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Principles and general objectives of education

Education is considered a right for all and is accessible to all Guyanese children from the age of 3 years and 9 months to the age of 16, although education is compulsory up to the age of 14. Education is “one of the engines of growth and holistic development” and “one of the most important social mechanisms for the acculturation and socialization of the nation’s young people along lines that are desirable socially and economically” (Ministry of Education and Cultural Development, 1995). Education also seeks to: prepare children for life in a rapidly changing social milieu, and in an environment that is envisioned as heavily influenced by scientific and technological developments; and inculcate in the young people “knowledge, skills, discipline, values, adaptability and the capacity to think critically and act creatively in the interest of their personal growth and development as well as that of their society and nation.” (*Ibid.*).

Education seeks to enable children to:

- acquire knowledge, skills and values necessary for a full and satisfying adult life;
- cherish love for their country;
- develop their potential to the fullest;
- cultivate tolerance and respect for cultural and religious differences among people;
- adhere to principles of democracy, justice, peace and accountability;
- develop a spirit of self-reliance and resilience;
- bring to bear creative and innovative approaches to problem solving;
- harbour a commitment to the care and protection of the environment; and
- live productive lives in a rapidly changing technological age.

The Ministry of Education is dedicated to ensuring that all citizens of Guyana, regardless of age, race or creed, physical or mental disability, or socio-economic status are given the best possible opportunity to achieve their full potential through equal access to quality education. The Ministry defines education as more than the instrumental activity for supporting greater national development or reducing poverty, even though it can contribute significantly to both of these objectives. Education is the main way to help each human being achieve his/her highest potential. It should be able to give the nation’s citizens the necessary knowledge, skills and values to lead happy and productive lives. On the basis of the education they receive, they should love their country and respect the diversity of their country’s ethnic, religious and political traditions. They should adhere to the ideals and practice of democracy, justice, peace, diversity and accountability. (Ministry of Education, 2008).

Laws and other basic regulations concerning education

The **Constitution** does not enshrine a right to education, but Article 27 confers on “every citizen [...] the right to free education from nursery to university as well as at non-formal places where opportunities are provided for education and training.” Article 28 promises every young person the right, *inter alia*, to ideological, social, cultural and vocational development. The Parliament may, by law, provide for the enforcement of these in a court or tribunal “only where and to the extent to which (Parliament by law so) provides [...] and not otherwise” (Article 39, Constitution of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, Constitutional Amendment Act No. 1, 1988).

The Constitution provides for a system of State controlled and directed system of education. Children are protected from compulsory religious education and citizens are conferred “freedom of conscience and religious beliefs and observance.” The Constitution also permits the imposition of restrictions by the State on teachers rights to freedom of expression and freedom of association, providing that the restrictions are required for the proper performance of their functions and are “reasonably justifiable in a democratic society”.

The Education Act makes provision for the appointment of attendance officers in order to enforce compulsory attendance. Magistrates are given powers to deal with offences connected to the non-attendance of school age children. The Act also provides for a National Council for Education to advise and make recommendations to the Minister of Education on matters relating to all levels of education.

The **Secondary School (Admission) Regulations** state that no person shall be admitted to a secondary school unless he/she has attained the specified score and has been allocated a place or a free place. However, the Ministry of Education may permit a governing body to admit a student to a secondary school even though he/she did not qualify to take the examination on account of his/her age (i.e. being over 11 years of age).

The **President’s College Act** of 1990 established a College managed by a Board of Governors with the aim of providing “a place of education, learning and research of a standard required and expected of a secondary school of the highest standard and to promote the advancement of knowledge and the diffusion and extension of arts, sciences and technology”. Students are admitted into this College on the basis of their performance at the Secondary School Entrance Examination.

The **Education Act** was enacted in 1876 and was amended several times (major revisions took place in 1949, 1961, 1972, 1975 and 1976). Many changes have been made in the education system without regard to the legal presumptions governing education and, as a result, many of the existing enactments are outdated and irrelevant. Private schools in Guyana have only been encouraged since the 1990s and they are not given any assistance by the State (Anthony, 1993). Some areas to be amended address the following: effective decentralization of education to the regional level; restructuring education management to allow central Ministry to be a strictly policy-making entity with more responsibility for monitoring and evaluation, and less



of an implementer of education policies; and re-defining the roles and functions of central Ministry officials.

Administration and management of the education system

Guyana gained its independence from the United Kingdom in 1966, and now has a parliamentary government headed by an Executive President. Ministers are chosen by the President from the leading political figures in Parliament, but also include an unspecified number of non-elected ministers generally recruited from the professional and public service. Ministers of Education at various times have been appointed from amongst the ranks of government members of Parliament. Some have been non-elected technocrats. The **Ministry of Education** (formerly the Ministry of Education and Cultural Development—MOECD) has overall responsibility for the functioning of the education system.

The Ministry of Education was restructured in 1989, as a result of re-assignment and the addition of responsibilities. Child and family welfare, for example, was put under the aegis of this Ministry, while culture formed part of the Ministry of Culture and Social Development for which the Vice-President and Deputy Prime Minister had overall responsibility (Paul *et al.*, 1991). The Ministry was reorganized again in 1991, and the Department of Culture once again was put under the aegis of the Ministry of Education, which has been renamed the Ministry of Education and Cultural Development. The Child and Family Welfare Division went to the Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security.

The **Permanent Secretary** (PS) of the Ministry has overall responsibility for the management of the education system which includes the formulation, co-ordination and implementation of plans. The PS is assisted by two deputy permanent secretaries, one education planning officer and one field auditor. The Deputy Permanent Secretary (Administration) supervises all personnel matters, general administration services and security. The Deputy Permanent Secretary (Finance) oversees all matters related to finance, materials, distribution, stock control, transport, buildings and maintenance. The education planning officer heads the Planning Unit and is responsible for education plans, research and evaluation. The field auditor heads the Internal Audit Section and ensures that accounting systems are in place.

The **Chief Education Officer** (CEO) has overall responsibility for professional matters throughout the system. The CEO is assisted by deputy chief education officers (DCEOs). The DCEO (Development) is responsible for the Cyril Potter College of Education and the National Centre for Educational Resource Development. The DCEO (Administration) oversees management of the school system, and supervises the assistant chief education officers responsible for nursery, primary and secondary schools. The DECO (Technical) is in charge of pre-vocational, vocational and technical education. Within the MOECD, there is also an Inspectorate headed by an assistant chief education officer who is accountable to the CEO.

Recent organizational changes include the creation of: a) the Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Development Unit under a DCEO also responsible for the



Inspectorate Unit; b) the Policy Implementation and Monitoring Unit under the DCEO formerly responsible for Administration. (Ministry of Education, 2008).

Guyana is divided into ten geographic and administrative regions (and education districts), in addition to Georgetown, the capital, which is administered separately. At the regional level, education is the responsibility of the **Regional Democratic Councils** and their chairpersons, who supervise regional education officers (REDOs) and teachers. These regional officers come within the political supervision of the **Minister of Regional Development** who, through his Permanent Secretary and Secretariat, controls the budget, maintenance and construction. The Ministry of Education remains responsible for overall educational policies and coordinates, monitors and evaluates the provision of educational services in the regions. The Ministry also remains responsible for examinations, curriculum, teacher training, educational planning and macro-level research. The staff of the regions include the regional education officers, education officers, education supervisors and school welfare officers.

Some of the statutory powers of the CEO (e.g. to open or close schools, grant leave of absence to teachers) have been delegated to the REDOs. Monthly meetings of all REDOs and senior professional officers of the Ministry allow for the dissemination of information and for reporting and feedback.

While REDOs have responsibility for all educational activities in their regions, education officers and supervisors have more specialized responsibility at the nursery, primary or secondary levels. The Ministry also has officers who specialize in specific levels. In particular, separate assistant chief education officers have overall responsibility, respectively, for nursery, primary and secondary schools across the regions.

Subject Committees have been established in each region for development work on each subject area. Subject committees are made up of experienced teachers from clusters of schools. They focus on the appropriateness of subject objectives, content, teaching strategies, materials and evaluation procedures. Members are expected to share the findings of the Committee with their school colleagues and Regional Subject Committees group representatives of the various subject committees within each region. Representatives of Regional Subject Committees form National Subject Committees for most subject areas. The National Subject Committee feeds information to the Ministry and makes recommendations on the curriculum.

The **Inspectorate Unit** is responsible for analyzing and reporting on the reasons for success or failure of the programmes and activities implemented within the education system. The team is, therefore, concerned with both formative and summative evaluation, and with recommendations for appropriate remedial action. An important aspect of the work of the Inspectorate is the evaluation of students' performance at the various levels of the school system in relation to regional and national norms. The Inspectorate has subject specialists for each of the core curricular areas—language arts, mathematics, science and social studies—as well as specialists in school organization and management.



The **National Centre for Educational Resource Development (NCERD)** is an arm of the Ministry which is concerned with the developmental aspects of the work. The main mission of NCERD is to plan and implement all in-service teacher education programmes, in order to improve the quality of education at all levels in the system so that education may serve as an effective instrument of social and economic development. Specifically, NCERD develops and implements in-service teacher education programmes that are designed to: enhance the capacities of schools to become effective, inclusive and successful learning communities; deliver quality education through the dissemination of well researched pedagogical findings; and create environments and opportunities that will facilitate, nurture and sustain the empowerment of students and teachers through the optimal development and actualization of individual potentials. The Centre includes the following units: Curriculum Development and Implementation; Science and Technology; Measurement, Evaluation and Research; Learning Resources Development; Distance Education and Information; and School Libraries. The **Curriculum Development and Implementation Unit** is responsible for conceptualizing, developing, testing and evaluating curriculum and other curriculum materials for nursery, primary and secondary schools. The materials include curriculum guides, teaching manuals, textbooks, work cards, and other forms of learning aids. It is also responsible for holding teachers training workshops to use the materials.

The **Curriculum Development Unit** has responsibility for the development of curriculum guide for teachers in primary schools and in grades 7-9 of secondary schools. Under specially-funded projects, the unit has also developed school textbooks for use at the primary and secondary levels. The Test Development Unit prepares tests such as: the Secondary School Entrance Examination (SSEE) which is taken by children at the age of 11+; the Secondary School Proficiency Examination (SSPE), Parts 1 and 2, which is taken by students in Forms III and IV, respectively, in community high schools; and the National Fourth-Form Achievement Test (NFFAT) which is taken by students in Grade X (or Form IV) to determine their suitability to sit the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC), Secondary Education Certificate examination. The Learning Resource Centre prepares teaching/learning resource materials for schools using multimedia and loans materials and equipment (e.g. science equipment, overhead projectors, tape recorders, etc.) to schools for specialized periods. The Broadcast to Schools Unit prepares exemplary lessons on various topics (in areas such as mathematics, social studies, science and music) which are aired on national radio in the early afternoon. Teachers are given guidance on the necessary preparation of the pupils for the broadcast and on the needed follow-up. The availability of printing facilities makes it possible for the Materials Production Unit to undertake printing jobs for the Ministry. The grouping of these units into one centre permits collaboration and integration of effort and activities.

Non-tertiary post-secondary institutions are managed by boards appointed by the Government except for the Labour College which is governed by a board nominated by the Trades Union Congress.

The **University of Guyana** is headed by a Chancellor with the Principal and the Vice-Chancellor as the academic and executive heads. The Chancellor is the chairman of the University Council, the governing body of the institution which is appointed by the government. The Academic Board regulates and superintends the



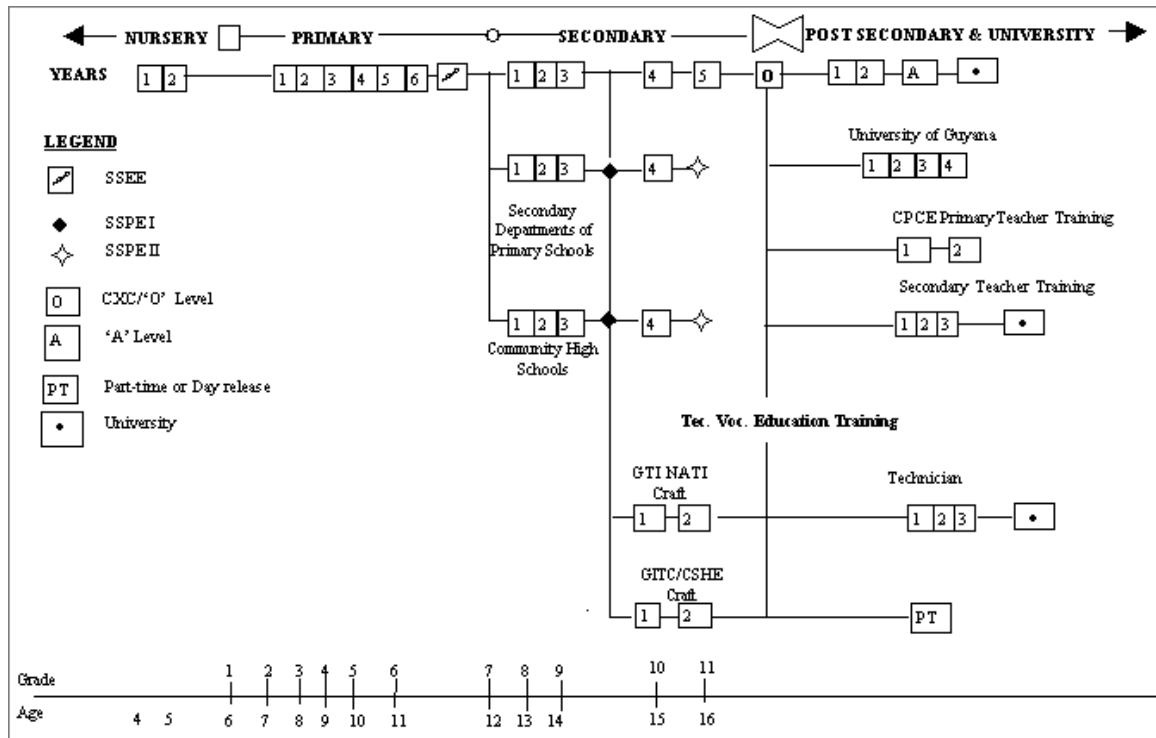
education and discipline of students of the University. Other important officers are the registrar who undertakes all matters pertaining to the registration of students, the bursar and the deans of the faculties. The University has formal procedures for assessing its staff members and its financial management is audited each year by officers from the office of the Auditor General. The University is regulated by the University of Guyana Act that governs the registration and regulation of higher education in general. There are however laws and statutes concerning particular professions such as medicine, pharmacy and engineering which have implications for higher education.

Two institutions have the major responsibility for non-formal education in Guyana: the Institute of Adult and Continuing Education (recently renamed the **Institute of Distance and Continuing Education**, IDCE, an arm of the University of Guyana, with the director of the institution enjoying a status comparable to that of a university dean) and the **Adult Education Association** (AEA). The latter offers a wide range of evening classes to meet various needs, including literacy classes for adults. Recently, this institution has begun to offer classes for out-of-school youth and adults who wish to take the Caribbean Examinations Council Secondary Education Certificate examinations in various subjects. The AEA also works with community groups in order to address the literacy problem in their midst.

On-the-job training is provided through work-study attachments in public and private firms. The apprenticeship scheme is run by the Board of Industrial Training which comes under the **Ministry of Labour**. The **Ministry of Public Service** organizes overall training in the public service, and administers the Government of Guyana Awards Scheme for undergraduate and short courses. The **National Data Management Authority** processes examination results.

Structure and organization of the education system

Guyana: structure of the education system



Pre-school education

Nursery (pre-school) education is available to children from the age of 3 years and 6 months. Attendance is not compulsory. Pupils spend two years at nursery school. First-year pupils are designated as Level 1 and those in the second year Level 2. The programme is delivered in nursery schools or in primary schools with nursery classes. Early childhood education covers the two years of nursery education and the first two grades of primary education.

Primary education

Children are admitted to primary school at the minimum age of 5 years and 9 months. Primary education is compulsory. The programme lasts six years and at the age of 11+ the pupils sit the Secondary School Entrance Examination (SSEE). Pupils are awarded places in secondary schools depending on their performance in the SSEE. Those with the highest scores are awarded places at President's College, while those with lower performances are placed in community high schools or in the secondary departments of primary schools. Community high schools offer a four-year programme oriented towards the acquisition of pre-vocational skills. Primary schools



with secondary departments offer a four-year programme that is similar to that offered by community high schools. The ages of the students range from 11 to 14 years.

Secondary education

Students who pass the SSEE are admitted into general secondary schools, offering a five-year programme that prepares students to sit the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC), Secondary Education Certificate and/or the General Certificate of Education, Ordinary-level (GCE O-level) examinations. While the programme in these schools is largely academic in orientation, students are also prepared to take the CXC in a wide range of technical/vocational subjects. Students who gain at least five passes with high grades in the CXC/GCE examinations can proceed to Form 6 in designated senior secondary schools, and at the end of the two-year programme students sit the GCE Advanced-level examinations.

Higher and tertiary education

Technical education and vocational training at the post-secondary level are offered in three technical institutes, an industrial training centre, the Carnegie School of Home Economics and the Craft Production and Design Division. These institutions train students above the age of 16 in a wide range of technical and vocational areas. Most courses are of two years' duration leading to a technical certificate, an associate degree, a technician diploma or a certificate of proficiency. Teacher training programmes are offered by the National Centre for Educational Resource Development, the Cyril Potter College of Education and the University of Guyana; programmes leading a certificate of nursery and primary education teachers take two years to complete, three years in the case of secondary education teachers. The University of Guyana offers four-year bachelor's degree courses, one-year post-graduate diploma programmes and one- to two-year master's degree programmes. Undergraduate studies leading to the award of certificates and diplomas are offered in a variety of fields, including public administration, education, social work, accountancy, etc. On average, a student carries a total of four courses per semester, giving an average study time of sixteen hours per week (typically there are four contact hours per week per course).

The school year consists of thirty-nine weeks at all levels.

The educational process

Pre-primary education

Among its objectives, the nursery education programme emphasizes the need to: encourage self-initiated activities through educational experiences based on the continuing analysis of each child's mode of learning; develop in children self-confidence and a healthy self-concept through the promotion of their mental and physical health; and provide a learning environment which will challenge and support exploration and problem-solving and promote creativity.



The nursery programme emphasizes freedom of expression through language, music, art, drama, and dance. The average size of nursery classes is between 16 and 25 children. Because of the shortness of their attention span, children are taught in 15-20 minute sessions, either as one large group or in smaller groups. Nursery schools usually operate between 9:00 and 12:00, so that the sessions last only half day. There are no formal examinations at the nursery level. Continuous school-based assessment is done to ascertain the readiness of the children for more advanced tasks. Check lists, anecdotal records and cumulative record cards are the evaluative instruments used at the nursery level (Rodrigues, 1994).

This curriculum of early childhood education spans the two years of pre-primary (nursery) and the first two years of primary education. It was introduced to lay the foundation for early literacy and numeracy through its child-centred approach to pre-reading, pre-writing and the teaching of life skills. This reform has been implemented through the Basic Education Access Managements Support (BEAMS) project, carried out with the assistance of the Inter American Development Bank. The innovations introduced under the BEAMS project included: a balanced approach between the whole word and phonic methods to the teaching of reading; and the teaching of mathematics using the Interactive Radio Instruction Programme, an activity-oriented approach, intended to encourage a change in the role of the teacher from repository of knowledge to facilitator of learning.

These innovations stimulated changes in other key areas such as teacher training and the acquisition of teaching/learning materials. As a result, BEAMS also focused on the inclusion of these strategies in the curriculum of the Teacher Training College, the Cyril Potter College of Education, the revision of the main textbooks, and the acquisition of complementary text books/materials for the pre-primary and primary levels.

According to official data, in 2006/07 there were 330 institutions in the public sector offering nursery education with 1,876 teachers. The total enrolment was 27,835 children. Nearly 50% (47%) of teachers at this level are untrained (72% in remote hinterland and riverain areas). The gross enrolment ratio is estimated at 80%. (Ministry of Education, 2008).

Primary education

The main objectives of primary education are to:

- provide each pupil with basic communication skills;
- develop basic numeracy and computation skills;
- help each pupil to think and solve problems;
- provide pupils with experiences that make them aware of beauty in the environment and to encourage them to express their ideas and feelings through a variety of creative activities;
- enhance child's psycho-motor development;
- help pupils to interact with others in socially accepted ways;
- help each pupil develop a feeling of self-worth and self-reliance;
- develop in each pupil a feeling of patriotism.



The curriculum consists of the following subjects: language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, health and family life education, art, music, and physical education. The core compulsory areas are language arts/literacy, mathematics, social studies and science. Curriculum guides for teachers provide a general plan or programme of what should be taught at this level. These guides are based on curriculum standards which indicate what a child should know and be able to do at this specific level. The guides comprise the topic, objectives, content, learning experiences, resources and evaluation of each specific subject. These provide the necessary guidance that teachers need for planning their general schemes, annual schemes, schemes for the terms and daily notes to ensure that teaching is done in an organized fashion.

Language arts/literacy and mathematics are treated as the primary areas which are taught daily five 30-minute periods each week. Science and social studies are each given at least two periods each week. Music is taught formally only in schools where there is a specialist teacher with the necessary skills and where a piano or some other musical instrument is available. The primary school day lasts approximately five hours excluding lunch break. Life skills, health and family life education, guidance and citizenship education are included in the curricula of grades 1-9 (the primary level and the first three years in the secondary level). The aim is to provide teachers with an integrated and consistent approach to the application of value education. Student should learn critical life skills that are necessary for applying values, become independent thinkers, and active, participating responsible citizens. This curriculum aims to serve two main purposes: to encourage students to i) inculcate essential life skills including the making of wise choices; and ii) acquire the values that will allow them to live peaceably in the pluralist, multicultural Guyanese society. The main themes of this curriculum are education, family, health, human rights, and human sexuality that will be taught from grades 7 to 9. It is also being taught at the primary level.

Special education schools follow the primary school curriculum as far as possible, but have a practical orientation designed to give the students skills in light handicrafts.

Pupils are assessed informally on their sense of responsibility, courtesy and thoughtfulness, on their ability to work independently, with speed and cheerfulness. Their hygiene, regularity of attendance at school, punctuality and their homework are also assessed. At the end of primary education, pupils sit the Secondary School Entrance Examination (SSEE) for placement in one of the types of secondary schools. Pupils with the highest scores are offered places at the President's College, a residential school which provides a wide range of academic and extra-curricular programmes. Those with lower performances are placed in community high schools or in the secondary departments of primary schools. (MOECD Education Planning Unit 1996).

Primary schools in the rural and hinterland areas tend to have classes with 30 pupils or less. In the capital city, Georgetown, however, most of the classes have between 41 and 55 pupils, with some classes exceeding 66 pupils.



Under the BEAMS project, the MOE piloted a Continuous Assessment Programme at grades 2, 4 and 6 levels, which allows teachers to identify weaknesses and strengths and make appropriate interventions. The pupils' performances are recorded at the three stages and it is proposed that this will be used instead of the SSEE for entrance to secondary schools.

According to official data, in 2006/07 there were 442 institutions in the public sector offering primary education with 4,058 teachers (of whom 43% were untrained). The total enrolment was 106,720 pupils. In addition, there were six special education schools with 582 pupils enrolled and 72 teachers; less than 40% of these teachers have sufficient training. (Ministry of Education, 2008).

Secondary education

Secondary education is offered in general secondary schools, community high schools (CHSs) and secondary departments of primary schools. Its main purpose is to provide students with opportunities to acquire the skills and attitudes that would equip them for beneficial employment and/or entry into tertiary level institutions.

The four-year programme offered in CHSs and the secondary departments of primary schools is oriented towards the acquisition of pre-vocational skills. The students study the compulsory academic subjects—English, mathematics, social studies and science—in addition to health education, physical education, music and drama, in cases where there are teachers with the necessary qualifications. Approximately 60% of the schools' timetable is devoted to the academic subjects in the first three years of secondary schooling. Technical subjects are also taught, such as agriculture, home economics, art and craft, industrial arts and business education. The choice of technical areas depends on the resources available to the school. About 40% of the school's timetable is devoted to these subjects in the first three years of study. Students then sit the Secondary School Proficiency Examination (SSPE), Part 1. Those with the highest grades are then transferred to a general secondary school, where they pursue a more academic curriculum. The other students remain in CHSs or in the secondary department of the primary school and spend their fourth year specializing in the pre-vocational area for which they have shown some aptitude. In this final year about 60% of the timetable is devoted to the pre-vocational area. The SSPE, Part 2, is taken at the end of the fourth year. However, some 60% of the students in CHSs are reported to drop-out of school at the end of the third year (Williams, 1993).

General secondary schools offer a five-year programme which is largely academic. In the first three years all students have to study English, mathematics, social studies and/or science, with more teaching periods being given to English and mathematics. A period is 40-minute long. Health education, music and drama are also taught in these schools, as well as some pre-vocational skills in home economics and agricultural science. The availability of the necessary equipment, tools and teachers with the appropriate training determines which skills are taught in particular schools.

At the end of the third year the students choose the subjects that they wish to study for the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC), Secondary Education Certificate and the General Certificate of Education, Ordinary level (GCE O-level)



examinations. Students have a wide range of subjects from which to choose, depending on the availability of a teacher qualified to teach the subject in their school.

Technical and vocational education and training is delivered in eight post-secondary institutions under the control of the Ministry of Education. These institutions offer a wide range of training programmes up to Level 3 of the Caribbean Vocational Qualifications framework in secretarial, building, mechanical, electrical, craft design and hospitality subjects. Prevocational education is also offered in general secondary schools, practical instruction centres, community high schools, and several primary tops. (Ministry of Education, 2008).

In its drive to achieve Universal Secondary Education (USE), the MOE strived to increase access to quality secondary education by: 1) amalgamating secondary departments of primary schools/primary tops (grades 7-9) and community high schools into general secondary schools, and 2) restructuring the curriculum to include other subjects that will provide secondary school leavers with requisite skills for the world of work and/or higher education.

In addition, for the period 2003-2007 the Ministry of Education made plans to: improve physical facilities and increase the number of secondary schools; develop a unified curriculum for all secondary schools for grades 7 to 9; increase the number of qualified teachers in the secondary system; increase the financial resources for non-salaried expenditure; reform the curriculum to include alternative learning paths; improve the organization and management of schools; and increase community participation in school management.

Through the Secondary School Reform Programme (SSRP) which concluded in 2004, and the Guyana Education Access Project (GEAP) that was completed in 2003, the Ministry began to address all of the above except the increase of financial resources for non-salaried expenditure which is being tackled by another project—the Basic Competency Certificate Programme (BCCP).

According to the draft document, the rationale of the BCCP is as follows: “In order to have a cadre of skilled personnel at the engineer, technician and craftsman levels available to the nation, it is necessary to provide basic training at the secondary level. The BCCP at grade 10 is intended to satisfy this need. This initiative will provide an opportunity for more secondary school students to pursue technically oriented careers, thereby alleviating the shortage of skilled persons. The certificate will facilitate, employment, access to CSEC and post-secondary institutions, and also serve as an entry requirement for apprenticeship training. To enable students to decide on their subjects of specialization for the BCCP, they will be exposed to a general introductory programme in agricultural science, visual arts, home economics, industrial arts and vocational guidance and counseling from grade 7 to 9.” The duration of the programme shall be for one academic year. Students who complete the programme by the end of the academic year will be certificated. The programme may be extended for an additional term to accommodate those students who did not satisfy the minimum requirements for certification. Student wishing to remain in the secondary school system may spend an additional one to two years to pursue CSEC.

Articulation in the Secondary System (Grade 10)						
Compulsory Core Areas						
BCCP	Practical Option Areas: Agricultural Science, Visual Arts, Home Economics, Industrial Technology	Work study/ Work attachment	English Language	Mathematics	Intgrated Science	Social Studies Including Health and Family Life Education and Citizenship Skills
CSEC related study areas:	Agricultural Science, Visual arts, Home Economics, Industrial Technology	Grade 10 Work Study/Work attachment	English A	Mathematics	Integrated Science	Social Studies History Economics

Options following Grade 10
<p>BCCP student graduates and continues in the secondary system CXC year 1 or 2 in Mathematics/ English/Industrial technology/Home Economics/Visual Arts/Social Studies/Integrated Science or any available subject for which they show aptitude. Year of entry dependent on attainment grade at the end of BCCP.</p>
<p>BCCP student graduates and exits Secondary System at the end of grade 10. Technical Institute or equivalent Craft level course</p>
<p>BCCP student graduates and exists Secondary System at the end of grade 10. Entry to Post Secondary Institution, apprenticeship training and/or employment</p>
<p>CSEC student continues in the secondary system Continues into year 2 dependent on year 1 attainment.</p>

Subject Groups Form 4 BCCP						
Practical Skills (300 hrs)	Work Study/Work Attachment (140 hrs)	English Language (120 hrs)	Mathematics (120 hrs)	Integrated Science (90 hrs)	Social Studies including HKLE and Citizenship (120 hrs)	
Technology and basic skills covering 'key' practical, problem solving and creative thinking areas.	<p>Awareness of opportunities in employment, education and training.</p> <p>TERM 1 Visits and presentations by members of the local business community. Three work-related visits (15 academic hours) given to business/manufacturers.</p> <p>TERM 2 Job shadowing- a total of 25 hours</p> <p>TERM 3 Work attachment or school based project a total of 100 academic hours (4 weeks)</p>	Literacy Skills based on areas of concern highlighted in the CXC report papers and MOE experience integrated with the specific practical options	Numeracy Skills based on areas of concern highlighted in the CXC report papers and MOE experience integrated with the specific practical options	Integrated Science based on essential cross curricula areas of general "science" based study integrated with the specific practical options. Referenced to the CARICOM science technology guidelines.	Focus on student interpersonal skills and awareness of their position or stake in society, as a support to and integrated with the Work Study/Work Attachment programme and the Specific practical options	

Source: The Basic Competency Certificate Programme Draft.

According to official data, in 2006/07 there were 82 institutions in the public sector offering general secondary education with 2,435 teachers. The total enrolment was 47,814 students. In addition, there were seven institutions providing technical/vocational education, with 298 teachers and a total enrolment of 4,246 students. Repetition rates remain high, i.e. 14.4% for boys and 8.8% for girls in grade 7, and retention rates are low: overall, only 38% of grade 7 students from 2001/02 were still present in grade 11 in 2005/06. The percentage of untrained teachers in secondary departments of primary schools, community high schools and general secondary schools was 57%, 46% and 34% respectively. (Ministry of Education, 2008).

Assessing learning achievement nationwide

In their final year of primary school, pupils sit the Secondary School Entrance Examination (SSEE). This is really a selection device for determining which pupils will gain entry to the more prestigious general secondary schools. Pupils are examined



in English, science, mathematics and social studies. The tests are largely multiple choice with some essay questions. Of the pupils who sit the SSEE in a given year, approximately one-third are selected for the general secondary schools (more girls than boys).

The Secondary School Proficiency Examination (SSPE) is administered in two parts to students who pursue the community high school programme. Part 1 is taken at the end of the third year (Form III) and Part 2 in the final year (Form IV). The Education Planning Unit of the MOECD (1995) reported that in 1993, 2,917 and 2,712 students passed the SSPE Parts 1 and 2, respectively. This represented a pass rate of 79% and 88% for Parts 1 and 2, respectively. This examination is held in low esteem in the society and particularly amongst employers.

The National Fourth-Form Achievement Test (NFFAT) was introduced in 1988 as a compulsory examination to be taken by Form 4 students in general secondary schools. This examination replaced the usual end-of-year examinations constructed and administered by individual schools. The main purpose of NFFAT was to identify those students who were likely to do well in the CXCSEC at the end of the fifth year of secondary schooling. The expectation was that if only the students identified by NFFAT were allowed to sit the CXC examinations, the overall performance of students at these examinations would improve, in comparison with their peers in other Caribbean territories.

NFFAT, however, encountered a number of problems, largely due to lack of adequate funding, poor management and administration of the examination and tardiness in finalizing the results. It did not have the impact on performance at the CXC examinations as expected. The name of the examination has since been changed to the 'Pre-CXC examination. It is no longer managed by the National Centre for Educational Resource Development, but has become the responsibility of individual schools.

The Caribbean Examinations Council Secondary Education Certificate (CXCSEC) examinations are taken at the end of Form 5 in general secondary schools. The examinations are also taken by private candidates. By offering three schemes of examinations—basic, general and technical proficiency—CXC caters to a wide range of abilities and interests. The general proficiency is more demanding than the basic proficiency scheme and is intended to provide a foundation for advanced study. The technical proficiency scheme is intended for those candidates who require a school programme with a greater practical orientation.

The CXCSEC is awarded in five grades, but only grades I and II are normally regarded as pass. Some subjects have a school-based assessment (SBA) component. This involves the teacher's evaluation of coursework assignments, projects and practicals set over a period of about two years prior to the final examination. The SBA component is worth between 20% and 40% of the final mark.

The performance of Guyana's secondary school students at the CXCSEC is very poor compared to their peers in other Caribbean territories. Of 16 or 17 countries that enter students annually for the examination in the various subjects, in most cases Guyana ranks last or next to last.



The 2007 National Assessment of grades 2, 4, 6 and 9 revealed that approximately 70% of each cohort failed to reach an acceptable standard in language arts (reading and English). Concerning the tests carried out by the Measurement and Evaluation Unit of the NCERD, the average score in mathematics remains well below 50%. (Ministry of Education, 2008).

As regards the CXCSEC results in 2008 and 2009, at the General and Technical Proficiencies, 63.7% of the candidates obtained at least a grade III, while 83.3% obtained grades I–IV, a 6.5% and 4.6% increase over the 2008 figures respectively. Of the 55,937 ‘subjects’ sat, boys accounted for 24.6% passes at grades I–III and girls 39.1%, and at grades I–IV, 31.8% were boys and 58.6% girls.

Teaching staff

The Cyril Potter College of Education (CPCE) offers several teacher training programmes as follows:

- Nursery Education Programme: This can either be done on a pre-service basis on the main college compound in Georgetown or on a in-service basis in the regions. The in-service programme is also offered in Georgetown. The programme is of two years’ duration.
- Primary Education Programme: This follows a pattern of delivery similar to that for nursery education. The two-year programme is designed for primary school teachers who are generalists (i.e. they should be able to teach all the areas that make up the primary school curriculum).
- Secondary Education Programme: This programme is of three years’ duration and can be done on a pre- or in-service basis. Two options are offered: pre-vocational (home economics, agriculture, industrial arts) and academic (language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, art and music).

Persons with a trained teacher’s certificate from CPCE, and at least two years’ experience post-certification, are eligible for admission into the certificate in education programme in the faculty of education, University of Guyana. Here they can specialize in nursery, primary or secondary education. Options in the latter are offered in mathematics, science, social studies, English, Spanish, home economics and agricultural science. These specializations are offered in the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) programme; admission is dependent on successful completion of the two-year certificate in education course. The B.Ed. requires a further two years to complete.

The full four-year programme on a part-time basis which culminates in the award of the B.Ed. offers candidates a solid grounding in the foundations of education. This includes courses in the philosophy of education, issues related to education and development in developing countries, the psychology of learning and teaching, curriculum theory and development, classroom testing and measurement and research methods.

The nursery education programme gives candidates a thorough grounding in the nursery school curriculum, the history and philosophy of early childhood

education, the social background of the nursery school child, school/parent and community interaction and creative arts for the nursery school. The programme also includes courses in administration for those who have responsibility for the management of nursery schools. The primary education programme provides opportunities for candidates to focus either on classroom teaching or administration. Courses are offered in the teaching of language arts, social studies, science and mathematics at the primary level, as well as educational technology, sociological theory and fundamentals of school administration.

In the secondary education programme a number of the content courses in the area of specialization (e.g. English, mathematics) are the same as those offered to candidates for Bachelor of Arts or Science degrees in other faculties. In the faculty of education, the candidates are given courses which deal more with the methodology and practice of teaching. All the programmes have a practicum that involves the assessment of the candidate teaching in the classroom or performing the function of an administrator or supervisor. In addition, in all the programmes the candidates are required to undertake a research study. This either takes the form of the development and implementation of some curriculum materials, or an investigation into a significant problem in education in Guyana.

The Diploma in Education (Dip. Ed.) is a two-year in-service programme designed to prepare candidates with a first degree (B.A., B.Sc., B.Ed.) to teach in the upper levels of the secondary school, especially at the sixth-form level. Specializations are offered in administration and the subject areas (mainly social studies, science, mathematics and English). As regards the B.Ed. in nursery education, as the first graduates of this programme entered the system in 1995. These persons are usually the heads of nursery schools or they have responsibility for supervising nursery school teachers at the regional level.

Persons with a trained teacher certificate specializing in primary education are qualified to teach in primary schools. Those with degrees in primary education are either heads of schools or function in some senior capacity (e.g. deputy head or senior master/mistress). Because of the severe shortage of teachers in Guyana, it is common practice to find a teacher at a higher level of education than that for which he/she has been trained. It is not unusual, therefore, to find persons who have been trained to teach at the primary level actually teaching in the lower forms of secondary schools. The secondary programme at CPCE prepares the teacher to teach in the lower forms of secondary schools, but many can be found teaching in the upper forms because there are very few Dip. Ed. graduates who remain in teaching, because the salary and working conditions are so unattractive. Many of the teachers trained in Guyana find jobs in the islands in the Caribbean where they can earn much better salaries. There are schools in St. Lucia, for example, that are staffed almost wholly by Guyanese teachers. The places left by teachers who have migrated have been filled by untrained and unqualified teachers. Whereas the expectation is that a teacher should have passed some subjects at the CXCSEC examination, in many rural schools, in particular, one finds teachers whose level of education has not gone beyond the community high school or the secondary department of the primary school.

In-service training of teachers has largely been the responsibility of the National Centre for Educational Resource Development (NCERD) which was



established as an arm of the Ministry of Education in 1988. Included in the aims of the Centre are to: develop processes designed to improve teaching methodologies and administration in the education sector; introduce new or different teaching strategies and technological innovations, where feasible, into the learning environment; and provide continuous in-service training for teacher educators and supervisors, and plan the annual activities of in-service teacher education.

Between 1988 and 1991, NCERD held annual workshops for all primary and community high school teachers throughout the country. This involved a team of persons from the Centre travelling around the country to hold the workshops at selected central sites. These workshops targeted the principals of the schools, with the understanding that on return to their schools they would in turn train their own teachers in the new ideas and methodologies learnt. Training workshops were also held in the specialist subject areas but these tended to be on an *ad hoc* basis. Training programmes include areas such as principles of teaching, curriculum planning and development, the reinforcement of language and mathematical skills across the curriculum.

Since 1991, the workshops have continued although not on such a regular basis. The general pattern is for selected teachers to attend workshops on the NCERD location in Georgetown and then for these teachers in turn to return to their schools and pass on what they have learnt to their colleagues.

Working conditions are poor and benefits are few. For example, teachers are not given any assistance with housing, although homes and rentals are very costly in Guyana, especially in the capital city and towns. Teachers are given monetary incentives for teaching in schools in the hinterland. Although they are normally provided with accommodation, the conditions are so rough that most teachers shy away from working in those areas. The main disincentives are: the isolation of the area; difficulties with transportation and getting water, especially in the dry season; and the high cost of purchasing food items.

The creation of the post-senior assistant master/mistress—and its addition to that of senior master/mistress—has widened the scope for promotion in the system. Apart from principals and deputy principals, there are also headships of departments to which teachers can aspire. Studying for degrees and diplomas and participating in professional development courses increases the teachers' prospects for promotion. In-service training is also important, and heads of schools are expected to organize staff development programmes with the support of NCERD staff, if necessary. Well-managed staff development programmes can serve as important sources of professional support during employment. Educational projects which are funded by international agencies usually have a component for the professional development of staff. This is normally done through training abroad.

The faculty of education offers a bachelor's degree programme in primary and nursery administration which is especially suited for the training of heads of nursery and primary schools. The Diploma in educational administration is especially suited for secondary school principals and heads of departments.



The master's in education programme—which includes specialization in the management of education and in curriculum development, curriculum change and evaluation—is especially suited for the training of senior officers in the Ministry of Education and senior school administrators. Options are also available for persons in senior positions with responsibilities in measurement and evaluation, guidance and counselling and language teaching in Creole contexts.

It is estimated that 47% of teachers are untrained, a percentage that is higher (62%) in remote hinterland regions. (Ministry of Education, 2008).

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Web resources

- Ministry of Education: <http://www.education.gov.gy/> [In English. Temporarily down, last checked: August 2010.]
- National Centre for Educational Resource Development: <http://www.ncerd.gy/> [In English. Last checked: August 2010.]
- University of Guyana: <http://www.uog.edu.gy/> [In English. Last checked: August 2010.]
- For updated links, consult the Web page of the International Bureau of Education of UNESCO: <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/links.htm>