

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**  
**MINISTRY PAPER** # 87/14  
**CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Members are asked to note that consequent on the changes in the primary and secondary curricula, the national assessment of student learning is being changed.

## **BACKGROUND**

The National Standard Curriculum (NSC) was developed in part to address concerns that students at Grades 4-6 were required to cover too much content, some of which they were required to study again in lower secondary school. This required a change in the assessment of student learning. The new assessments, details of which are provided herein, are being developed concurrently with the NSC. This increases the synergies between both processes.

### **Salient Features of the New Draft National Standard Curriculum**

- The New National Standard Curriculum covers all subjects in all grades from Grades 1-9. At Grades 1-3, the integrated approach has been retained and Civics, Technical and Vocational Education and Information Communication Technology (ICT) have been added. A discreet programme was developed for Language Arts and Mathematics.
- At Grades 4-6, Spanish and Civics will be introduced as discreet subjects while Technical and Vocational Education and ICT will be integrated with other subjects. The Grades 7-9 curriculum has been strengthened with the inclusion of History and Geography at Grades 7-9 and Biology, Chemistry and Physics at Grade 9. The full suite of curricular offerings is presented at **Appendix 1**.

## **NEW ASSESSMENTS**

In response to the findings of the GSAT review, adjustments are being made to the existing assessments at Grades 3, 4, 6 and 9. The following are the new assessments:

### **1. Grade 2 Diagnostic Test**

Currently, diagnostic tests in Language Arts and Mathematics are being administered at Grade 3. A Grade 2 Diagnostic Test (G2DT) will replace these

assessments in order to facilitate intervention at an earlier stage and for a longer period for students who require greater support prior to sitting the Grade Four Literacy and Numeracy Tests.

## **2. Primary Exit Profile**

It is proposed that the end of primary assessment, the replacement for GSAT, will consist of three (3) components which together will provide a comprehensive picture of the students' attainment in primary school.

- One (1) component will continue to be curriculum-based. However, a greater portion of the assessment will be on higher level thinking skills.
- The second component will be an ability test of verbal and quantitative reasoning and will not be curriculum-based. This component is expected to achieve greater equity than the GSAT as it will be difficult for students to be coached for this portion of the assessment.
- The third component of the Primary Exit Profile (PEP) will be a performance assessment, which will require students to demonstrate the use of several skills to complete a task.

A weighting will be assigned to each component to derive a composite score.

While the current GSAT is curriculum-based with fifty percent (50%) of the items on each test assessing recall, the PEP will focus on the assessment of higher order cognitive skills. Also, whereas the GSAT covers content from Grades 4, 5 and 6 and is administered in the second term of Grade 6, the proposed end of primary assessment will assess mastery of the grades 6 curriculum only, and the proposal is that the administration takes place in June annually to allow for more of the Grade 6 curriculum to be covered.

## **3. Grade 9 Diagnostic Test**

At present, the Grade Nine Achievement Test (GNAT) is open to students in All-Age and Primary Junior High Schools, and allows successful candidates access to five year institutions. The Grade 9 Diagnostic Test, which will be a national test, will be administered to all students at Grade 9, regardless of the institution they attend, and will be used to assess the extent of support students require before sitting the CSEC examinations. The introduction of a national assessment at this level will:

- Facilitate timely corrective action
- Give a clear picture of how Grade 9 students in all schools are performing
- Focus on and ensure the use of the National Standard Curriculum at Grades 7- 9
- Provide early assessment that will assist students in making informed decisions regarding their career path
- Facilitate movement of students among schools (i.e. providing a standard understanding of performance)

#### **4. National School Leaving Certificate (NSLC)**

A National School Leaving Certificate is being introduced. At present, the reports received by graduates of secondary schools are not standardized, making the comparison of secondary school achievement problematic. The NSLC will therefore resolve this problem by providing an inclusive and nationally recognized qualification for all school leavers. It will use a common system of reporting student achievement in the areas covering academics, social behaviour, participation in extra-curricular activities and general school life.

#### **PROJECTIONS**

It is projected that following the formal pilot, the curriculum will be introduced on a phased basis over a three year period, commencing 2016. This timeframe allows for the phasing out of the national assessments which are to be discontinued and the development of the new assessments. The phased approach is also needed to allow time for the development of the curriculum support materials and the acquisition of teaching/learning resource materials. This process has already commenced. The introduction of the NSC and the new assessments should therefore be completed by 2019/2020.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Successful implementation of the National Standard Curriculum and the suite of new assessments will depend on the allocation of human and financial resources to support the implementation. The Education System Transformation Programme (ESTP) will provide over J\$100 M for this financial year, with the necessary budgetary allocations being made for subsequent years.



Ronald Thwaites, MP

Minister

May 3, 2014

File No. G.366/1117

Appendix 1: List of Subjects in the National Standard Curriculum, 2013.

<b>Grades 1-3 (The subjects below are integrated around themes)</b>	<b>Grades 4-6 (Discrete Subjects)</b>	<b>Grades 7-9 (Discrete Subjects)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civics</li> <li>• Drama</li> <li>• Music</li> <li>• Physical Education</li> <li>• Language Arts</li> <li>• Mathematics</li> <li>• Information and Communication Technology</li> <li>• Religious Education</li> <li>• Science</li> <li>• Social Studies</li> <li>• Design Art</li> </ul> <p><b>Grades 1-3 (Discrete)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language Arts</li> <li>• Mathematics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language Arts</li> <li>• Mathematics</li> <li>• Science</li> <li>• Social Studies</li> <li>• Civics</li> <li>• Religious Education</li> <li>• Design Art</li> <li>• Music</li> <li>• Drama</li> <li>• Physical Education</li> <li>• Spanish &amp; *French (<i>*currently optional</i>)</li> </ul> <p><b>Integrated</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resource and Technology</li> </ul> <p><i>Information and Communication Technology (as a tool promoted in all subject areas)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language Arts</li> <li>• Mathematics</li> <li>• Integrated Science</li> <li>• Physics (Grade 9 only)</li> <li>• Chemistry (Grade 9 only)</li> <li>• Biology (Grade 9 only)</li> <li>• Geography</li> <li>• Social Studies</li> <li>• History</li> <li>• Civics</li> <li>• Information Technology</li> <li>• Religious Education</li> <li>• Design Art</li> <li>• Music</li> <li>• Drama</li> <li>• Physical Education, Spanish &amp; *French (<i>*currently optional</i>)</li> <li>• Resource and Technology Grades 7-9</li> </ul> <p><i>Information and Communication Technology (as a tool promoted in all subjected areas)</i></p>