

MINISTRY PAPER # 47/116

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, YOUTH & INFORMATION

THE NATIONAL STANDARDS CURRICULUM (NSC)

INTRODUCTION

Members are being asked to note that the Ministry of Education, Youth & Information is implementing the National Standards Curriculum (NSC), which is intended to improve educational outcomes.

BACKGROUND/ISSUES

The NSC has its foundations in the recommendations of the 2004 Education Task Force Report and the reviews of the 1999 Revised Primary Curriculum (RPC) and the National Grades 7–9 Curriculum (*formerly referred to as the Reform of Secondary Education (ROSE) Curriculum*), which collectively covered the primary and lower secondary levels of the system, respectively. The main findings of these analyses justified the need to develop a new curriculum.

Some of these were:

- Lack of developmentally-appropriate outcomes that would define what children should know and be able to do;
- Absence of standards for discrete subjects other than Mathematics, Science and Language Arts at Grades 4 to 6;
- Curriculum was too content-heavy resulting in teachers being unable to complete it in the allotted period;
- Curriculum too focused on the retention of factual knowledge rather than the development of transferable skills and competences; and the
- Curriculum did not sufficiently provide a smooth progression of learning from Grades 1 to 9.

RATIONALE FOR THE NSC

The NSC is intended to allow for greater accountability at the school level and through national assessment, articulation across grades (from 1-9) for alignment with assessment requirements for the secondary level and provision of a general guide for teaching and learning in keeping with international standards and global trends. The 21st Century is a time of rapid technological growth and social change, and hence the school curriculum must ensure that young people are well-prepared for the present and the challenges and opportunities they will meet as adults.

There is need therefore for a vibrant and dynamic curriculum that will inspire and provide greater opportunities for all learners as an inclusive approach is used to cater for the needs of all students.

STATUS OF THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Curriculum development activities that were undertaken:

- (a) Organizing teams led selected curriculum processes in areas such as
 - Teacher Preparation/Training.
 - Curriculum Leadership (preparation/training of Education; Officers, Principals, Vice Principals and school administrators;
 - Development and identification of electronic and non-electronic resources;
 - Designing an on-line learning and collaboration Portal; and
 - Time-Tabling/work design
- (b) The engagement of approximately 110 Curriculum Writers
- (c) Critical analysis of the Curriculum standards Document and Teachers Guides
- (d) Meeting with selected International and National partners and stakeholders with vested interest in the curriculum to the plan, monitor and review projects/initiatives that serve as part of the system of support for the curriculum.
- (e) Providing support to consultants and other institutions involved in the development of curriculum support material and co-curricular initiatives
- (f) Participating in assessment/test development workshops

OUTCOMES OF THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The process has so far led to the preparation of the following documents:

- i. **A Framework Document** with the following elements – the vision, aims, values, principles, the competencies, the subjects and curriculum standards for each subject; and
- ii. **A Teachers' Guide** outlining the teaching units.

The Role of Subject Areas based on Grade Levels

Grades 1-3: Integrated approach to learning

Focusing on early Literacy and Numeracy skills with an integrated approach to Civics, Drama, Information and Communication Technology, Language and Literature, Mathematics, Music, Physical Education, Religious Education, Resource and Technology, Science, Social Studies and Visual Arts.

Grades 4-6: Subject Areas for Problem Solving in Context

Discrete areas of learning that include: Language and Literature, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. Other areas such as Civics, Drama, Foreign Languages, Information and Communication Technology, Music, Physical Education, Religious Education, Resource and Technology, and Visual Arts are introduced in themes supporting the four main areas.

Grades 7-9: Subject Areas for Problem Solving Pathways

This level has broad fields broken into related areas such as English Language and Literature, Spanish, French, Mathematics, Resource and Technology, Biology,

Chemistry, Integrated Science & Physics, Social Studies, History and Geography, Civics, Information Technology, Music, Drama, Physical Education, Religious Education, Visual Arts and Dance.

At Grade 7-9, children will be placed on a Pathway that best suits their academic and other learning needs. This is to ensure that they are given the kind of help for them to be successful. There are three Pathways: Pathway 1, 11 & 111. These Pathways are distinguished by the level of reflective coaching support and customized learning that is provided. **(See Ministry Paper on APSE)**

STRUCTURE

Subject areas are treated as contexts for learning and will be organized using the framework below.

CATEGORIES OF LEARNING EXPERIENCES FOR ALL STUDENTS	PURPOSE & EMPHASIS	EXAMPLES OF FORMS OF KNOWLEDGE
ENRICHMENT:	Catering to the whole child – the mind, spirit, body. (holistic learning)	Personal Empowerment, Physical Education & Movement Religious Education Health & Family Life Guidance Personal Development
PROBLEM-BASED DRIVERS	Real-Life problem solving in context	Investigation through Projects Resource & Technology Technical Vocational Learning/Education
EXPLORATORY CORE	Enhancing problem-solving in context while catering to intellectual development	Natural Sciences Social Sciences/History Languages
CREATIVE EXPRESSION	Building the power to use the imagination/creative thinking and reflective thinking	Music Drama Dance Visual Art

STATUS OF THE CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

PILOT

The pilot of the NSC commenced during the 2013/2014 School Year in selected schools. The feedback from the pilot is being used to inform the final documents. Other implementation activities to date include:

- (a) Preparation of Master Trainers;
- (b) Sensitization of Teacher Education institutions;
- (c) Orientation of Regional Directors and Preparation/Training of Education Officers;
- (d) Field visit to Pilot schools to gather baseline data on resources and school operations;
- (e) Establishment of curriculum implementation teams;
- (f) Preparation of primary and secondary level teachers of the pilot schools;
- (g) Preparation of a curriculum resource classification framework; and
- (h) Design of an online portal for monitoring, sharing of resources and continuous professional development.

NB: Feedback from the Programme Monitoring and Evaluation Unit and from observation and reflection on implementation activities serves as a major source of information to determine changes to be made for successful implementation.

PREPARATION FOR NATIONAL ROLL-OUT OF THE NSC

This process for roll out is underway and will be focusing on Grades 1, 4, 7, 8 & 9 for those who teach up to Grade 9) in year one and Grades 2, 3, 5, 6. In year two.

CURRICULUM EVALUATION

The NSC framework is being updated in preparation for International Review. The philosophy and related elements are completed and are being reviewed locally. It is expected that this process will be completed by June 30, 2016.

CONSULTATIONS

Various groups are being prepared for their roles in the implementation of the NSC. Sessions have been held with the:

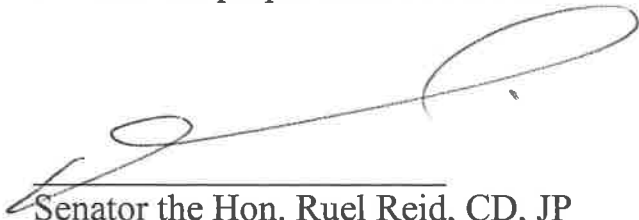
- (a) Book Industry Association of Jamaica;
- (b) International Partners, such as the Centre for International Development and Training (CIDT);
- (c) Teacher Education institutions including Shortwood Teachers' College, Church Teachers' College and College of Agriculture, Science and Education;
- (d) Principals;
- (e) Teachers; and
- (f) Community groups, including parents.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

A total of J\$49, 986, 785.80 M was expended to design, develop and pilot the NSC. Implementation of the NSC will cost approximately 480 M over a two year period, i.e. 2016 -2018. One Hundred and Thirty One Million Jamaican Dollars (J\$131 M) has been allocated for implementation in Year 1.

CONCLUSION

It is expected that this new curriculum will allow for a more targeted approach towards the preparation of our students to meet the demands of the workplace.



Senator the Hon. Ruel Reid, CD, JP

Minister

June 6, 2016

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