave for emergency purposes

Study Leave

- Permanent teachers with ten years service who have not taken study leave are entitled to two (2) years' study leave with pay
- Permanent teachers with less than 10 years service are entitled to one-year study leave with pay

Working Days

Currently, there is no clear position in respect to the length of instructional time and number of working days for which teachers are employed and salaried. According to the Education Regulations Section 7, (1) ***the school year shall run from the 1st September of each year to the 31st August of the following year.*** The Regulations also stipulate that ***the teacher shall receive a monthly salary for the period of employment.***

Conversely Section 7 (3) states that: "Every public educational institution shall meet for no less than 190 days of each year unless it is prevented from doing so for reasons

permitted by the Minister”. In practice, teachers work for a total of 190 days, enjoying all school holidays. However, when teachers are on holiday they are on call to the Ministry and should seek permission to travel overseas.

Registration

At present teachers are registered on entering the system however, there are no regulations in place requiring them to constantly upgrade themselves so as to remain current.

Teachers’ Salaries

Recently, there has been a move to increase the salaries in the teaching profession to 80 percent of market. This has resulted in improved salaries to all categories of teachers.

2. Inclusive Education: The Way of the Future²

Inclusion – The Jamaican Perspective

Inclusive education from the Jamaican perspective coincides with the definition given by UNESCO which is ‘a process of addressing and responding to the diverse needs of all learners by increasing participation in learning and reducing exclusion within and from education.’ In addition to addressing the issue of access, we also emphasize quality, equity and relevance.

Jamaica, for some time, particularly in the late 80’s and early 90’s focused its attention on mainstreaming as part of the inclusion process. This was done in partnership with the Dutch government, where at the primary level a number of special education units were built and incorporated by host schools to provide small groups/class interventions and resource services for students with special needs including those with disabilities. Students were expected to remain in the programme for a maximum of two years and then be fully mainstreamed. The facilities still exist but over time the significant

² Extract from paper presented at the Caribbean Symposium on Inclusive Education: The Jamaican Experience, December 5-7, 2007.

numbers of children in the mainstream requiring special accommodation suggested a renewed look at the approach.

Inclusion, in Jamaica, has taken on a new perspective where the focus is not only on facilitating children with disabilities in the mainstream but a broader look at provisions for all students. The government embraces the concept that ‘all children should have equal opportunities regardless of their economic, cultural and social backgrounds or their differences in abilities or capabilities. However appropriate provisions are being implemented on a phased basis in recognition of budgetary constraints.

Even though Jamaica has moved in this direction, there is still the need to maintain segregated facilities for the provision of specialized services and programmes for a select group of students. To do otherwise at this juncture, would be a serious compromise for the students who need special support, that would be absent in a mainstream setting.

Those institutions still being maintained include:

- ▲ Schools for the Moderate to Severe Mentally Challenged
- ▲ Schools for the Deaf
- ▲ Schools for the Blind

The School for the Blind has over the years, mainstreamed a number of students in High Schools, where support has been provided through the services of itinerant teachers. These students have performed well and have not displayed any maladaptive behaviour that would warrant their staying in segregated facilities.

The University of the West Indies has indicated a steady increase in the enrolment of students with visual impairment in its faculties although this is limited to the Arts, Education and a number of disciplines in the Social Sciences. The University further reported that ‘the movement of persons with disabilities into higher education, and the success of those who finally get there continued to be marred by such challenges as language barrier (as in the case of the hearing impaired) as well as the lack of technical support’. Inclusion, therefore, must embrace not only physical space but all the support necessary as well as the educational opportunities to enhance success.

Jamaica is signatory to a number of international conventions ensuring the political and civil rights of persons with disabilities. This commitment is broadened to involve all persons receiving not only access to information but services that enrich the lives of people.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) reminds us that children, whilst retaining their entitlement to the full range of human rights, are often marginalized or excluded and require additional safeguards. However, even within the constituency of children, particular groups remain vulnerable to further risk factors requiring additional interventions from the state.

The World Declaration on Education for All (Jomtien 1990) to which Jamaica is committed, supported by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, gives credence to the value Jamaica places on education as an agent of National Development. This commitment, among others, is grounded in the philosophy that “Every Child Can Learn and Every Child Must Learn” and is the theme for the current transformation process.

The Transformation of the Education System

The Ministry of Education (MOE) recognizes that the human resource capacities of our nation can only move forward within a transformed education system that is accessible, equitable and relevant. Consequently, in February 2004, the then Prime Minister of Jamaica appointed a 14-member Task Force on Education Reform to prepare and present an action plan consistent with the vision for the creation of a world- class education system, which would generate the human capital and produce the skills necessary for Jamaican citizens to compete in the global economy.

The Vision

“A prosperous and dynamic Jamaica which upholds the fulfillment of human rights, dignity for all persons, and builds continual social progress based on shared values and principles of partnerships. Minds are transformed and extra ordinary results are produced

in this the most caring and secure country in the Americas, where individuals fulfill their potential, and are in control of their destiny, take responsibility for their lives and work always to the larger good.”

(Task Force on Education Reform, 2004)

The realization of this vision will require that our educational institutions become more caring and supportive, creating learning communities that facilitate the needs of all students irrespective of race, class, gender, challenges or intellectual capacity.

Emanating from this vision is the mission of the Ministry of Education ‘to provide a system which secures quality education for all people in Jamaica and achieves effective integration of educational and cultural resources in order to optimize individual and national development’. A Transformation Team has been put in place to implement the recommendations of the Task Force through reforms in the following areas:

- ▲ Governance and Management of the Education System
- ▲ Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Support
- ▲ Full Stakeholder Participation in the Education System
- ▲ Finance

Consistent with the transformation of the system is the responsibility of the government to ensure that every child’s right to basic education and training in an environment that maximizes his/her potential is achieved.

An Inclusive Environment – Curriculum Considerations

Approximately sixty percent (60%) of the population of students with special needs fall within the mild range. These students are recognized by the lag behind their peers in academic performance. On the other hand, there are students who are gifted and talented and must be provided for in an inclusive context and there must be scope within the curriculum to engage these students. The standards set for curriculum achievement must therefore be applied to all students.

Expectation of schools and other educational institutions are constantly rising to meet the challenges of modern societies and competitive knowledge-based economies. This implies that schools must constantly add value to the educational process and their most valued clients, the students themselves. To accomplish this, they must set standards and re-asses these continuously.

The Ministry of Education has developed standards at all levels of the system and these standards are drivers of the education process and are grounded in the following principles and understandings:

1. The goal of education is to produce well-rounded, responsible individuals who are literate, numerate, environmentally aware, humane, culturally sensitive and tolerant.
2. Learning and education are complex activities and are best carried out by corporate and co-operative actions and interactions
3. All students are capable of learning and should be provided with the opportunities to do so.
4. All students are entitled to quality curriculum and instructional methods
5. Mastery of the curriculum offerings and delivery techniques are indispensable for success.

Curricula must respond to the emerging needs of the society and where this response is ignored, national development is at stake. To this end the Ministry of Education has provided the opportunity for the involvement of various stakeholders in the development of curricula at the three levels of the school system.

- ▲ The curriculum at the early childhood level provides guidelines for the cognitive, emotional, psycho- social development of the child and facilitates inter-sectoral integration of services. It provides articulation for transition from that level to the early primary years thus bridging the transition gap.
- ▲ The primary curriculum was revised in 1999 and was fully implemented in 2002 and is geared at providing opportunities for child-centered, inclusive

teaching learning experiences. It is designed on the premise that every child can learn, and as such provides for the identification and development of the intelligences. It is flexible enough to allow teachers to adapt it to satisfy the varying abilities and learning styles of the students as well as the demand of their local environment.

- ▲ At the secondary level, curriculum is provided for Grades 7-9 and was developed in response to the need for a common curriculum at that level. The driver of this initiative was the Reform of Secondary Education (R.O.S.E.), a World Bank Project that commenced in 1993 and is still offering support for the programme.

Teacher Preparation and Inclusion

Since 1998, all teachers in training are required to do a module in Special Education. This course is meant to sensitize all teachers to the various types of exceptionalities and the approaches that can be used in working with students even before a formal assessment is done. Teachers are also exposed to other special areas of training in an attempt to provide the best responses to the specific needs of the students.

The issue of teacher quality has been the concern of governments past and present and various programmes and initiatives have been put in place to remedy the situation. The Professional Development Unit of the Ministry of Education in collaboration with Schools, Professional Associations, as well as the Joint Board of Teacher Education has organized professional development training for both in-service and pre-service teachers. Other provisions have been made in the following areas:

- ▲ Scholarships in specialized areas of study e.g. Mathematics, Science Spanish
- ▲ Postgraduate training in Management and Leadership for all Principals at the Primary level, in order to increase site-based management and responsiveness to the needs at the local level.
- ▲ Training in Management and Leadership for Principals at the Secondary level currently being undertaken.

- ▲ A revolving loan scheme to facilitate the professional development of teachers.
- ▲ A 50% refund of tuition to teachers who pursued courses of study up to the graduate level without taking study leave.

Programmes for Maintaining Inclusion

Guidance Counselling

Integral to maintaining an inclusive education system is Guidance Counselling. Philosophically, guidance espouses the concept of a fully functioning person and acknowledges that individuals have the capacity for self-determination, and are able to make intelligent, rational and satisfying decisions about their lives. The process assumes respect for the personal worth of the individual who by nature has integrity and is entitled to dignity. One of the aims of the programme is to produce students who are more self aware, capable of demonstrating belief in themselves no matter the level of academic competence.

Literacy Initiatives

The importance of literacy to education is well recognized. Consequently, the Ministry of Education is giving special emphasis to the early development of literacy skills as a tool to enhance student outcomes in all areas of the curriculum. Essentially, attention is given to various facets of instructions such as emergent, developmental, corrective and remedial as reflected in the different programmes and activities being undertaken (MOE 2007). The following are some of the initiatives being implemented:

- ▲ The National Literacy Plan under the Education Transformation
- ▲ The Grade Four Literacy Intervention
- ▲ The Student Empowerment Programme (SEP)
- ▲ Expanding Educational Horizons
- ▲ Primary Education Support Project (PESP)
- ▲ The Inner-city Schools Improvement Programme
- ▲ The Competency Shelter Programme

- ▲ The National Assessment Programme which includes the Grade 4 Literacy Test

The posts of National and Regional Literacy Co-ordinators were established to promote and improve literacy at all levels.

Achievements in Support of Inclusion

The government of Jamaica in its commitment to promote and support 'Education for All' has initiated a number of policies and initiatives to improve access and equity and ultimately the outcomes of the system. Of significance, are the following achievements by level:

Early Childhood Education

- ▲ Universal access to early childhood and primary education.
- ▲ The expansion of early childhood education to cater for children 0-5 years
- ▲ Institutionalization of a standard curriculum in all infant schools
- ▲ Improvement in the quality of Basic School Teachers and the supervision of early childhood education
- ▲ The establishment of an Early Childhood Commission to drive this sector and to advise the Ministry of Education on policy matters relating to early childhood care, education, initiatives and actions
- ▲ The establishment of the Early Childhood Act in 2005
- ▲ The placement of college trained teachers in Early Childhood institutions.
- ▲ The Enhancement of Basic Schools Project 2002-2008
- ▲ A pilot School Feeding Programme

Primary Education

- ▲ A National Assessment Programme at the Primary level

- ▲ Gross enrollment rate for the primary level at 95.5% (97% for males and 93.9% for females) in 2005/06.
- ▲ Improved performance in Literacy at the grade four levels by 14% (from 65% in 2005- 2006 to 79%) in the academic year 2006-2007.
- ▲ National standardized textbooks and workbooks provided free of cost at the primary level.
- ▲ Revised national Grades 1-6 Primary Curriculum. Grades 1-3 fully integrated with discrete subject areas at Grades 4-6.
- ▲ Curriculum and Building Standards developed for the Primary level
- ▲ Introduction of technology in education
- ▲ The introduction of Spanish in over 300 primary schools

Secondary Education

- ▲ An aggressive move towards Universal Secondary Education – currently full access at Grades 7-9 and approximately 80% access at Grades 10 and 11. The challenge of space in certain rural communities and urban centres is of particular concern as the system grapples with internal migration and the rapid expansion of new housing developments.
- ▲ Development under the ROSE project, of a common Grades 7-9 curriculum in 13 subject areas to address equity, access, quality and productivity.
- ▲ The construction of five secondary schools between 2005 and 2007 generating over 6,000 places, in addition to improving the capacity of existing schools.
- ▲ National textbook loan scheme at the secondary level with provision of approximately 590,000 free textbooks to students at grades 7-11 across 270 secondary schools island-wide.
- ▲ A Secondary School Enhancement Programme to upgrade specific programmes and facilities in the secondary schools which were upgraded to high schools. Since the inception of the programme in 2001, some \$547m has been allocated to over 80 schools.
- ▲ Development of curriculum standards for all subject areas to establish a foundation for accountability.

Special Education

- ▲ The development of a Special Education Policy to provide guidelines for the education system.
- ▲ Provision for students with special needs to sit examinations at all levels of the system.
- ▲ Establishment of a Braille and Large Print Department which has as one of its functions the reproduction of all national examinations in Braille and large print.
- ▲ Placement of Special Education Resource Teachers in Primary and All-Age schools. These received in-service training and continuous support, both technical and material, to enable them to carry out basic assessment and plan for students using the diagnostic prescriptive approach to teaching and learning.
- ▲ Development and dissemination of a Special Education Manual to provide guidelines and strategies for identifying and teaching students with special needs. This also allows for early identification and the referral of students for further diagnosis and treatment.
- ▲ Establishment of a computer laboratory at the Special education Department in the Ministry of Education for the training of teachers in the use of assistive technologies in the teaching learning process.

Other

- ▲ The establishment of a National HIV and AIDS Response Team in collaboration with a number of government and non-government partners.
- ▲ The establishment of an inner-city project to address issues of access and equity.
- ▲ A National School Feeding Programme -approximately 175,000 children benefit on a daily basis.
- ▲ The preparation of a policy for the mainstreaming of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (Tech Voc) in Secondary Schools. This

is to ensure that every secondary school graduate has certification in at least one Technical Vocational subject.

- ▲ Technical/vocational training under the HEART Trust.
- ▲ The Programme of Advancement Through Health & Education (PATH) where needy students from ages 6-17 years benefit from financial and other support to ensure school attendance.
- ▲ The preparation of a policy on Compulsory Education.
- ▲ Consideration of a policy on the Reintegration of School-aged Mothers into the formal education system.