



THE JAMAICA EDUCATION
TRANSFORMATION COMMISSION



THE REFORM OF EDUCATION in Jamaica, 2021

REPORT

ABRIDGED VERSION

Presented to

**Prime Minister the Most Honourable Andrew Holness, ON, PC, MP
by Professor the Honourable Orlando Patterson, OM, Chairman**

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Report of the Jamaica Education Transformation Commission

Abridged Version

Preface

An Institution in Crisis

Jamaica has long struggled to overcome the twin challenges of economic stagnation and social instability. As the Most Honourable Prime Minister, Andrew Holness, recently noted in his Emancipation Day speech, these challenges are deeply rooted in our violent and exploitative colonial past. There is now general agreement that the key to overcoming these problems is a well-functioning system of education. It is the primary engine of social and economic growth. For individuals, it generates the increased income that promotes social mobility and wellbeing; it produces the skills, knowledge, and modes of thinking our economy, polity and social institutions need; and it promotes the values that nourish our national culture, civil society and stability. We have known this from the first day of our independence, and successive governments have, with admirable bipartisanship, devoted increasing attention and resources to its development. There is no better indication of how highly we prioritize education than the fact that, today, Jamaica is among the top 20 percent of nations in the share of its national income and annual government budget devoted to this sector.

However, the education institution on which we have pinned so many of our hopes, both as individuals and as a nation, is itself now entangled in three major crises. It has failed to educate a majority of children in what the World Bank calls a 'learning crisis'; it faces an administrative crisis of organizational and strategic incoherence, redundancy and unaccountability, leading to chronic inefficiency; and it is in the midst of the crisis brought on by the COVID 19 pandemic.

There have been successes. Jamaica claims to have one of the highest enrolments of pre-primary children in the world. Access to education is now available to all children of primary school age and to the great majority of adolescents. Our top secondary schools compare with the best in the world, and the lead universities of our tertiary sector have produced women and men of the highest calibre. And it is thanks to our schools that our small nation now amazes the world with the prowess of our athletes. The institution of the ISSA Boys' and Girls' Athletics Championships, the complete creation of our schools, is our greatest national event, the theatre of our civic pride, and the cathartic, if temporary, healing of our many self-inflicted wounds.

But there have been enduring failures, partly emphasized by these very successes. The high performance of our top 10 percent of schools, in demonstrating what might be possible, highlights the inadequacies and inequities of the system. The global success of our young athletes exposes in bold relief the large number of our youth who are unattached from employment, school, security and hope. But our greatest failure lies in the very success of placing the great majority of our children in schools where, sadly, the hopes of over a half are dashed by the end of their primary education from which they emerge illiterate and innumerate.

The Prime Minister's terms of reference to our Commission can be summed up in this single charge: recommend the guidelines to correct this chronic failure in the institution to which we have devoted so much of our national resources and energy. In doing so, however, we were immediately faced with the global Covid-19 pandemic. As all the commission members have noted, COVID has magnified the many shortcomings and inequities in the system. However, the timing of the commission made it difficult to thoroughly study its impact: a full accounting is still to be known, and the data to measure its damage yet to be collected. Nonetheless, to the degree possible the Commission has tracked its influence and has recognized that its impact has been devastating. The majority of our students have likely missed at least a half a school year of quality learning, and a substantial minority with limited or no access to online learning have possibly lost more than a year. Behind the devastation, there were silver linings such as the rapid learning of online teaching and the provision of internet resources. The Teaching and Curriculum committee, in particular, has also found that the crisis has led to a greater awareness and appreciation of the role of teachers and of the importance of parents, the local community and out-of-school factors for the efficient running of our schools. These unexpected gains have informed many of our recommendations, which indicate the ways in which what was learned, of necessity, can be maintained and better built when life returns to normalcy.

However, there is no gainsaying the fact that the pandemic has been an educational calamity from which it will take a long time to recover. It is therefore the worst possible time for the nation to face the mounting institutional crises in the ministry responsible for dealing with the educational havoc brought on our children by the pandemic.

Among our terms of reference is an assessment of the outcomes of the many admirable recommendations of the 2004 Task Force on Education. Our assessments are given at length in the reports of the various sub-committees of the Commission, especially those of Governance and of Teaching and Curriculum. In broad terms, while the 2004 task force made many valuable recommendations toward improvement of the teaching profession and classroom procedure directly relating to student performance, in the implementation process these were largely neglected or failed to make much of an impact. Instead, the emphasis during implementation was on the building of institutional capacity, which was effectively executed by the Education System Transformation Program. These upstream changes are yet to have any meaningful effects on the academic performance of our students, the majority of whom continue to perform at well below the goals and standards set by the Task Force itself as well as later national plans such as the 2009 Vision 2030 Jamaica National Development Plan of the Planning Institute of Jamaica, and the 2012 National Education Strategic Plan of the MoEYI.

The 2004 Task Force also strongly recommended institutional changes in the MoEYI, hardly any of which were implemented, as noted by the report of our Governance committee. Mindful of these implementation deficiencies and their consequences, the Commission has placed primary emphases on the institutional reform of the Ministry, and on teaching and curriculum reform, the longest sections of our report. The Commission has also highlighted the foundational early childhood development sector, which was not considered in the 2004 Task Force report. This commission further differs from that of 2004 in its consideration of the tertiary sector, which it concludes needs major reform.

The members of the Commission were honoured to have been given this extremely important task and all worked diligently to fulfil its mandate. The fact that we were forced by the pandemic to meet online

turned out to be an advantage, since it allowed for far more meetings and a more efficient use of time in our deliberations. It also meant that we were able to hear the views of a larger than usual number of stakeholders. I am happy to report that all members of the Jamaican community we called upon were willing to share their views and expertise with us and clearly saw it as the fulfilment of their civic duty. A substantial number of persons went further, agreeing to be co-opted by the sub-committees and collaborating on a regular basis for the entire course of our work. We also benefited from the advice and work of several members of international organizations related to Jamaica, chief among whom were Ms. Cynthia Hobbs, Lead Education Specialist and Dr. Diether Beuermann Mendoza, Lead Economist, both of the Inter-American Development Bank; Ms. Mariko Kagoshima and Dr. Rebecca Tortello, Country Representative and Education Specialist, respectively, of UNICEF Jamaica; and Mr. Shawn Powers, Economist of the World Bank Group's Latin American and Caribbean Unit. Of special value was UNICEF's survey of the nation's students on behalf of the Commission, which provided us with a detailed account of what students think and feel about their education and the changes they would like to see implemented, changes we are happy to report, comported well with our own findings and recommendations.

The Commission was provided invaluable assistance by its secretariat, ably directed by Ms. Trudy Deans, Senior Advisor to the Prime Minister. Two other senior members of the Prime Minister's office, Mr. Alok Jain, Consultant, and Ms. Merle Donaldson, Chief of Staff, also gave us critical advice throughout the year. Our work would not have been possible without the cooperation of the officers of the Ministry of Education and Youth who provided us with the answers and data that we sought. The Honourable Minister of Education, Ms. Fayval Williams, has enthusiastically supported the aims and work of the Commission, not only meeting on several occasions with the group, but engaging in long conversations with me from which I greatly benefited.

Speaking personally, I would like to thank the Most Honourable Prime Minister for the confidence he has shown in me in my appointment as Chair of the Commission. I am deeply honoured to have been given this opportunity to serve my country in such a critical endeavour. Nearly fifty years ago, in 1972, I was appointed by the then recently elected Prime Minister, the Honourable Michael Manley, to serve as his Special Advisor for Social Policy and Development. Prime Minister Holness, at our first meeting, reminded me that 1972 was the year of his birth. The fact that I have been able to serve two Prime Ministers so far apart in age and political philosophy reflects one of our greatest assets as a nation: the steadfast vibrancy and continuity of our democratic system of governance. Our system of education has also greatly benefited from this continuity, in the unusual degree of bipartisanship shown by our political leaders in supporting and reforming the institution over the course of our history as an independent nation.

Despite this bipartisan effort, however, the performance of the system has been deeply unsatisfactory, failing too many of our nation's children. It is our ardent hope that the successful implementation of our recommendations will justify, finally, this sustained effort by our leaders to achieve the ideal expressed in the Vision 2030 National Development Plan which is modified as follows: 'equitable access to modern education and *successful* training appropriate to the needs of each person and the nation'.

Professor the Honourable Orlando Patterson, O.M.

Chair, Jamaica Education Transformation Commission: 2020. Office of the Prime Minister, Jamaica
John Cowles Professor of Sociology, Harvard University

MEMBERS OF THE JAMAICA EDUCATION TRANSFORMATION COMMISSION

Chair: Professor the Honourable Orlando Patterson, O.M. - John Cowles Professor of Sociology, Harvard University

Committee Chairs:

- Dr. Dana Morris Dixon, Chair, Governance and Accountability and Tertiary Committees
Assistant General Manager/Chief Marketing and Business Development Officer, Jamaica National Group Limited
- Mr. Jeffrey Hall, Co-Chair, Finance Committee - Chief Executive Officer, Jamaica Producers Group Limited
- Ms. Floretta Plummer, Chair, Technical and Vocational Education and Training Committee
Former Principal, Naggo Head Primary School
- Ms. Erica Simmons, Chair, Infrastructure and Technology Committee
Executive Director, Centre for Digital Innovation and Advanced Manufacturing, Caribbean Maritime University
- Prof. Michael Taylor, Chair, Teaching and Curriculum Committee - Dean of the Faculty of Science and Technology, UWI Mona
- Prof. David Tennant, Co-Chair, Finance Committee
Professor of Development Finance and Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, UWI Mona

Members of the Commission

- Dr. Garth Anderson, Principal, Church Teachers College
- Prof. Eleanor Brown, Professor of Law and International Affairs, Pennsylvania State University
- Prof. Colin Gyles, Acting President, University of Technology, Jamaica
- Most Rev. Donald Reece, Archbishop Emeritus of Kingston and Chairman, Ecumenical Education Committee
- Prof. Maureen Samms-Vaughn, Professor of Child Health, Child Development and Behaviour, UWI Mona
- Mr. Gordon Swaby, Chief Executive Officer, EduFocal Limited
- Mrs. Esther Tyson, Former Principal, Ardenne High School
- Ms. Trudy Deans, Senior Advisor to the Prime Minister

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Introduction: Guiding Principles

Access to education has long been enshrined as a fundamental human right, its provision by most countries hailed as one of the great achievements of the late 20th century. However, there is growing awareness of the fact that access to schooling does not amount to learning and that in many parts of the developing world children at the end of primary education remain illiterate. This learning crisis is costly both in terms of human and economic development, UNESCO estimating that it costs governments some \$129 Billion dollars per year.¹ Jamaica, unfortunately, is typical of the learning crisis. We therefore follow UNESCO in its declaration that:

“Children do not only have the right to be in school, but also to learn while there, and to emerge with the skills they need to find secure, well-paid work.”

The pursuit of this fundamental right animates the work and recommendations of this report. Although Jamaica has a good record in providing near universal access to primary school, it has failed to educate at the most basic level a substantial proportion of its children. Exam results in 2019 indicated that at the end of 6 years of primary schooling 59 percent were failing mathematics, and 45 percent were failing in language arts. Jamaica’s tepid economic performance over the past half century, not to mention its related chronic social problems, can in good part be attributed to its learning crisis.

Five fundamental principles motivate our objectives and recommendations for the reform of Jamaica’s education system: organizational coherence in the governance of education, internal and external systemic alignment in its functioning, a pedagogic transformation focused on the instructional core of learning as a collaborative process, a revision of the curriculum grounded in the complementary learning of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, the ARTS, and Mathematics) and SEL (Social and Emotional Learning) disciplines, and the vigorous pursuit of equity.

A. Organizational Coherence

Organizational coherence exists when all parts of the education system work toward successful learning outcomes. Jamaica has a chronic coherence problem, in which different parts of the system work at cross purposes with each other, in the process neglecting or undermining the ultimate goal of learning. These organizational problems were clearly recognized by the 2004 Task Force and recommendations made to correct them. Nonetheless, there has been a failure to deliver improved outcomes in student performance, in spite of considerable capital investment, very high prioritization of education in the nation’s budget, and a great deal of capacity building over the past two decades. Two experts on the problem of coherence have indicated what needs to be done to fix this problem: “There is only one way to achieve greater coherence, and that is through purposeful action and interaction, working on capacity, clarity, precision of practice, transparency, monitoring of progress, and continuous correction. All of this requires the right mixture of “pressure and support”: the press for progress within supportive and focused cultures”.² The Commission hopes to achieve such coherence in the organization of education in Jamaica.

1 UNESCO: Teaching and Learning: Achieving Quality for All. EFA Global Monitoring Report 2014.

2 M. Fullan and J. Quinn, 2015. Coherence: The Right Drivers in Action for Schools, Districts, and Systems.p.2

B. Systemic Alignment

Alignment is the interdependent functioning of the different levels of the education system with each other, and of the system with its economic and social environment. Internal alignment is the efficient coordination of the different levels of the education system. We may think of the entire education system as a learning stream in which value is added at each level, depending in part on the degree and quality of the input from the previous level. Jamaica's globally competitive school athletic program is a stellar case of successful alignment. Its underfunding of the foundational pre-primary level is an unfortunate example of misalignment, being a major cause of the learning crisis appearing in its primary and secondary levels.

External alignment is the collaborative process of orchestrating the educational system with the demands of the private sector and broader societal needs. It is a strategic approach to educational planning and programming in which leaders at all levels of the education system "strategizes, aligns, collaborates and implements with the private sector for greater scale, sustainability, and effectiveness in achieving development or humanitarian outcomes across all sectors."³ Jamaica's education has long failed to provide the nation with a badly needed skilled labour force, the Vision 2030 National Development Plan noting that nearly 70 percent of the workforce had received no formal training and that its tertiary sector is "not sufficiently responsive to the demands of the labour market." The alignment is a two-way process and there are encouraging recent signs that the Jamaican private sector is ready to engage in such educational co-leadership and co-investments such as the National Baking Company Foundation's support of scholarships in science, the NCB Foundation's sponsorship of digital training in schools, and the Amber group's recent digital training school. The Commission strongly recommends the advancement of such educational co-investments modelled on the practice of long-established apprenticeship countries such as Germany, Denmark, Switzerland and Korea.

C. Collaborative learning focused on an interactive instructional Core

The Commission finds that Jamaica's teaching profession is too committed to a traditional, teacher-centred method of instruction aimed at passive students, which discourages learning. We advocate a radical shift toward a pedagogical method in which the instructional core is a collaborative interaction between flexible teachers, engaged students and a dynamically relevant curriculum. Research shows that teachers' instructional capacity varies with their interaction with students and how they use the materials; and the experience, prior knowledge, modes of thinking, disposition and relations with other students are as critical to what and how students learn as what the teachers impart of the curriculum being taught: "Improved capacity depends on affecting the ways in which teachers, students and materials understand, make sense of, and influence one another."⁴ To the degree possible, this interaction should include the supportive role of parents and other care-givers. This approach has important implications for how teachers are trained as well as their later development, for both periods of which the classroom should be central. It entails a substantial makeover of teaching colleges and the retraining of trainers at these institutions. Such reform asks much of teachers, which is why we affirm UNESCO's recommendation that "governments must provide teachers with the right mix of incentives to encourage them to remain in the profession and to make sure all children are learning, regardless of their circumstances." We applaud the fact that the MoEYI's new National Standard Curriculum embraces elements of this approach, but we regret its failure to properly prepare and train teachers and students for it. We strongly urge the Ministry to start over, and recommend measures to get it

³ Lisa Blonder, 2020. "What does Private Sector Engagement Mean in Education." USAID. <https://www.edulinks.org/learning/whatdoes-private-sector-engagement-mean-education>

⁴ David Cohen and Deborah Ball, "Instruction, Capacity and Improvement", Penn Grad School of Educ, Consortium for Policy Research and Improvement, 1999

right. The commissioners were greatly encouraged by the findings of a UNICEF survey, prepared for the Commission, that Jamaica's schoolchildren all share these views on learning, and appeal for more teacher-student collaboration, active engagement, more parent and teacher motivation, and blended learning.

D. An Appropriate Curriculum

The Jamaican education system faces two major challenges: the need to train students to function in a technologically based economy; and the need to help solve its catastrophic problem of crime, including unusual levels of violence toward females, children and persons with non-traditional sexual and gender orientations. Hence, the curriculum requires as much attention to social and emotional learning as to STEAM so as to engender respect for human life and a sense of responsibility and civility in human relations.

Our move toward a more technologically driven and knowledge-based system requires the incorporation of a STEAM curriculum at all levels of the education system. However, this equally necessitates a shift toward a SEL curriculum. Emotionally unstable, disrespectful, educationally disengaged children cannot learn STEAM. However, the good news, from a wealth of educational research, is that the teaching and learning of STEAM education and SEL are complementary and mutually reinforcing.⁵ The collaborative classroom built around the respectful interaction of teacher, student and relevant content required by STEAM is precisely the kind of pedagogy that cultivates the mutual respect, self and social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making that are the goals of social and emotional learning. The work of Professor Marina Bers, who addressed our Commission, and has agreed to work with us, has compellingly demonstrated this interaction in her studies and policy work with pre-schoolers.⁶

In the reform of the curriculum, it is important to pay full attention to our history. Few societies bear the stamp of its past more than Jamaica and its history should be one cornerstone of learning at all levels. The 'A' in STEAM must stand as much for "Annals" as for Arts.

E. Equity

UNESCO has noted that: 'Equity is at the core of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).' Educational disparity is chronic in the island, considerably worsened by the pandemic. There are two extremely different school systems in the country, one that is world-class and serves mainly the 'Haves,' the other, pertaining to the vast majority, that serves the 'Have-Nots' and that is largely failing. Jamaica also has a gender problem, but unlike most of the rest of the world, it is boys who are at a disadvantage. This peculiar gender problem is directly related to the crisis of unattached youth, gangs, and violence. This, we hasten to add, is not the result of positively favouring girls, but of the special social circumstances faced by boys, their often-abusive upbringing, and the cultural norms of masculinity from the compelling popular culture that too often disincentivizes education. Indeed, Jamaican girls and women pay a high price for this male failure, reflected in unusually high rates of sexual abuse by men from an early age, and the fact that they experience the highest rate of femicide (homicide, nearly all by men) in the world.

⁵ Peterson, A., Gaskill, M. & Cordova, J. (2018). Connecting STEM with Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Curriculum in Elementary Education. In E. Langran & J. Borup (Eds.), *Proceedings of Society for Information Technology & Teacher Education International Conference* (pp. 1212-1219)

⁶ Strawhacker, Amanda; Bers, Marina Umaschi, 2018. "Promoting Positive Technological Development in a Kindergarten Makerspace: A Qualitative Case Study," *European Journal of STEM Education*, v3 n3 Article 9

There is also a poorly addressed problem of disability in the country, with woefully inadequate resources made available to students with special needs. We strongly endorse the UNICEF's inclusive education benchmark norms that require the inclusion of children with disabilities in regular schools wherever possible, and the removal of all physical and instructional barriers to them.

International studies by PISA show definitively that the vigorous pursuit of equity is not a drag on high educational performance, that, to the contrary, "fairness in resource allocation is not only important for equity in education, but it is also related to the performance of the education system as a whole... school systems with high student performance in mathematics tend to allocate resources more equitably between advantaged and disadvantaged schools." We are mindful that equity and the provision of equal resources are not the same, that indeed, the latter may exacerbate the former. The Commission therefore strongly endorses the International Commission on Education's policy of "progressive universalism," which advocates "expanding provision of quality education for everyone while prioritizing the needs of the poor and disadvantaged."⁷

Conclusion

The best laid plans are only as good as their implementation. We recognize that there is a serious implementation deficiency in Jamaica. To ensure success we urge the government to heed the advice of those who have studied the problems of implementation. First and foremost, that the ownership and commitment to the changes we recommend are assumed by both the Minister and other top leaders of the Ministry of Education and, following their example, at all levels of the organisation down to school administrators and teachers. Above all, top leadership must buy into our plan and not simply announce and applaud it then return to business as usual, which is the sure recipe for failure. Secondly, that there is an unwavering commitment to accountability on the part of those enjoined with the implementation of our recommendations throughout the implementation period. Thirdly, that managers in the MoEYI are all clear about the nature and prioritization of our recommendations, and that they are thoroughly communicated and understood. Fourthly, that there is constant monitoring and review of how our recommendations play out in practice, with unhesitating action to correct what does not work, to be replaced with what does achieve the recommended goal, in a continuous process of improvement. Fifthly, that the necessary resources and management capabilities are assigned to the implementation of our plan, with changes in allocation as realities on the ground dictate during the implementation process. Finally, and most importantly, we urge the government to consider locating the implementation of our recommendations outside of the administrative framework of the Ministry of Education. Given the failure to implement the institutional recommendations of the 2004 Task Force and the institutional crises now facing the Ministry, we do not believe that it is capable of internally reforming itself.

We are all fully committed to Jamaica's noble motto for education, that "every child can learn, every child must learn." However, this ideal will never be attained until we overcome our chronic pattern of implementation deficiency. The Jamaica Education Transformation Commission hopes to change this pattern and do well by our children, the disadvantaged among whom have waited far too long for change.

⁷ The International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity, 2016. *The Learning Generation: Investing in Education for a Changing World*, pp. 87-88

The Findings of the Commission

The Jamaica Education Transformation Commission was launched in July 2020 by the Most Honourable Prime Minister, Mr. Andrew Holness, charged with conducting a ‘comprehensive review of the public education system, covering all sectors of education, namely, early childhood, primary, secondary, vocational, and higher education.’ On the basis of this review, it should recommend an action plan for change setting out ‘specific legislative, policy, structural or other changes necessary to create a world-class educational system, geared to enabling Jamaicans to fulfil their potential and develop the skill base and human capital required for Jamaica to compete successfully in the 21st Century Global Economy.’ Over the course of the past eleven months, the fourteen members of the Commission, with the valuable assistance of several co-opted members and a dedicated secretariat, produced this document. This document summarises the full findings and recommendations of the Commission, which can be found in a companion document (the Unabridged Version).

The Commission’s work focused on eight (8) areas of the education system: An Analysis of the Present State of Education in Jamaica; Governance; Early Childhood Education; Teaching, Curriculum and Teacher Training; the Tertiary Sector, Technical and Vocational Education and Training; Infrastructure and Technology; and Finance. The recommendations for each of these eight areas are included at the end of each section, though detailed explanations and recommendations may be found in the extended version of the JETC report. Care must be taken not to treat the recommendations of this report in ‘silos’, since this runs the danger of neglecting the principle of organizational coherence, the fact that the system is highly inter-related and that recommendations made in one area directly or indirectly impact another.

Following these sections, we summarize the results of a survey of Jamaican students’ views on the education system and their recommendations for change which was generously produced on our behalf by UNICEF Jamaica in 2021.

1. The State of Education in Jamaica

The education system is one of the largest institutions in Jamaica. The Ministry of Education, with its eleven agencies and 7 regional offices, employs over 25,000 teachers who educate nearly 580,000 students in over a thousand educational centres. Jamaica provides access to education to nearly all children of pre-primary and primary ages and to the majority of those in the secondary school cohorts 18 and under.

At the pre-primary level Jamaica claims one of the highest rates of enrolment in the world: 93.4% of 3–5-year-old children, the great majority in private institutions that are not effectively monitored, with most providing unsatisfactory care. At the primary level some 232,000 students are registered. Although the country claims to offer universal access, UNESCO reports a gross enrolment rate of 85% and a net rate of 79% which is well below those of countries at Jamaica’s level of development and of the other small Caribbean states. Furthermore, over 17% of primary age children are not in school, due mainly to economic factors (lunch money and transportation fare) and boredom.

Some 211,800 students attend secondary schools. Jamaica’s officially stated secondary enrolment rates are also problematic. Contrary to the 98 percent rate recently reported to the World Bank, the lower and upper secondary rate (ages 12-16) is 87%, and for age groups 17 and 18 (grades 12 & 13) it is 28.7%. Most students leave secondary school without a certificate—70 percent of the 18-year-old cohort in

2018. As of 2018, there were 51,684 students in the tertiary level, attending 18 institutions, of which 3 are universities. The island's tertiary rate of enrolment is 27%- well below that of countries at its level of development.

1.1 The Performance of Students

Although the great majority of its children have access to primary and secondary schooling, Jamaica has a severe learning crisis, in that a majority of students at the end of primary school remain illiterate and innumerate and most leave secondary school with no marketable skills. In 2017, over 85% of students achieved “mastery” of their Grade 4 literacy test, and 66% in their test of numeracy. Although there were indications of improvement between 2002 and 2018 in the GSAT and GNAT primary school-leaving exams, the recently introduced PEP (Primary Exit Profile) exam, which shifted away from memorized learning to the testing of analytic thinking, revealed major deficiencies in the level of learning achieved by students: only 41% passed in mathematics, 49% in science, and 55% in language arts (Table 1). A breakdown of the language arts results indicated that a third of students at the end of primary school could not read, 56% could not write, and 57% could not identify information in a simple sentence.

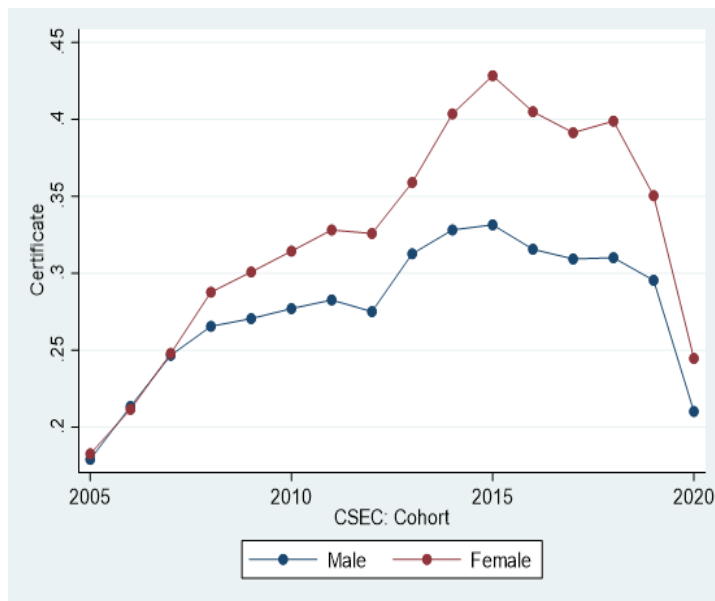
Table 1 Pass Levels and Overall Pass/Fail Ratios in the 2019 PEP Examinations

Subject	Percent Beginning	Percent Developing	Percent Proficient	Percent Highly Proficient	Pass/ Fail Ratio
Math	7	52	35	6	41/59
Science	7	44	42	7	49/51
Social Studies	3	34	50	13	63/37
Language Arts	9	36	46	9	55/45

The PEP exam indicated that most students were barely literate. The mean language score in the last GSAT exam in 2018 was 65. While the two exams are not strictly comparable, the GSAT score indicated at least acceptable levels of literacy. However, the PEP exam showed that: 33% of students could not read or barely do so, 56% could not write or barely able, and 58% could not find information on a topic in a simple passage.

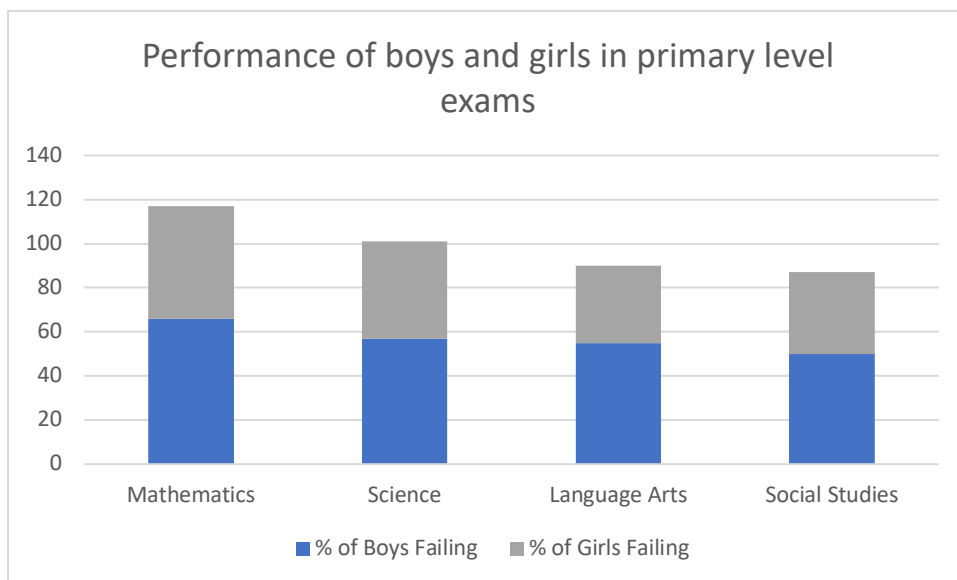
Performance at the end of secondary schooling was not much better. In 2019 some 32,617 students sat the CSEC exams (54% females/45% males), of which only 42.5% passed 5 or more subjects including English and/or mathematics. Overall, only 28% passed 5 or more subjects with English and Mathematics. In the CAPE exams, pass rates are low and have been declining: only 45% passed the Diploma certificate at an acceptable level.

Figure 1 CSEC Certificate Pass Rate by Years and Gender



In all examinations, starting with the Grade 4 tests, girls substantially outperform boys (Figure 1). The gap appeared to decline somewhat between 2005 and 2018 in the primary and secondary school tests but increased sharply with the new PEP exams in 2019, in which girls outperformed boys by 15 points in Mathematics, by 13 points in science, by 20 points in Language arts, and by 13 points in social studies. Jamaica is one of the few countries where girls outperform boys in math and science.

Figure 2 Performance of boys and girls in primary level exams



The performance of students at the tertiary level will be examined in depth in the Tertiary section of this report. We note here, however, that the gender disparity widens at each level of the system. At the tertiary level, 69% of enrolled students are females, and only 31% are males. Women also graduate from this level at three times the rate of men.

1.2 The World Bank's Report on Jamaica's Learning Crisis and declining Human Capital Index (HCI)

The World Bank's most recent Human Capital Reports⁸ indicate that Jamaica has a learning crisis of relatively high enrolment and poor education performance that is getting worse, contributing to its deteriorating Human Development Index score. In 2018, the Bank found that children in Jamaica could expect to complete 11.7 years of pre-primary (starting at age 4), primary and secondary schooling by age 18. However, when years of schooling were adjusted for quality of learning, it was found that this was equivalent to only 7.2 years, a learning gap of 4.5 years. This gap is a major component of the Bank's overall Human Capital Index (HCI), which measures the amount of human capital that a child born today can expect to attain by age 18. It ranges between 0 and 1. A country with a score of 1 means that a child born today can expect to achieve complete education and full health by age 18. Jamaica's Human Capital Index in 2018 was .54, ranking it in the bottom half of countries, significantly below its Caribbean small-island counterparts as well as the average for the upper-middle income group of countries to which it belongs.

Since then, the country's score and rank have declined, due mainly to its relatively poor education performance. In 2020, assessed before the COVID-19 pandemic, the Bank found that Jamaican children could expect to complete 11.4 years of schooling by the age of 18. However, factoring in what children actually learned, the actual years of schooling were only 7.1 years, a gap of 4.3 years, the slight decline in the gap due to the facts that both the expected and adjusted years of schooling had declined. Jamaica's overall Human Capital Index has also declined to .53, which means that a child born in Jamaica today will be 53 percent as productive when they grow up as they could be if they had achieved complete education and full health. Jamaica's country rank on the Human Capital Index has worsened to 97th out of the 173 countries assessed, worse than the average of its income group as well as the group of small Caribbean countries.

1.3 The Performance of Schools, with a New Method of Evaluation

Schools cannot be blamed entirely for the unsatisfactory performance of the nation's students, but they bear a good deal of responsibility for it. Jamaica now has two ways of evaluating the performance of schools. One is by the National Education Inspectorate, instituted in 2009, which uses traditional means of evaluation—observations, tests, self-evaluations and the like. The other was introduced in 2021 by this Commission, applying only to secondary schools: a value-added mode of evaluation, on the basis of which a novel composite ranking system was constructed.

In 2015, its most recent nation-wide evaluation, the National Education Inspectorate evaluated 55% of schools as 'ineffective,' with 45% of school leaders judged "unsatisfactory" and only 55% of teachers assessed as "satisfactory or above." Since then, there has been dramatic, though inexplicable, improvements in the NEI's evaluation indicators. However, no nationwide evaluations similar to the baseline of 2015 have since been done.

Value-added estimates measure how much of students' examination performance can be attributed to the school itself as distinct from the attributes of the students and their background. Jamaican secondary schools were ranked, not solely on the basis of their exam results, or only on the value-added

⁸ The World Bank, The Human Capital Index, 2018 & 2020

<file:///C:/Users/orp295/Downloads/9781464815522.pdf>

<https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/363661540826242921/pdf/The-Human-Capital-Project.pdf>

metrics, but also with a new composite index, created by the Commission, that combined the average of rankings on both exam results and value added results.

Stakeholders still have the option to continue using only exam results to assess schools should they so choose. In view of the extreme inequality of schools in Jamaica, the Commission decided to divide the secondary schools into two groups: a traditional, more privileged, group of 42 schools and a non-traditional group of 211 schools. Unfortunately, it was not possible to conduct the value-added procedure on 100 of the secondary schools because of either missing data or the fact that their exam results were at zero percent pass rate which confounds modelling.

Tables 3 and 4 show the rankings for the 42 traditional, and top 42 non-traditional high schools. The complete list of all schools, including the 100 which were not included in the value-added model, but with CSEC and CAPE results attached, can be found in the Unabridged Version of the Commission's report. The results substantially alter the traditional evaluation of the nation's secondary schools. The nation's top three traditional secondary schools, measured in terms of the composite ranking index, are Glenmuir High School, in May Pen, Wolmer's High School for Girls in Kingston, and St. Jago High school in Spanish Town. The three top non-traditional high schools are Dintill Technical in Linstead, Denbigh High in May Pen, and Edwin Allen High in Frankfield. Merl Grove High school and Campion High are the best performing traditional high schools measured solely in terms of the value they add based, respectively, on the CSEC and CAPE exams. St. Mary's College and Bluefields High/Belmont Academy are the best non-traditional performers in value added based, respectively, on the CSEC and CAPE results.

Glenmuir emerges as the nation's preeminent secondary school. It clearly demonstrates that schools can perform at the highest level while admitting students from more modest backgrounds, or those who may not have been as well prepared academically during their primary school years.

Moving Forward: Recommendations on the Evaluation of Secondary Schools

EVAL1: Standardise the use of the value-added ranking for secondary schools

EVAL1.1: It is recommended that in future years all secondary schools should be evaluated and ranked using the value-added procedure, complementing the traditional evaluation of the National Education Inspectorate

EVAL1.2: The value-added rankings should be combined with the rankings on the regular CSEC and CAPE exams to produce the composite rank developed by the Commission

EVAL1.3: MoEYI should promptly address both sets of evaluations. Special attention should be paid to schools that perform poorly on the value-added assessment. Schools that perform well should be publicly acknowledged and rewarded

EVAL1.4: Both sets of evaluations should be made publicly available and widely disseminated to stakeholders

EVAL1.5: Every effort should be made to ensure that all schools are able to provide the appropriate data needed to conduct the value-added procedure

Table 2 Rankings of Average & Value-Added Scores for CSEC & CAPE Exams + Base % Average Results (Traditional Schools 2001-2018)

Secondary School Name	OVERALL RANKING Based on Average of All Other Rankings	Ranking based on Average Result (% CSEC Certificate)	Ranking based on Added Value (% CSEC Certificate)	Ranking based on Average Result (VA CSEC and % CSEC Certificate)	Ranking based on Average Result (% CAPE Diploma)	Ranking based on Added Value (% CAPE Diploma)	Ranking based on Average Result (VA CAPE and CAPE Diploma)	Average CSEC % Certificate	Average CAPE % Diploma
GLENMUIR HIGH SCHOOL	1	3	16	1	4	3	4	72.04%	46.55%
WOLMERS HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS	2	6	24	9	3	2	2	69.86%	52.01%
ST JAGO HIGH SCHOOL	3	15	12	7	8	5	7	62.13%	38.87%
ST ANDREW HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS	4	5	17	3	11	15	12	71.42%	34.32%
IMMACULATE CONCEPTION	4	2	35	16	2	4	3	72.89%	54.26%
CAMPION COLLEGE	6	1	41	22	1	1	1	73.64%	64.15%
WOLMERS BOYS HIGH	7	8	30	17	6	7	7	68.81%	43.43%
CONVENT OF MERCY	8	22	11	13	12	9	9	58.69%	31.26%
HAMPTON HIGH	9	4	37	30	5	6	5	71.50%	45.86%
QUEENS HIGH SCHOOL	10	28	8	15	15	8	10	52.76%	28.90%
ST HUGHS HIGH SCHOOL	11	23	5	8	20	14	16	57.21%	27.47%
ARDENNE HIGH SCHOOL	12	7	33	19	7	13	8	69.17%	39.66%
CLARENDON COLLEGE	13	32	3	14	23	11	16	48.02%	26.88%
MEADOWBROOK HIGH	14	25	6	10	21	19	19	56.30%	27.14%
KINGSTON COLLEGE	15	19	14	13	19	20	18	61.32%	27.78%
HOLY CHILDHOOD HIGH	16	17	9	6	26	23	26	61.88%	26.12%
WESTWOOD HIGH	17	10	22	11	13	31	22	68.22%	30.88%
ST HILDAS DIOCEAN	18	13	13	6	26	23	26	63.63%	26.15%
KNOX COLLEGE	19	18	4	3	29	29	31	61.47%	24.00%
DECARTERET	20	16	29	25	17	16	14	61.89%	28.66%
ST MARY HIGH SCHOOL	21	31	19	32	16	10	12	51.79%	28.71%
MERL GROVE HIGH SCHOOL	22	24	1	4	32	27	32	56.37%	21.02%
MANININGS SCHOOL	23	11	36	30	14	25	18	64.56%	30.57%
ST CATHERINE HIGH SCHOOL	24	38	7	25	31	12	21	40.97%	21.27%
MUNRO COLLEGE	25	20	39	36	9	18	13	61.22%	36.23%
MORANT BAY HIGH SCHOOL	26	27	15	21.5	28	21	26	53.49%	24.96%
MONTEGO BAY HIGH SCHOOL	27	9	38	30	10	32	20	68.62%	34.73%
MOUNT ALVERNIA HIGH SCHOOL	28	12	27	18	22	34	29	63.74%	27.05%
ST GEORGES COLLEGE	29	26	20	27.5	24	22	23	56.08%	26.19%
CHARLEMONT HIGH SCHOOL	30	41	2	23	37	17	28	31.87%	17.12%
BISHOP GIBSON HIGH SCHOOL	31	21	26	30	18	30	24	59.27%	27.95%
MARYMOUNT HIGH SCHOOL	32	35	10	25	35	26	33	44.07%	18.01%
MANCHESTER HIGH SCHOOL	33	14	32	27.5	27	35	34	63.05%	25.49%
TITCHFIELD HIGH SCHOOL	34	33	21	33.5	33	24	30	46.88%	18.96%
CAMPERDOWN HIGH SCHOOL	35	36	18	33.5	39	33	36	43.59%	16.64%
YORK CASTLE HIGH SCHOOL	36	30	25	35	36	37	38	52.09%	17.47%
CORNWALL COLLEGE	37	29	40	41	30	41	35	52.56%	21.50%
JAMAICA COLLEGE	38	34	34	39.5	34	39	38	45.16%	18.28%
EXCELSIOR HIGH SCHOOL	39	39	28	38	41	36	40	38.11%	13.38%
CALABAR HIGH SCHOOL	40	37	31	39.5	38	38	39	42.57%	16.87%
FERRICOURT HIGH SCHOOL	41	42	23	37	42	42	42	30.43%	7.26%
RUSEAS HIGH SCHOOL	42	40	42	42	40	40	41	33.95%	13.42%

Table 3 Rankings of Average and Value-Added Scores for CSEC & CAPE + Base % Average Results

Secondary School Name	Ranking based on Average Result (All rankings)	Ranking based on Average Result (% CSEC Certificate)	Ranking based on Added Value (%CSEC Certificate)	Ranking based on Average Result (VA CSEC and % CSEC Certificate)	Ranking based on Average Result (% CAPE Diploma)	Ranking based on Added Value (% CAPE Diploma): 2SLS	Ranking based on Average Result (VA CAPE and % CAPE Diploma)	Average %CSEC Certificate	Average % CAPE Diploma
DINTHILL TECHNICAL SCHOOL	1	7	4	1.5	4	3	2	31.90%	13.16%
DENBIGH HIGH SCHOOL	2	2	9	1.5	3	16	5	41.10%	14.71%
EDWIN ALLEN HIGH SCHOOL	3	9	11	5	5	12	4	27.40%	11.74%
ST MARYS COLLEGE	4	15	1	4	11	11	6	23.64%	9.02%
OLD HARBOUR HIGH SCHOOL	5	13	2	3	15	19	9	25.36%	8.01%
THE CEDAR GROVE ACADEMY	6	12	15	7				25.54%	
HOLMWOOD TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL	7	27	6	10	25	6	8	18.83%	4.51%
JONATHAN GRANT HIGH	8	11	18	8	13	24	10	26.31%	8.19%
JOSE MARTI TECHNICAL SCHOOL	9	28	27	20	9	4	3	18.60%	10.13%
MACGRATH HIGH SCHOOL	10	40	5	13.5	18	10	7	13.24%	6.26%
OBERLIN HIGH SCHOOL	11	16	16	9	14	28	12	23.55%	8.05%
GUYS HILL HIGH SCHOOL	12	33	12	13.5	21	17	11	15.63%	5.68%
VERE TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL	13	20	3	6	20	51	14	21.56%	5.75%
GARVEY MACEO HIGH SCHOOL	14	17	17	11	12	75	18	23.28%	8.64%
HOLLAND HIGH SCHOOL	15	18	31	17	17	59	16	22.75%	7.49%
MICO PRACTISING PRIMARY AND JUNIOR HIGH	16	51	10	23	43	30	15	10.43%	2.47%
CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL	17	42	23	26	32	46	17	12.54%	3.54%
SPALDINGS HIGH SCHOOL	18	19	20	12	22	94	26	21.99%	5.17%
BLUEFIELDS HIGH / BELMONT ACADEMY	19	14	144	69	1	1	1	24.48%	16.34%
BOG WALK HIGH SCHOOL	20	75	42	40	31	31	13	6.41%	3.64%
WINDWARD ROAD PRIMARY AND JUNIOR HIGH	21	64	8	28	69	42	23.5	7.91%	1.04%
ST MARY TECHNICAL HIGH	22	25	37	24.5	24	101	28	19.30%	4.70%
BRIDGEPORT HIGH SCHOOL	23	21	41	24.5	16	119	34.5	21.29%	7.62%
MAY DAY HIGH SCHOOL	24	10	36	15	19	137	48.5	26.67%	5.83%
SYDNEY PAGON AGRICULTURAL HIGH SCHOOL	25	90	7	36				4.68%	
ANNOTTO BAY HIGH SCHOOL	26	32	19	18	44	113	50	16.09%	2.23%
MILE GULLY HIGH SCHOOL	27	35	54	33	30	99	30	14.42%	3.73%
LENNON HIGH SCHOOL	28	45	26	27	36	109	40	11.52%	2.97%
NEW DAY PRIMARY AND JUNIOR HIGH	29	113	14	45	105	2	21	2.83%	0.48%
CLAUDE MCKAY HIGH SCHOOL	30	56	38	34	38	102	37	9.56%	2.69%
ST THOMAS TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL	31	29	24	19	26	155	69	18.22%	4.47%
CONSTANT SPRING PRIMARY AND JUNIOR HIGH	32	114	30	56.5	97	7	20	2.77%	0.57%
IONA HIGH SCHOOL	33	26	48	29	28	138	56	19.25%	4.16%
TIVOLI GARDENS HIGH SCHOOL	34	77	61	50.5	57	60	27	5.95%	1.56%
MAVIS BANK VOCATIONAL SCHOOL	35	95	28	44	90	45	34.5	4.35%	0.66%
AABUTHNOTT GALLIMORE HIGH SCHOOL	36	37	49	31	48	118	56	13.80%	1.98%
BUFF BAY HIGH SCHOOL	37	50	59	37	52	98	44	10.54%	1.76%
HOLY TRINITY HIGH SCHOOL	38	100	52	63	77	33	22	4.14%	0.83%
TACKY HIGH SCHOOL	39	66	64	47	65	73	36	7.76%	1.21%
ST ANDREW TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL	40	38	117	65.5	27	84	23.5	13.60%	4.30%
WATERFORD HIGH SCHOOL	41	92	46	50.5	72	62	33	4.62%	0.95%
PORT ANTONIO HIGH SCHOOL	42	36	45	30	49	132	69	13.82%	1.95%



2. Governance and Accountability

Good governance is a critical element of any well-functioning education system. The current governance framework is inadequate for the articulated goal of significantly improving education outcomes in Jamaica. As noted before, the Government of Jamaica (GOJ) is committing significant resources to education, but the returns are well below what is acceptable. This disconnect between spend and results is due in large part to the lack of accountability across the system as well as issues in the administration of the education system.

The GOJ has dedicated significant resources to the development of a corporate governance framework for public bodies and this framework has been implemented across most Ministries, Departments and Agencies. The GOJ's corporate governance framework is predicated on the premise that better governance leads to better outcomes, more efficient spend and enhanced strategic focus. The Committee is of the view that the education system should adopt these corporate governance norms that emphasize accountability and transparency, and which ultimately facilitate key values of inclusivity and equity in education.

Decisions regarding the use of funds in the sector, channels of accountability, and agenda setting—all related to governance—impact the overall effectiveness of an education system. Ensuring quality education is therefore dependent on the existence of good governance and relies on the five principles of:

- legitimacy and voice
- performance
- fairness
- accountability; and
- direction⁹

In the area of Governance, the Commission focused its work on a review of the overall governance framework for the education system. The key elements of this review included the Ministry's structure and the effectiveness of the strategic framework of the Ministry, school boards, and the various agencies tasked with supporting the work of the MoEYI.

The OECD argues that effective governance requires that a government sets “clear distribution of roles and responsibilities and find the right balance between central and local direction, set concrete objectives and policy priorities for their education system, and engage stakeholders in the process.”¹⁰ While there is some evidence locally of efforts to engage stakeholders in processes of setting priorities for the system, too often balances between local and central direction and clear distribution of responsibilities (such as between the central ministry and regional offices and the schools themselves) have fallen flat or have been hindered by incoherent strategies. Improved governance and new mechanisms to pursue effective governance are desperately needed as the country seeks to address these challenges and create a more effective education system.

⁹ Graham J, Amos B and Plumptre T (2003) *Principles for Good Governance in the 21st Century*. Ottawa, Canada: Institute on Governance in Hutton, Disraeli M. "Governance, management and accountability: The experience of the school system in the English-speaking Caribbean countries." *Policy Futures in Education* 13, no. 4 (2015): 500-517.

¹⁰<https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/4581cb4den/index.html?itemId=/content/component/4581cb4d-en>

MoEYI Strategic Planning

The Commission also found that the MoEYI was deficient in its strategy setting as its overarching policies often lacked strategic focus and coherence. In addition, the accountability structures were lacking at all levels and this accountability deficit has negative implications for the country's ability to improve its education outcomes. As one of the largest and most critical public employers and service providers, it is important for the Ministry of Education to have and routinely monitor a coherent strategic plan. Furthermore, that strategic plan must be linked to the performance of the Ministry's management team, with mechanisms in place to measure achievements against expected outcomes.

Following the report of the 2004 Task Force for Education Reform, the Government of Jamaica designed a National Education Sector Plan (2011-2020) (NESP) which outlined targets for the Ministry of Education and actors within the education system to meet through to 2020. Though the targets outlined in the plan are time-bound (ranging from goals to be achieved from 2015 to 2020), the plan lacked specific details on the short-term targets to be implemented, or variables used to measure the achievement of outlined targets, **leaving clear doubts on the Ministry's capacity to monitor its progress in achieving these targets.**

The NESP listed the relevant pieces of existing legislation and the additional legislative and policy changes that would be required to meet the strategic objectives set. Of that list of twenty-two (22) necessary changes prescribed in 2011, as of July 2021, only three (3) have been passed with some policies underway. Based on the Commission's review of this plan, and other business, operational, and strategic plans of the Ministry, it is evident that there is no consistent monitoring or articulation of progress being made on targets set for Vision 2030 in the NESP, or annually in the various strategic plans, given that:

- i. **there exists a plethora of targets and strategies that are misaligned and overlapping;**
- ii. **the strategies and annual targets to be met are not publicly communicated; and**
- iii. **the progress made by relevant actors for all targets are not consistently measured.**

Organisational Structure of the MoEYI

Data on staffing and organisational structure provided by the ministry show that the organisation is extremely complex with a very large number of staff. Based on the data made available to the Committee from the Ministry, it appears that most funds allocated to the central ministry relate to compensation with smaller amounts available for programmatic activities that could have impact.

Furthermore, the committee found that the seven (7) educational regions are not organised and resourced to achieve the goals articulated in the 2004 Taskforce Report, despite being equipped with additional human resources. However, there is still a very high school-to-staff ratio as the regions are grossly understaffed. There is also a need for reform of the education officer function to lessen the administrative duties so that these valuable resources can focus on improvements within the schools.

Given the vast budget allocated to the sector and the significant performance challenges ***it is important that a comprehensive organisational review be conducted of the central ministry and the regions at a minimum.*** During both official and informal interviews, the committee also unearthed concerns regarding the cultural dynamics in the Ministry as well as the lack of appropriate accountability structures in the Ministry.

Organisation structures need to be designed with clear guidance from the Strategy and Policy direction, consideration for the current context (e.g. severe under-resourcing, out-dated technology, unfilled vacancies, etc.), to address organisational imperatives (e.g. the need for rapid transition from manual to automated workflows, use of on-line platforms for teaching, need to deliver sustainability and Vision 2030 goals, regulations) and principles (e.g. guidelines for handling staff changes arising from recommendations, developing talent, etc.). Once these considerations are established, the design will require a close examination of the “FROM” position to the “TO” state and interdependencies in the following key areas: Strategy, Technology, Processes, Governance/Risks, Talent Capability, Talent Capacity and Culture among others. Once these parameters are understood the organisation can be reviewed and re-designed with the support of research, practical tools, analysis and change management as recommendations are developed.

Poor Performance of School Boards

Currently, school boards are appointed by the responsible Minister to serve for a three-year period pursuant to Regulation 79. There is no minimum qualification for an individual to be nominated to serve on a board. In addition, this service is voluntary, and members are not remunerated for their service. There is an imbalance in the availability of qualified and competent representatives. As seen in some boards, there may not be sufficient members that fully understand the impact of their decisions on the administration, faculty, ancillary staff, or the student body.

Lack of Data Analysis

A key requirement of a functioning administrative apparatus is the existence of a robust system of data collection and analysis. In a modern school environment data must be at the heart of strategy setting and overall decision-making. Good data analytics allows for increased operational efficiency and is an indispensable source for making decisions, formulating diagnoses about strengths and weaknesses of institutions, and assessing the effects of initiatives and policies.¹¹ The MoEYI has not been a participant in this data revolution, but if we want to improve outcomes the creation of a data analytics unit is imperative as it will allow for increased operational efficiency in the MoEYI. It will also allow the MoEYI to make better assessments of its institutions and in turn formulate more evidence-based educational policies.

Education Management System

A 2019 review of Jamaica’s current Education Management Information System (EMIS) concluded that it was deficient in several areas. ***It concluded that the Jamaican EMIS is in an “incipient” state of development*** (2.07) which meant that it partially covers the processes and structural conditions that define it but is not geared to efficient management. Also, there is currently no complete student directory that covers all levels and uses the School-Education Programme-Section-Student identification paradigm to identify the school, curriculum, and section to which each student belongs. For teachers' professional development plans, the MoEYI has yet to establish full digital support and monitoring systems.

¹¹ Agasisti, T. and Bowers, A. (2017). Data analytics and decision-making in education: Towards the educational data scientist as a key actor in schools and higher education institutions. Retrieved from <https://www.academiccommons.columbia.edu/doi/10.7916/D8K374FG/download&ved=2ahUKEwja-7SPnNXxAhUpneAKHefPBJQQFjAaegQIExAC&usg=AOvVaw0X2b1mIQUs-EBG3bOQYhM>

Inadequate Monitoring and Evaluation
















The Programme Monitoring and Evaluation Unit (PMEU) of the MoEYI was established in the Planning and Development Division of the MoEYI to monitor and evaluate programmes and projects introduced and/or being utilized by the Ministry, as well as inform the relevant stakeholders on the progress thereof and indicate ways in which the programmes can be improved. The work of the Unit in terms of evaluation is lacking in the evaluation of student outcomes as seen by its evaluation of the National Standards Curriculum (NSC). The narrative therefore outlines the need for a more improved, robust Monitoring and Evaluation Unit which will aid in setting performance goals, selecting useful performance indicators and targets, reporting on results, and informing the implementation of programs. There also needs to be greater planning so that gaps can be observed between the planned and achieved results.








Key – Performance Indicators

	Underperforming
	Satisfactory Performance
	Good Performance

There are several agencies supporting the MoEYI in achieving its goals and objectives, the Committee reviewed these entities with a focus on those created after the 2004 Taskforce Report. The general view is that these institutions are operating at world class standards and should be commended. These include the UCJ and the NEI. The following table summarises the review of the performance of the remaining entities:

Table 4 Review of Performance of Supporting Entities within the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information

Entity	Function	Performance Indicators
University Council of Jamaica	Registers and assures the quality of local programmes and institutions, and foreign programmes being offered in Jamaica.	  
National Education Inspectorate	Assesses the standards attained by the students within primary and secondary schools at key points in their education, generate a report on the findings and make recommendations to support improvements.	  
Early Childhood Commission	Coordinates all activities, development plans and programmes within the early childhood sector.	  
Jamaica Tertiary Education Commission	To regulate, standardize, safeguard and transform Jamaica's tertiary education sector.	  
National Parenting Support Commission	Coordinates parenting support programmes.	  

Overseas Examinations Commission	Supervises overseas examination boards at the secondary and tertiary level.	
Jamaica Teaching Council	Responsible for the enhancement and maintenance of professional standards in teaching.	
National College for Educational Leadership	Responsible for preparing school leaders for effective leadership	
Jamaica Library Service	Provides information, educational and recreational programmes and services through a Public Library Network and School Library Network.	
National Council on Education	Ensures effective governance of public educational institutions.	
National Education Trust	Mobilizes financial and quality resource investments for schools	
Nutritional Products Limited	Produces and distributes meals to schools.	

Urgent Need for Amended Regulations

Currently, the education sector is governed by the Education Act and Education Regulations which was promulgated in 1965 and 1980, respectively. However, the standing legislative framework does not contemplate the current educational landscape and its rapid transformation. ***This has created a lacuna in the educational sector because the multiplicity of powers bestowed upon the education minister cannot be effectively utilised based on the existing legislative framework. It is important to further note that none of the proposed legislative amendments in the 2004 Report have been drafted or implemented in the Regulations:*** This includes the School Improvement Bill, the Jamaica Teaching Council Bill, the Jamaica Tertiary Education Commission Bill, and the long-awaited amendments to the 1980 Education Regulations. There have been years of discussion regarding these amendments, but there has been little progress in passing them. The Committee recommends a complete re-write of the Education Code in the medium term, but given the GOJ's less than stellar performance in relation to legislative matters, the Committee concluded that at a minimum, the Education Code should be amended with focus on the priority areas for amendment as outlined in Version 1 of the JETC's report. The Governance and Accountability Committee spent copious amounts of time reviewing the Discussion Draft of the Proposed Amendments to the Education Regulations, 1980 that was produced in 2019.

The key areas of amendment to the Regulations were grouped into six (6) headings:

- Accountability
- Teacher Performance

- Technology
- Health & Safety
- Early Childhood Provisions
- Elimination of Discriminatory Policies

As seen in this summary of some of the deficiencies in the governance and accountability framework in the education sector, the Committee made several important recommendations. These in the education space. These recommendations are outlined below:

GOV1: The reform of the education sector should be designated an area of national priority, and a structure similar to the Economic Programme Oversight Committee (EPOC) should be implemented to monitor the implementation of Jamaica’s education reform measures. This body should develop annual work plans with targets and should prepare quarterly and annual reports that outline achievements against targets. This committee should have dedicated resources and institutional support, and the performance reports should be publicly available.

GOV2: The existing public education funding model should be adjusted to allocate funds based on the needs of the schools and not on a simple per student basis. The MoEYI must implement a funding model that re-calibrates the allocation based on the needs of the school in order to ensure equitable treatment. Students with lower levels of prior attainment or who are from lower socio-economic backgrounds would require more centrally-funded resources to fund their education and to enable remedial actions.

GOV3: School board selection framework should be more rigorous and should include vetting and training to better facilitate the important strategic role of boards in the education system to be on par with other bodies in the public sector. The selection and operation of school boards should also be consistent with the GOJ’s Governance Framework for Public Institutions

GOV3.1 The NCE should vet the CVs of all nominees and review boards for appropriate mix of expertise

GOV3.2 A database of potential school board candidates should be developed and populated with a list of names garnered from a public call for expressions of interest in serving on school boards

GOV3.3 Board Chairs and Board members should have minimum qualifications and leadership experience and a demonstrated track record for contributions to education and or community development to be considered for selection

GOV3.4 Provide enhanced governance training for school board members

GOV3.5 Enhance board training on financial management in schools and the requirements as per MoEYI regulations. This training should be done at the start of every term of boards and should also be done for the committees with responsibility for finance and personnel decisions which should mirror the Government’s Corporate Governance Framework for Public Bodies in Jamaica.

GOV3.6 Implement term limits for board chairs. Board chairs should not serve more than two consecutive terms on the board of a single school. This will facilitate enhanced renewal in schools over time and will facilitate the incorporation of fresh ideas and approaches that can serve the school and its students. This will not restrict the Board Chair from serving at other schools.

GOV3.7 Consider options for non-monetary recognition of the service provided by directors of school boards. There are thousands of individuals performing voluntary service on school boards across the country. These individuals are performing valuable national service and should be recognized. While we do not recommend payment for service on boards at this time,

it is important that non-monetary means of acknowledging this work be identified and implemented.

GOV4: Principals should receive adequate training in strategic planning, change management, financial management, human capital management and corporate governance

GOV4.1 Update current NCEL course for principals to better incorporate financial management and change management processes; this course should be a requirement prior to confirmation of principals into those posts.

GOV4.2 Additional courses and hands-on training in technology including suitable office suite of applications/information systems, on-line meeting platforms, learning tools, time and attendance systems and workflow tools that are now the new reality for managing the modern organization.

GOV4.3 Principals should receive enhanced training in financial management and the use of related technology/software (this is especially critical for those in basic and primary schools that have no bursars assigned)

GOV5: The MoEYI's plan to expand the number of roving bursars to support principals in primary schools should be accelerated to provide greater support to principals in this non-academic element of their responsibilities

GOV6: Given the serious concerns regarding cultural issues in the Ministry, it is recommended that a full organizational review be conducted so as to rethink the entire Ministry of Education structure.

GOV6.1 Conduct a review of structure of and resourcing of Regions, given that they are not functioning well

GOV7: Better resource regional offices to manage the schools in their districts

GOV7.1 Consider the use of centralized and shared services that can be accommodated with the use of technology (with self-service features) so as to optimize talent capability and capacity as well as the productivity of the Ministry.

GOV8: The Education Officer role should be adjusted to that of School Improvement Officers and to better reflect the needs of schools, especially those that are challenged in achieving the learning outcomes of students.

GOV8.1 The job description should be amended to reflect a more strategic and change management role

GOV8.2 Performance management targets of education officers should be linked to improvements in school performance

GOV9: Develop a realistic performance management framework for the senior team at the Ministry aligned with the implementation of recommendations from the Commission.

GOV9.1 Develop a practical strategic plan with relevant targets and wherein performance assessments are more closely aligned with the achievement of elements of the strategic plan

GOV9.2 Cross reference the Government of Jamaica Performance Accountability Framework for benchmarking purposes.

A review of the audit findings for public schools reveals that a significant percentage of audits uncover some adverse findings. These range from merely incorrect elements in financial accounts to potential misappropriation of public funds. These audit findings signal potentially pervasive issues regarding the financial accountability framework in the public education sector. It is therefore recommended that:

GOV10.1 More financial audits should be conducted by the Internal Audit team of the MoEYI of schools to identify irregularities in a timelier manner

GOV10.2 Increase staffing in Internal Audit in the Ministry as well as in the financial control units of the regions

GOV11: Develop a centralized cloud-based accounting software suite to be used across all schools

GOV12: Create a website that provides dashboards detailing the performance of all schools as well as the funding allocated by the GOJ. It should include exam passes, NEI reports on the schools and any other relevant performance indicators. Importantly, it should not only feature academic performance, but should also highlight achievements in co-curricular activities and other initiatives undertaken by the schools.

GOV13: JTC Code of Conduct for teachers is necessary and should be linked to Education Regulations as well as other behaviour change initiatives such as the recently passed Sexual Harassment Act

GOV14: JTC Act should be passed urgently and should include the recommendations garnered from years of consultation with the JTA and other interest groups

GOV15: The MoEYI must develop and deploy a functioning and fit for purpose Education Information Management Systems that can handle the large volume of data on students, schools, and teachers that should be maintained, processed, and analysed

GOV16: A Data Analytics department should be established as a priority in the MoEYI. There is need to analyse significant volumes of data so as to have a more comprehensive understanding of performance and issues so as to better inform policy decision-making.

GOV17: Develop of a fully functioning Monitoring and Evaluation Unit. The current unit's evaluation framework as well as the ministry's responsiveness to findings of the unit is not suitable. A better functioning monitoring and evaluation unit will equate to better policy formulation and more effective programmes and resource allocations.

GOV18: Additional flexibility should be embedded in the Education regulations re the movement of teachers where the teacher-student ratio is well below the established standards (based on consultations with teachers and boards)

GOV19: Place greater emphasis on regulating the process utilized to assess teachers. This will include clearly stating the key performance indicators that must be attained by teachers as well as impact on the student and their performance. The teacher disciplinary procedure must be outlined and prioritized for implementation.

GOV20: Formalise the policy directive and framework for technology and its use in the classroom, to be more deeply entrenched in the Regulations

Empower the Minister of Education to intervene in underperforming schools by setting clear objectives and timelines for school improvement (based on the findings and recommendations of the National Education Inspectorate).

3. Early Childhood Education

Research has shown that the experiences of young children predict their academic and social success in later childhood and in adulthood. Children at risk who had a high-quality early childhood development (ECD) programme have better short and long term academic and social outcomes than their peers who did not have this exposure. In childhood there are better school readiness, academic achievement, and high school graduation; in adulthood, there are higher annual earnings and employment and reduced criminality. The economic returns on investment in early childhood are also very high, most of which accrues to the public in returns such as lower crime rates and increased funds from taxes on higher earnings. Jamaica has a long tradition of concern for its pre-school population, beginning in the 1940s.

The Early Childhood Commission

The Early Childhood Commission (ECC) was established by the Early Childhood Commission Act of 2003, and reports to the Minister of Education, its main roles being to develop, monitor and evaluate the implementation of the plans and programmes relating to early childhood, to act as a coordinating agency to ensure effective streamlining of all activities relating to early childhood development, to supervise and regulate early childhood institutions, and to convene consultations with relevant stakeholders as appropriate. The Early Childhood Act, and Regulations of 2005 outline rules of operation of early childhood institutions, specify requirements for early childhood practitioners, list responsibilities of the Commission, and prescribe the frequency of inspections to be conducted by the ECC. Significant resource constraints and staff attrition have however limited the ECC's capacity to conduct the prescribed number of inspections and re-inspections of these institutions. Evidence-based legislative review is now necessary to ensure that the legislation in place has been effective, to identify gaps and to improve relevance, by adjusting for changes that have taken place since its promulgation.

Enrolment in ECIs

Jamaica presently has one of the world's highest rates of enrolment in early childhood institutions: in 2019, some 12.0% of the 0-2 year population and 93.4% of the 3-5 year old. A variety of ECIs provide services to Jamaica's children. Most are privately operated. Of the 2,676 ECIs that have applied for registration, the ECC reports that 408 (15.2%) are identified as public institutions fully funded by the Government of Jamaica. Infant schools are stand-alone public schools and infant departments are attached to primary schools. Basic Schools are privately operated community-based ECIs that receive some financial support from the GoJ, typically in the areas of teacher salaries and nutrition support; these 1630 public-private partnership schools form the majority of ECIs (n=60.9%). Some 638 ECIs (23.9%) are fully private, and do not receive any GoJ support.

While enrolment rates are high, the quality of care and training is unsatisfactory. There is overall inadequate exposure to developmental and educational activities. Only a representative two of all socio-emotional activities evaluated for are included, and only 11% of ECIs were rated as having adequate numbers of play material for the numbers of students present. Between 2017 and 2019 it was found that two-thirds of children had no developmental problems, while a fifth had at least one issue. Early literacy concerns were identified in 18.3% and early numeracy concerns in 20.3%. Boys, children attending infant schools and departments, and children on the PATH programme, were those that had the greatest concerns.

Training of Early Childhood Practitioners

Analysis in 2011 showed that ***trained teachers are not distributed equitably throughout the sector***. Few ECIs achieved the established pupil: teacher ratios recognised to be critical to advance children's development. Nurseries and Day Care centres for children 0-2 years have appropriately low pupil: teacher ratio standards. ECIs for children 3-5 years, infant departments and infant schools have more children per teacher, but infant schools and infant departments have fewer children per trained teacher. The number and qualification of staff have implications for children's development, as well as their safety.

Table 5 Highest Education Qualification of ECI Staff

Highest Level of Education Attained	2011		2021	
	No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage
Primary	772	8.7	-	-
Secondary	282	3.2	-	-
Vocational	4642	52.3	5471	47.7
Tertiary – Diploma	1299	14.6	1822	15.9
Tertiary – Bachelor's Degree	745	8.4	2026	17.7
Tertiary – Master's Degree	97	1.1	314	2.7
Unable to be Verified	1041	11.7	1830	16.0
Total	8872	100	11,463	100.0

Source: Registration Information System, ECC

Evaluations of ECD in Jamaica

The World Bank SABER group compared Jamaica favourably with other countries in its level of development. However, the evaluation of the ECD by the Auditor General in 2015 was very critical, especially of the facts that no ECI had received a full 5-year certificate to operate and that no ECI was then operating with a valid permit, all previous 1-year permits having lapsed. The ECC responded that ECIs operating without permits occurred as a result of limited staff to conduct inspections twice annually as required by the EC Act. Presently, only 280 ECIs are fully certified. Of the remainder, only 37 permits (1.4%) are operating with a valid 1-year permit.

The World Bank in its 2021 PER report on Jamaica's education system, finds that ***early childhood education is underfinanced and experiences significant pressure through high demand and an inadequate number of qualified teachers***. It urged the government to consider reallocating funds from other levels of the education system, especially higher education, to the early childhood sector.

Children with Special Needs

A recent review of services for children with special needs in Jamaica highlighted major, persistent gaps in meeting the needs of this vulnerable community.¹² These gaps included: the failure to implement critical laws and policies; absence of data on prevalence, distribution and aetiology of disabilities in young children for appropriate planning; inadequate screening services; inadequate access to inclusive developmental/ educational services for children with disabilities, and particularly for children 0-2 years; limited training to support children with disabilities in the health and education sectors; inadequate access to tertiary medical and therapeutic services due to limited medical and allied health professionals; inadequate social protection mechanisms; inadequate co-ordination of services and stigma and discrimination. The review nevertheless identified a well-developed primary care system, universal access to ECIs for children 3-5 years, elements of a national screening system and existence of a social protection system and a public early intervention programme (Early Stimulation Programme).

In light of these findings, the following eight recommendations are made toward improving this foundational level of Jamaica's education system.

ECD1: Conduct a thorough institutional review of the Early Childhood Commission

ECD1.1 Conduct analysis of the human resources needs to effectively implement, regulate and provide development support to the ECD sector.

ECD1.2 Conduct analysis of the remuneration of staff at the ECC relative to other similar agencies such as the CPFSA, OCA and infant school leadership.

ECD1.3 Conduct analysis of regulatory processes to identify areas to increase efficiency.

ECD1.4 Increase capacity of ECC to utilise data to inform its own interventions and practice, and to inform the public.

ECD15. Conduct research to evaluate the impact of ECI Standards, new infant schools and merged Basic schools on children's development/educational outcomes

ECD2: Undertake a review of laws guiding the EC sector, especially in regard to frequency of inspections of ECIs and required teacher qualifications

ECD2.1 Conduct comprehensive legislative review.

ECD2.2 Conduct specific review of frequency of inspections and validity of permits based on recommendation ECD 1.3

ECD2.3 Conduct specific review of teacher qualifications based on changes in programmes

ECD3: Rationalise the provision of centre-based ECD services¹³

ECD3.1 Conduct geographic analysis to determine optimum number and location of ECIs relevant to population needs

ECD3.2 Accelerate the programme of creating infant departments within primary schools

ECD3.3 Identify ECIs within areas of poverty and prioritise these ECIs to meet ECI Standards

ECD3.4 Increase service provision for children 0-2 years, by establishing more Brain Builder Centres

ECD4: Increase the quality of teaching and learning through provision of trained teachers and resources to ECIs.

ECD4.1 Rationalise training and qualification for the early childhood sector

ECD4.2 Provide at least one trained teacher for each ECI with urgency

ECD4.3 Improve quality of pre-service and in-service training at all training levels.

¹² Samms-Vaughan M. (2020). Bridging the Gap: Towards a System of Early Years Care and Support. UNICEF Publication.

¹³ Centre-based ECD services refer to "registered and licensed service[s] providing care and learning experiences for children during parents' working hours throughout the year". (CARICOM, 2008)

ECD4.4 Improve teaching and learning resources available at ECIs.

ECD4.5 Introduce early integrated STEAM and socio-emotional learning via a digital playground pedagogical strategy in which pre-primary children learn to code and code to learn.

ECD5: Improve the services available to children with disabilities and their families

ECD5.1 Conduct research to accurately identify the prevalence and types of developmental disabilities at the EC level.

ECD6: Develop a co-ordinated strategy to engage and support parents of young children.

ECD6.1 Child development and stimulation programme offered at ECIs should be associated with certification that allow training for parents in basic literacy and numeracy and to transition into existing vocational training in ECD, especially early childhood education

ECD6.2 Develop a structured parent support, child development and stimulation programme to be offered at ECIs.

ECD6.3 Provide education and training for parents in basic academics and other vocations

ECD7: Ensure co-ordination and monitoring of educational strategies with all other strategies in the current National Strategic Plan (NSP) and those for young children in other ministries, departments, and agencies, that are not included in the NSP.

ECD7.1 Establish an oversight body to co-ordinate and monitor implementation of strategies to improve services to young children.

ECD8: Ensure adequate financing of the ECD sector. If necessary, reallocate funds from other levels of the education system, as recommended by the World Bank, this being the foundational level of the entire system.

ECD8.1 Specific areas of financing include provision of trained teachers for each ECI, teacher training, investment in teaching and learning resources at ECIs, investment in support services for children with disabilities, and investment in improving efficiency of the ECC.

4. Teaching, Curriculum and Teacher Training

Introduction

Education policy analysts all agree that teaching constitutes the most important element of the education system and must be the priority focus of attempts to improve performance outcomes linked to learning. The recommendations in this section of the report are presented across six areas: Education Philosophy; The Teaching Profession; Teacher Training; Teaching; Curriculum and Assessments; and “Out of School Factors”.

Pathways to Transformation

We suggest that the recommendations point to five ‘pathways’ to be simultaneously pursued to bring about the transformation desired in Teaching and Learning. Pursuing each pathway will involve taking on board recommendations that straddle the six focus areas.

Education policy analysts all agree that teaching constitutes the most important element of the education system and must be the priority focus of attempts to improve performance outcomes linked to learning. The recommendations in this report are presented across five areas: The Teaching Profession; Teacher Training; Teaching; Curriculum and Assessments; and “Out of School Factors”. The

recommendations are broken down into these five areas. The approaches taken, strategies employed, and interventions made in these five areas are anchored in an overarching National Educational Philosophy.

Pathway 1: Placing a High Value on the Human Resource. Highly motivated, quality teachers are essential to improving Jamaica's educational outcomes. Arguably, the strong (and necessary) resource-focused fixes for education in recent years may unintentionally be contributing to the erosion in the perception of teachers as the most critical component of the educational system. Restoring the centrality of the role of teachers to a successful education system is critical for how they are perceived by the community, but also to their own confidence that they are indeed highly valued by government. Recommendations in this pathway focus on incentivization and the enhanced professionalization of teaching.

Pathway 2: Prioritizing Early Intervention and an Avoided-Cost Approach. A fair amount of the current educational capital is wrapped up in remedial or corrective endeavours. This is not a sustainable approach. Some of the recommendations offered are geared at strategic interventions at the pre-primary and primary levels. Others emphasize the value of monitoring and robust evaluation of newly implemented strategies before wide-scale rollout, to avoid the need for later fixes. There are also recommendations aimed at strengthened teacher training institutions.

Pathway 3: Ensuring Equity of Access. Achieving equitable access to quality education is the goal for all students, irrespective of school or educational pathway being followed. Steps to achieving this will necessarily involve models for allocating resources, not premised on equal distribution, but rather on matching need. For this reason, some of the recommendations target flexibility at the regional level to re-allocate (for example) teaching competencies where needed. The advent of widespread use of online education modalities is a significant recent development which, if appropriately managed, can go a long way in ensuring equitable access to quality education.

Pathway 4: Partnerships for Total Learning. Schools have long realized the importance of community partnerships not only to fill financial gaps but, now more than ever, to provide non-academic support to the educational process. Jamaica's present-day context makes schools the safe-haven for a significant number of our students that are at risk of both hunger and violence. Several of the recommendations in this section get at the role school-community partnerships and initiatives can play in character formation and in improving student and parent well-being. These are complemented by similar recommendations made in other sections of this report, especially in the domain of early childhood education.

Pathway 5: Data Driven Decisions. Some of the recommendations are premised on comprehensive data collection, an efficient data management system and the eventual mining of the data to support decisions.

It is the coherent, simultaneous pursuit of all Five Pathways that will eventually bring about the transformation envisioned in Teaching and Learning and the broader education system.

COVID and Teaching

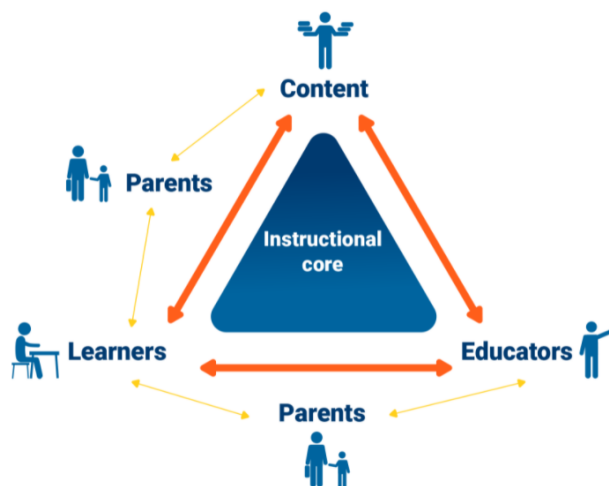
What about COVID? COVID has magnified many of the inadequacies and inequities in the education system, including Teaching. Unfortunately, the timing of the Commission did not allow for a fulsome analysis of the impact of COVID since much of the data required to do so is only just being collected. Notwithstanding, COVID was borne in mind, and is reflected in some recommendations made e.g., those related to the emerging role of ICT in teaching. COVID has also resulted in a greater awareness of the important social roles that teachers and schools play and has forced a re-engagement of community groupings in the delivery of education. In that light several recommendations aimed at doing so are also presented.

Specific Recommendations:

Education Philosophy

There is a strong perception that the (under)performance of the system can be linked to an outdated educational philosophy that supports a too teacher-dominant pedagogy, focused on the traditional 3-Rs¹⁴, that is not capable of delivering the education and training required to meet the cognitive, social, technological and other workforce needs of a transitional society, let alone one with as many social problems as Jamaica's. The Commission endorses an approach which emphasizes teaching and learning as a collaborative process around an instructional core that engages teachers, students, and a dynamic curriculum, supported by out-of-school stakeholders in the local and broader community. (See figure 2 below)

Figure 3 The Instructional Core



Source: Brookings, "Realizing the Promise: How Can Education Technology Improve Learning for All?" <https://www.brookings.edu/essay/realizing-the-promise-how-can-education-technology-improve-learning-for-all/>

Complementing the learning of STEAM disciplines, the A of which includes the determinative history of our nation, should be a program of social and emotional learning, without which academic success will not be possible for the majority of our students from underprivileged homes and environments.

¹⁴ The traditional 3 Rs are reading, writing and arithmetic

There are indications that the MoEYI is shifting away from a teacher-centric approach to learning toward such a 'constructivist' learner-centred, competency-based approach that allows alternative pathways to success and makes connections with the real world - including workplace settings-- but the transition has been problematic. The Jamaica National Education Strategic Plan 2011-20 (NESP) calls for holistic learner-centred, competency-based curricula. The NESP gave rise to the National Standards Curriculum (NSC) which is based on a constructivist approach to learning and advocates pedagogical methodologies such as the 5E's teaching model and STEM infusion to support this. The fairly recently introduced PEP exam is also intended to shift the emphasis to acquiring knowledge and "21st-century skills" which includes critical thinking and communication. It is important that this shift be documented and mainstreamed in the MOEYI culture and operations and be made widely known across the sector.¹⁵

EP1: Widely promote an education philosophy which sees learning as a collaborative interaction between teachers, students and the curriculum and pursue efforts to ensure widespread acceptance.

EP1.1: Make both a summary of its guiding educational philosophy and the relevant strategy or policy documents highly visible and easily accessible from the MOEYI's website.

EP1.2: Conduct a mapping exercise to ensure that the national educational philosophy (i) is embedded in the curriculum and training programmes for teachers, so that once trained they will replicate what they have been exposed to, and (ii) is captured in the evaluation metrics used to gauge teaching efficacy and school performance

The Teaching Profession

The Jamaica Teaching Council was established for the regulation of the teaching profession, including through the licensing and registration of teachers. ***Though the Council has been in place since 2008, the Bill to legally establish it continues to languish.*** Therefore, though teacher registration has been in place since 2008, the issue of licensing and the JTC's role as the governing authority is yet to be addressed, as well as other issues raised from as early as in 2014 by the Jamaica Teachers' Association. Recommendation GOV14 in the Governance section of this report has already called for the urgent passing of the Act.

Attractiveness of the Teaching Profession

Stakeholder consultations pointed to the challenge of increasing the quality of teachers in the profession, rather than an overall unavailability of qualified teachers to meet the demand. This observed challenge was associated with the negative 'image of teaching as a profession' which contributes to an inability to attract and retain the best.

The attractiveness of teaching is linked to perceived career paths/ options in the profession. The figure below shows the many possible career paths and options (as defined by the JTC), though how well these are known to students leaving high school or persons entering the profession is unsure. One perceived gap is that the pinnacle of the profession is ultimately linked to administration in schools, teacher training institutions, or public sector roles related to managing the sector. This takes some of the best primary and secondary teachers out of the classroom. It also limits achievement and remuneration at the highest levels to when vacancies in administrative positions become available.

¹⁵ Bourne, Paul Andrew, and Ruth Owen-Wright. "Education in Jamaica: A need for redefinition and a changing of the old philosophy of education."

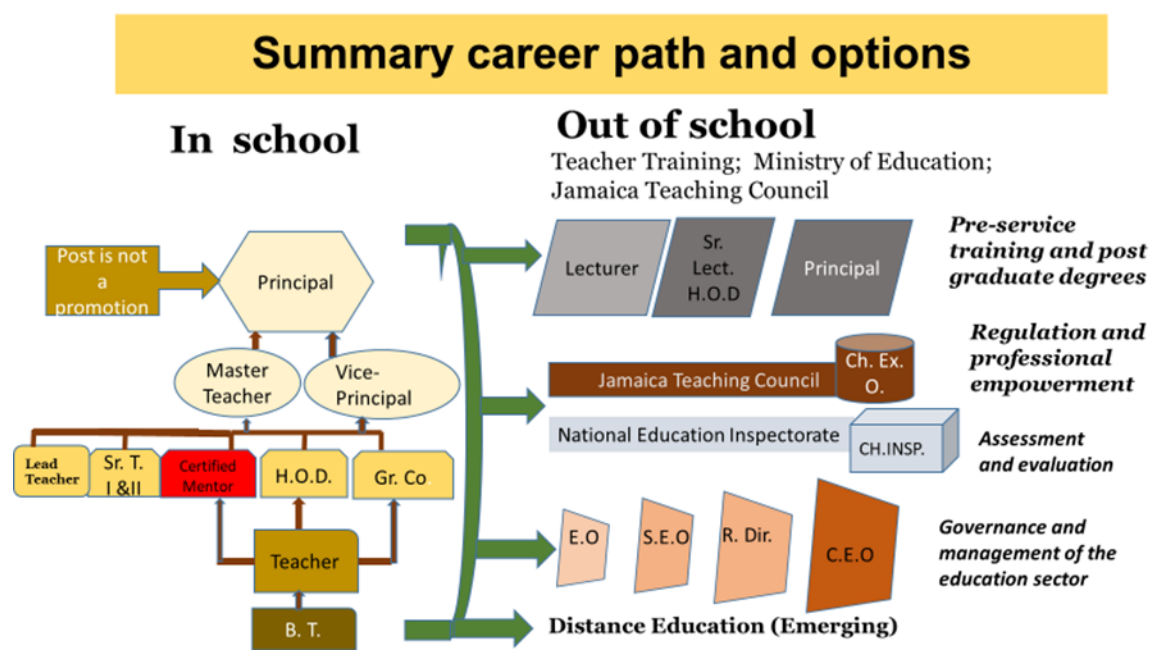


Figure 4 Summary of career paths and options

Source: Jamaica Teaching Council

Incentives for the Teaching Profession

In the Jamaican context, consideration should be given to promotion-based incentives for teachers who engage in activities that enhance the education sector e.g. in active research and who have their findings published and utilized in the sector. These teachers, who are willing to move beyond the accepted boundaries, should be afforded the opportunity to become senior teachers of research, for example, and assist the principal in the monitoring and mentoring of inexperienced teachers.

Performance incentives should also be considered. The mechanism would consider teacher performance based on relative improvements in student/classroom performance, rather than performance in absolute terms. This would avoid disincentivizing teaching disadvantaged students. The metrics would have to be carefully worked out and agreed upon by all stakeholders. Such a strategy has the potential to retain the best teachers in the classroom and motivate excellence in teaching.

Consultations, coupled with available data highlight inefficiencies linked to the allocation of teaching staff. Shifting demographics due to migration patterns and greater demand concentrated in some schools have left some institutions overstaffed and others understaffed. A World Bank Jamaica study has also alluded to an inequitable allocation of university graduate teachers across schools with a noticeable rural versus urban divide. The mismatches, especially with respect to student-teacher ratios, result in unequal access to quality teaching and affects student performance.¹⁶

Shortage of Specialised Teachers

There is a critical shortage of quality teachers in some STEM and TVET related subjects. The shortage is repeatedly highlighted as an immediate concern with the link often made between the number of high school students with STEM competencies and a globally competitive workforce. Contract teachers have

¹⁶ World Bank Group. (2021, June). Public Expenditure Review of the Education Sector in Jamaica, [Draft] (Forthcoming).

been used by several countries to help fill demand in desired subject areas. The most popular models recruit recent college graduates and professionals with degrees/competencies in demand areas to teach for two-three years. Studies show that contract teachers, even though most often uncertified, have the capacity to raise learning outcomes when added to a school's teaching corps, sometimes more effectively than their certified counterparts.¹⁷

TP2: Create/Define a professional (non-administrative) track which teachers can pursue without leaving the classroom.

TP2.1: Define a three-tiered professional teaching track based on levels of teaching mastery which culminates at the Master Teacher level

TP3: Consider how incentives can be strategically utilized to attract, retain, fill gaps for quality teachers, as well as improve quality in the teaching profession.

TP3.1: Use data to ensure that current allowances/incentives for serving in underserved geographical (e.g. rural and inner-city) and subject areas remain appropriately targeted.

TP3.2: Link incentives to professional development and advancement.

TP3.3: Consider providing performance incentives to schools and teachers based on value-added metrics.

TP4: Formalize a framework for the engagement of contract teachers to fill teaching gaps in STEM and TVET areas.

TP4.1: Conduct a gap analysis to ascertain where contract teachers are needed.

TP4.2 Ensure provisions are made for the licensing mechanism to accommodate contract teachers.

TP4.3: Develop and/or partner on programmes similar to the Teach America or UWI BOOST models.¹⁸

TP4.4: Promote the profession to contract teachers and provide them with incentives to remain in teaching.

TP5: Allow for the reallocation of teachers within regions in response to needs.

TP5.1 Pilot within one MOE region the granting of authority to reallocate teachers according to need

TP5.2 Modify the way teachers are employed to allow mobility within a region to areas of staff shortage

Teacher Training

The quality of teaching is influenced by several factors, of which, the quality of teachers is the most consequential. The quality of teachers refers not just to the personal characteristics of the individuals entering the profession, but also the quality of their preparation.

A major recommendation from the 2004 Task Force on education was that the baccalaureate degree be the minimum requirement for entry into the teaching profession. The implementation has meant that Jamaica has a trained education workforce with most teachers having advanced education certification. In early childhood education (public schools), about 53 percent of teachers are university

¹⁷ Is teacher certification an effective tool for developing countries? IZA World of Labor 2017: 349 doi: 10.15185/izawol.349

¹⁸ The UWI BOOST (Building Out Our STEM Teachers) was created to provide graduates with employment immediately upon graduation and also supply the education sector with a steady stream of new STEM teachers each year.

graduates, compared to 75 percent in primary and 81 percent in secondary schools.¹⁹ Notwithstanding, the continued underperformance of the education system may suggest weaknesses in the training of teachers, in turn affecting the quality and preparedness of graduates entering the classroom.

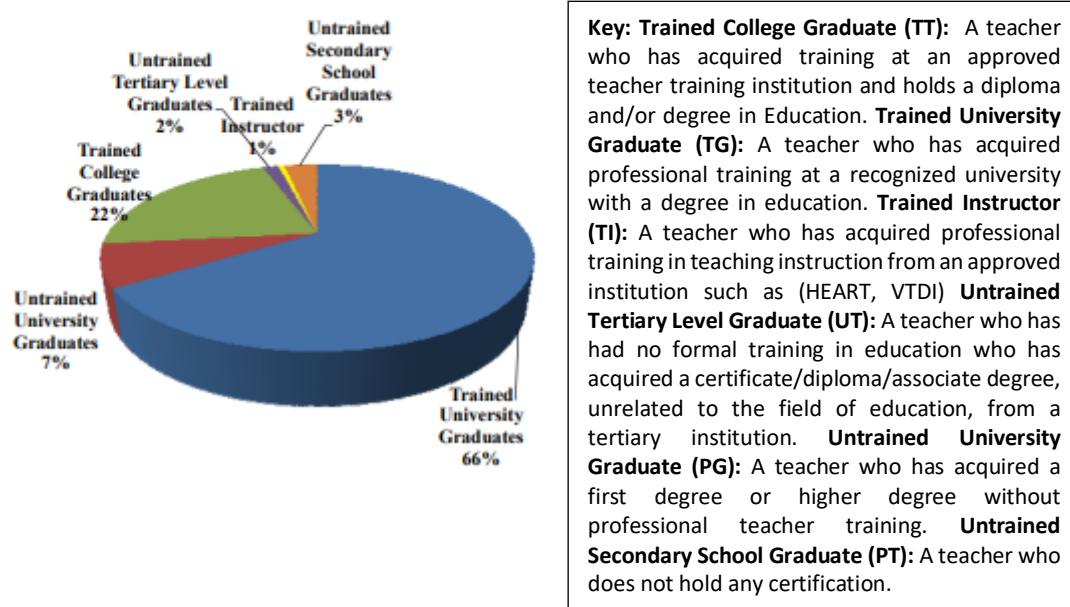


Figure 5 Distribution of Teachers by Qualification in Infant, Primary and Secondary Schools (2018/2019).

Source: MoEYI Education Digest 2018-2019

Governance of Teacher Training Institutions

In 2016 there were eight public Jamaican institutions designated by the MoEYI as teacher training institutions, along with several other institutions offering teacher education programmes. While all of the identified programmes were accredited by the University Council of Jamaica (UCJ), the requirements, systems, and certifications all varied. There are a diverse set of institutions with varying levels of oversight roles for teacher education, leading to a very complex governance structure in the teacher education landscape. These include the MoEYI, JTC, J-TEC, UCJ and the Joint Board for Teacher Education (JBTE).

The educational governance system of teacher training institutions needs to be urgently revisited as the parts hinge on the same regulations that govern secondary institutions. This limits the ability of Teachers' Colleges to expand on or adequately execute their mandates. By regulating the Teachers' Colleges through the Education Act, one of the problems that arises is their lack of autonomy. There is a need for a more modern approach to governance which allows these institutions to have greater freedoms, in alignment with higher education institutions such as universities.

Financing Teacher Training

Currently, teachers' colleges in Jamaica struggle financially as they depend on a subvention from the Government to cover salaries, and student tuition to cover **operational** costs and pursue infrastructural development and other needs. Teachers' colleges are limited in their capacity to raise funds for the

¹⁹ World Bank, June 2021: Public Expenditure Review of the Education Sector (Draft). (Forthcoming).; MOEYI Education Digest 2018-2019.

efficient operation of the institutions, as permission must be granted by the MoEYI. One way to begin addressing the financial issues is through greater resource-sharing, such as through a consortium of colleges.

There is no defined mechanism for the award of grant for capital investments for teachers' colleges- which presents a challenge for old institutions that need urgent repair. The existing physical infrastructures are antiquated. For example, laboratories are significantly below the required standard and often below the standard in some secondary institutions. This impacts how well-equipped teachers trained through these institutions are for entering their profession.

A Screening Mechanism for the Teaching Profession

Currently, no statutory mechanism exists in Jamaica to screen candidates leaving colleges who wish to enter the teaching profession. The complex teacher training landscape in Jamaica with both public and private providers makes screening while in training a challenge. Screening at the point of exit and/or at registration would allow the most suitable graduates from the teacher training institutions (TTIs) to continue into the teaching profession while also providing an exit point for others while still allowing them to leave with a degree. Over time, this kind of screening to ensure only the most suitable and best enter teaching would also help change the perception of the profession from a 'last resort' to being 'highly selective'.

Standardising the Teaching Practicum

In Jamaica, there is currently a disconnect between the share of teachers with training (~85%) and improved learning outcomes. Teacher training programmes last three to four years with school-based experience spread across the period of training. There is a need to expand and provide full immersion in field-based practice for longer periods. Incorporating more practical modules in the pre-service training which would allow students to be immersed daily in a school for a specified period to learn school culture, prepare lesson plans, substitute for teachers, while under supervision, has the potential to improve the preparedness of teachers entering the profession and yield improved educational performance.

TT1: Increase matriculation standards for entering TTIs over time.

TT1.1 Using a phased approach, increase the requirements for entry to teacher training institutions to include a combination of CAPE and CSEC passes.

TT2: Re-examine Pre-service training to increase hours spent in practical training.

TT2.1 Increase and standardise across all teacher training programmes hours spent in practical training using the 3 plus one (3+1) model

TT2.2 Remunerate beginning teachers on school-based practice/internship

TT3: Enhance partnerships between teacher training institutions and schools.

TT3.1 A school-based practice/teacher training institution policy should be developed by the MOEYI to include a robust induction programme.

TT3.2 The MOEYI should assign designated practicum schools.

TT3.3 The JTC, along with the JBTE, should establish criteria for and monitor the partnership between the TT institutions and practicum schools.

TT4: Institute a mechanism for screening of entrants into the teaching profession from teacher training institutions (TTIs).

TT4.1 Ensure the JTC is legislated to work in conjunction with teacher training institutions and other partners to assess and screen candidates entering the teaching profession.

TT4.2 Work with the JTC to institute a mechanism for psychosocial screening of entrants into the teaching profession at year 3 of teacher training. Qualified students will be elevated to a one-year probationary period of school-based practice and with a provisional licence given by the JTC during this period.

TT4.3 Implement a mechanism to assess the quality of persons entering the profession, measured against standards for teachers set by the JTC.

TT5: Review the legislation under which TTIs are presently governed

TT5.1 A higher education act should be developed to include regulations for teacher training colleges.

TT6: The MOEYI should work with public and private institutions to establish a consortium of higher education institutions engaged in teacher training.

TT7: Review the current funding model for Teacher Training Institutions.

TT8.1 Establish a more suitable mechanism (80% government / 20% tuition) for the funding of teacher training institutions, to include quality programme delivery, infrastructural development and investment in human resource.

TT8: Conduct a review of the curriculum offered in teacher training institutions.

TT8.1 Teacher training institutions, the MOEYI, JBTE, and the UCJ should work in partnership to review the teacher education curriculum as needed to ensure relevance and alignment with local and international standards and trends for teacher training.

TT8.2 The MOEYI through its agencies should set standards and criteria for teacher training programmes that all institutions must adhere to.

TT9: Develop standards for teacher educators.

TT9.1 The Ministry of Education, through the JTEC and/or JTC should develop standards for teacher educators which should be closely monitored and reviewed against local and international trends for relevance.

Teaching

There is extensive research confirming that the single most important factor determining academic performance is the quality of teachers and teaching practices. While budgetary allocation on education has been increased over the years, the education system has not produced the expected results. This has turned the spotlight on deficiencies in teacher quality and teaching. Teaching, now more than ever, requires a skillset that forms the basis of getting students to learn skills and competencies that will allow them to make meaning of their learning. The Jamaican teacher must be pivoted in the centre of the educational system to ensure Jamaicans have a world-class education and training system.

The World Bank Jamaica study notes that classroom time is not effectively and efficiently used by teachers to the potential detriment of student learning.²⁰ It notes that teachers only use 62 percent of the total class time for instruction versus a best practice of 85 percent. ***The foregone time is equivalent to a full day of instruction per week.*** Most of the time lost is used on classroom management activities,

²⁰ World Bank Group. (2021, June). Public Expenditure Review of the Education Sector in Jamaica, pg 69. [Draft] (Forthcoming).

such as taking attendance, cleaning the blackboard, grading homework, or distributing papers, which could be performed by a teacher aide. Jamaican teachers also spend 11 percent of total class time in “off-task” activities (neither teaching nor managing the classroom), one of the highest rates in the LAC region. This could also suggest a need for improved school leadership and systems for monitoring and mentoring to improve classroom performance.”²¹

Continuous Teacher Training / In-Service Training

There is a continuous, urgent demand for training for teachers presently in the classroom, as a result of three major recent shifts in education in Jamaica - the introduction of the National Standards Curriculum, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the need to pivot toward a STEAM-centred approach in education. Absence of in-service training of teachers will retard professional growth of teachers and create “missing gaps” between demands and actual achievement levels. Continuous professional development of teachers in Jamaica is not mandatory. ***Mandatory continuous teacher training or development can be realized through the licensing of the teaching profession.***

Licences for individuals in the teaching profession in most jurisdictions are for predetermined fixed periods. Renewal of teachers’ licences are, then, tied to the attainment of optimum teacher performance based on the systems in place for their continual professional growth, thereby introducing accountability, and enhancing teacher quality and professionalization of the teaching career. Revocation and refusal of licenses further help to ensure the quality of teachers in the system.

There are growing concerns about whether teachers have the requisite knowledge and skills to meet the needs of the students, and also about the limited connection that exists between the teachers and their pursuit of ongoing training once they assume responsibilities upon entering the profession. This comes as teachers are now expected to have much broader roles, such as, considering the individual development of children and young people, the management of learning processes in the classroom, the development of the entire school as a “learning community” and connections with the local community and the wider world. This raises concerns about the effectiveness of teachers to adapt to the demands of the profession and its emerging trends.

In order to improve students’ learning outcomes, a radical approach needs to be taken to reshape in-service training. This includes structuring planning time for departments in the schools’ schedules.

Furthermore, with the heightened use of the online platform, teachers can more efficiently share with each other information on how to carry out their teaching responsibilities. Department heads should be given the responsibility to create a professional learning community (PLC) among their subject teachers. The Principal, as the instructional leader, should develop, among the staff, a culture of collaboration and action research. Professional development efforts could therefore also include school leaders as well as teachers, with recognition of their unique role as both administrators and pedagogy leaders. ***More prominence should be given to the instructional core idea of teaching as an interaction between teacher, student and curriculum, with support where available from parents.*** The interaction is more important than any of the three elements viewed separately. To encourage this culture, the principal should find ways to acknowledge and celebrate those teachers and departments that are most successful in developing such practices. The JTC should recognize in a formal manner, the schools that are actively engaging in such activities and monitor and evaluate the outcomes. Where such efforts are successful, they should be published so that other schools can benefit from what has been learnt.

²¹ Bruns, Barbara; Luque, Javier. 2015. Great Teachers : How to Raise Student Learning in Latin America and the Caribbean. Washington, DC: World Bank. © World Bank.
<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/20488> License: CC BY 3.0 IGO

Accountability in the Teaching Profession

The NESP 2011-2020 notes that “The absence of clearly established policies governing teaching standards has made it challenging to measure teacher performance at the primary and secondary levels. ***The weaknesses in the checks and balances that should hold all providers of educational services accountable mean that the system of accountability is inadequate.*** The institutional arrangements currently are unable to hold educational managers or educators accountable for the results of teaching and learning in classrooms, which are currently measured almost entirely by national and regional tests and examinations.

Research has shown that there is a correlation between class sizes and student achievement.²² The Task Force on Educational Reform 2004 recommended a rationalisation of class sizes from Early Childhood to Secondary School. Effecting the reduction in class size will incur a cost and may require further infrastructural development in schools where limited space, among a myriad of other reasons, hamper the realization. of this. An alternative to expansion is to add additional teachers to the classroom. The approach of Teaching Teams could be pursued as an alternative to reduce the student-teacher ratio.

Multi-grade Schools

The multi-grade school is not a novel concept in education systems. It is widely practiced across various societies with a consensus that absence of a teacher should not result in diminished students’ learning achievements. Multi-grade teaching is where a teacher teaches more than one grade at the same time in a single classroom. In 2018, multi-grade schools comprised approximately 20% of primary schools across Jamaica, which is a reduction from the over 30% reported in the 1990s. There are 286 multi-grade schools currently operating in Jamaica. Of this total, the highest concentration is in Region 2 (Portland, St Thomas, and St Mary). In the Jamaican context, multi-grade institutions face challenges in facilitating quality teaching and learning primarily because the approach forces schools to combine as many as three sets of cohorts of students in a single classroom to be guided by only one teacher. Though ideally, multi-grade schools should allow for teachers to lend themselves to the recognition of students’ diversity, the local context does not guarantee these outcomes.

Even before the pandemic, ICT was being used more and more to enhance teaching-learning interaction, as demonstrated by approaches such as replacing chalkboards with interactive digital whiteboards, using students' own smartphones or other devices for learning during class time, and the "flipped classroom" model. ***The COVID-19 pandemic has, however, highlighted the digital divide that not only exists among students but teachers.*** For teachers to successfully navigate the digital space and effectively prepare students for the digital era in which the world is situated, they must be adequately equipped with the necessary resources. Despite efforts by E-Learning Jamaica Company Limited to distribute tablets and accessories to approximately 21,000 eligible teachers island-wide under the Tablets for Teachers Programme, deficiencies exist. There are also questions around how sustainable the distribution model is. A challenge that has emerged is that tablets are proving inadequate for all the planning and teaching tasks of teachers and there is a need for laptops.

TG1 Roll out a targeted programme of re-training for all teachers at all levels of the education system.

TG1.1 Re-introduce and re-train teachers in the NSC curriculum.

TG1.2 Train teachers in the STEAM-infused methodology of teaching.

TG1.3 Train teachers in online and blended learning skills to ensure quality education during and after COVID-19 in Jamaica.

²² Jepsen, C. (2015). Class size: does it matter for student achievement? IZA World of Labor. doi:10.15185/izawol.190

TG1.4 Consider the Quality Education Circle model for the placement of new STEM Schools.

TG2 Make continuous professional development mandatory by making it a condition for the renewal of licences for teachers.

TG2.1 Work with JTC and NCEL on a scheme that defines professional development credits among other requirements for licensing renewal.

TG2.2. Empower JTC and NCEL to manage the accreditation of continuous development courses.

TG3 Link professional development to professional advancement.

TG3.1: Develop (through the JTC) a scheme that includes mandatory professional development credits in teaching career path.

TG4: Refocus in-service training to improve teaching effectiveness.

TG4.1: Reconsider the focus of in-service training. Revise in-service training to emphasize efficient lesson planning, use of class time, strategies to improve student engagement, and more effective teaching techniques especially considering the shift to ICT.

TG4.2 Work with the NEI and JTC to monitor and evaluate teacher effectiveness and to formally recognize schools with best practices

TG5: Ensure a robust and mandatory appraisal system linked to licensing and professional advancement.

TG5.1: Ensure that the Standards for Licensure (renewal) are aligned to the current standards for Teacher Appraisal by JTC.

TG5.2 Take advantage of the online environment to create customized professional development programmes

TG5.3: Resource JTC and NCEL to adequately manage and exchange data (with each other and MOEYI) related to teacher appraisals

TG6: Reduce student to teacher ratios to create a more conducive physical and online teaching environment to facilitate student engagement and teaching effectiveness.

TG6.1 Mandate classroom sizes and establish standard teacher: student ratios for each school type.

TG6.2 Pursue a Teaching Team model.

TG6.3 Revise and update minimum infrastructure and equipment standards for classrooms and schools

TG7: Review the multi-grade school structure to determine its effectiveness in achieving optimal student learning with a view to improve its operation or eliminate it from the education system.

TG7.1 Reduce classes to no more than two grade cohorts being taught together.

TG7.2 Train teachers of multi-grade classes in differentiation skills.

TG7.3 Train teachers in social and emotional learning.

TG7.4 Develop a system of voluntary parent assistants in each class to help in classroom management.

TG7.5 Introduce a shared resources model for administration, bursarial and guidance staff with nearby schools.

TG7.6 Where the number of students in a class is over 20, provide teaching assistants.

TG7.7 Consider using subject teachers who teach across grades instead of one teacher per multigrade.

TG7.8 Provide incentives for principal who carries additional responsibilities.

TG7.9 Monitor and evaluate the operation of these schools on a termly basis.

TG7.10 Use the data captured after one year to determine the continuation of this structure.

TG7.11 Where the outcome of the evaluation shows that the school is failing, assist communities by providing transportation for the students to attend single grade schools in other districts.

TG7.12 Make provisions to relocate teachers to other institutions, in the event that the school has to be closed.

TG8: Establish Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) in schools in collaboration with the JTC

TG9: Ensure teachers and school are adequately resourced to deliver online teaching.

TG9.1 Implement schemes for teachers to access laptops and accessories

Curriculum and Assessment

The curriculum is the formal and informal content and processes by which learners gain knowledge and understanding, develop skills and alter attitudes, appreciations, and values under the guidance of a school. It involves a range of interactions and deliberations and is influenced by a range of factors. One cannot overstate the importance of the curriculum to the educational process. Changes to any aspect of the curriculum have a butterfly effect on other aspects of the education system related to teaching and learning and on educational outcomes.

The National Standards Curriculum (NSC) was piloted in selected schools in Jamaica between 2014 and 2016 and fully rolled out in September 2016. The NSC guides instruction for all grades from 1 through 9, spanning six years of primary education and the first three years of secondary education. Assessment for students at the primary level is guided by a continuous national assessment programme. Curriculum in the upper years of secondary school is primarily guided by the examination being pursued such as CSEC, City and Guilds, CAPE, NVQ-J. CSEC and CAPE (offered by CXC) and City and Guilds are the main assessments done at the secondary level.

Alternative Pathways

The MoEYI in seeking to cater to the diverse needs of students has created a curriculum for alternative pathways to receiving an education at the secondary level. The Alternative Pathways to Secondary Education (APSE) programme defines a 7-year (Grades 7-13) period of instruction for students on three learning pathways. The challenge with APSE is that currently it is seen as a streaming and remedial mechanism rather than a mechanism that provides a pathway for success for all students. This is linked to the fact that it is PEP scores that are used to determine pathways, and those pathways only become accessible at the secondary level. The result is that under APSE a bulk of students (especially students on Pathways II and III) are sent primarily to non-traditional high schools lacking the prerequisites they should have garnered from basic and primary school. Additionally, the progress of the APSE approach is further stifled by the MOEY&I and the schools' inability to provide the needed resources to cater to the students' needs. This results in further challenges in the classroom as secondary trained teachers are forced to re-teach the prerequisites thus resulting in further delays in the teaching of the age-appropriate prescribed curriculum, especially for mathematics and English language. ***A curriculum framework is needed that ensures a balance between cognitive and noncognitive skills in the curricula and shows how students transition in different ways from one level of the education to the next and ensures comparability of opportunities provided by each pathway.***

One of the major issues surrounding the one-sided view for education success is perpetuated in the great zeal or importance that is placed on obtaining a CXC certification which in turn undermines the

perception of the quality of certification outside this area in Jamaica. Other certification programmes include City and Guilds and NVQ-Js through NCTVET. ***A renaissance is needed in the attitudes and mindset of the Jamaican populace regarding these alternative assessment pathways that are parallel to CXC examinations, underscoring the plethora of opportunities that these technical and vocational areas present, not just in the local market, but internationally.***

Curriculum Alignment and Relevancy

There are inconsistencies regarding the NSC's alignment to Jamaica's Vision 2030. Under Goal 1 of the Vision 2030, a part of the philosophy of education is to empower the citizens by focusing on achievement of a high level of human resource development (education, training, and health system reform), fostering of innovation and cultural preservation, and strengthening of systems geared to protecting vulnerable groups in the society. A main function of the educational system is to transmit the cultural heritage to the new generation. As such, subjects such as History and Civics should be mandatory throughout schools at all levels, and act as a supplement to the educational philosophy of the country. History as a subject is not taught at the primary level and is offered as optional at the secondary level. There is a need for the curriculum to be responsive and aligned to national circumstance. There are other national circumstances that also warrant curriculum alignment or adjustment in the pursuit of making students more resilient. For example, adjustments aimed at integrating and emphasizing conflict resolution and developing negotiation skills in the face of greater exposure to aggression and violence; promotion of mental health; and coping in disasters and adapting to changes in norms driven by (for example) climate emergency and the pandemics, seem especially pertinent now.

Use of ICT

The NSC emphasises the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Jamaica is, however, faced with resource constraints as it relates to implementing ICT in schools across the island. In fact, one of the main impediments to the implementation of the revised curriculum was the lack of ICT resources. Despite this, there are considerable advantages to introducing ICT from the earliest stages of education linked to the development of an IT comfortable and knowledgeable workforce. Studies, however, also show that inappropriate use or overuse of technology can also negatively affect students, thus requiring teachers to be adequately equipped, skilled, and aware of the potential obstacles that technology may bring to the teaching process.

Curriculum Evaluation

Curriculum evaluation provides a basis for decision-making on curriculum policy, ongoing curriculum adjustment, and feedback on the curriculum implementation process. It is the usual practice in most of the developing countries to update the curriculum every 5 - 10 years. Given that the NSC is a fairly new curriculum governing much of the primary and secondary education years, and that it is premised in part on experiential learning and infusion of STEM methodology which would have been impacted by the pivot to online learning due to the pandemic, there is merit to a review of its implementation five years in. There is further value in undertaking a review of the NSC given concerns about how its pilot roll-out was reviewed. ***Research has shown that, the education system in Jamaica suffers from a lack of adequate system-wide supervision, resulting in inconsistent quality of educational delivery from rural to urban schools. This is closely connected to the allocation of resources, both material and human, with rural schools and those in volatile inner cities receiving fewer classroom resources and fewer teachers.*** In 2020 the NEI reported that the curriculum implementation teams, introduced to provide support for

the delivery of the new curriculum, were not fully operationalised in many schools and that there are significant variations in how the education administrative regions are improving key indicators.

Curriculum Enhancement Programmes

Research has proven that co-curricular activities form an important aspect of students' life. Co-curricular activities enhance and supplement classroom learning by emphasizing social, emotional, and physical development. The NEI has demonstrated in its reports the correlations between well-performing schools and an effective curriculum enhancement programme, as well as the absence of and inadequacy of such programmes in poorer performing or less effective schools.

National School Leaving Certificate

The idea of having a National School Leaving Certificate (NSLC) is not alien as prior to the recommendations of the 2004 Task Force Report, a Jamaica School Certificate and Secondary School Certificate exams were sat and issued to students, though not recognised by most institutions. The NSLC was introduced in 2011 and again in 2019.²³ This certificate will document the learner's competencies developed over the entirety of their secondary school years and will be unique to the learner and reflect each learner's achievement of competencies, performance in external examinations and completion of community service. Such a certificate should incorporate co-curricular/ extracurricular activities as a part of the requirement for the award of same.

The NSC covers the primary level of the education system and the first three years of the secondary education system. Currently, a national assessment system exists for the NSC at the primary level, but none exists for the secondary level. At the secondary level, assessments are next done at the end of grade 11 and follow a two-year (grades 10 and 11) curriculum of the examination body. An opportunity exists for a national assessment programme that spans all grades of secondary education.

Curriculum Framework for Students with Special Needs

Research conducted by the UWI Centre for Disability Studies constitutes a major effort to scientifically assess the levels of access and inclusion of the disabled in the Jamaican education system. It concluded that policymakers must make the necessary adjustments to make the education system more responsive to the needs of persons with disabilities.²⁴ There is value in having a standardised curriculum framework for all schools that outlines the core strategies and principles for detecting students with special needs and procedures for managing these needs.

CA1: Review the National Standards Curriculum to ensure alignment with an established educational philosophy, Vision 2030 goals, and in response to national socio-cultural issues.

CA 1.1: Mandate greater emphasis in both primary and secondary schools on civics, History and citizenship.

CA1.2 Review and appropriately revise children's curricula to include resilience.

CA2: Commence an evaluation on the last five years of the implementation of the NSC.

²³ Morris, A. (2019, September 1). Roll-Out of National School Leaving Certificate Programme This Academic Year – Jamaica Information Service. <https://jis.gov.jm/roll-out-of-national-school-leaving-certificate-programme-this-academic-year/> See also: <https://www.credly.com/org/ministry-of-education-youth-information/badge/national-school-leaving-certificate-level-1>

²⁴ Morris, Floyd. "Report on access and inclusion for persons with disabilities in the Jamaican education system." (2011).

CA2.1: Commission either a task force or research-based study to evaluate the state and effectiveness of various aspects of the NSC and its implementation

CA3: Promote ICT integration in NSC in primary schools as a means of enhancement but not as a primary method for teaching and learning.

CA3.1 Equip all primary schools with ICT. The use of ICT should be seamlessly integrated into teaching and learning at the primary school

CA3.2 Target tablet distribution schemes at the primary level. All children entering secondary level should be competent and comfortable with the use of ICT.

CA3.3 Make the use of ICT to enhance teaching of the NSC an important focus of in-service training at the primary level.

CA4: Revamp APSE and CAP or develop a simplified curriculum framework that provides alternative curriculum pathways to success mapped from early childhood through tertiary.

CA5: Implement core standards for a basic mandatory and uniformed co-curricular curriculum structure for all schools to be used alongside the formal curriculum.

CA5.1: Expand the mandate of the Curriculum Unit to include developing, implementing, and monitoring a co-curricular curriculum.

CA6: Improve access to, co-ordination of and integration of extra-curricular activities in especially under-performing schools, particularly those with behaviour challenges and/or those located within Zones of Special Operations.

CA6.1 Implement nationally available extra-curricular activities with centralised coordination and shared monitoring, evaluation and learning.

CA6.2 Create MOUs between professional groups and MOEYI to support teacher involvement in and extra-curricular activities in schools.

CA6.3 Provide a budget for extra-curricular activities in schools

CA7 Modify the National School Leaving Certificate (NSLC) to include co-curricular activities as a requirement for graduation in all schools

CA8: Implement a standardized curriculum framework that outlines the core strategies and principles for students with special needs and procedures for managing these needs.

CA9: Give credence to parallel alternative assessment pathways especially at the secondary level of the education system

CA9.1 Map alternative curriculum pathways with parallel assessments especially at the secondary level to demonstrate the opportunities they provide. Mapping should ensure comparability of opportunities for each student.

CA9.2: Change eligibility for the top national school leaving scholarship to include a range of certifications and other tertiary institution; and/or create a similarly prestigious and promoted scholarship so targeted.

CA9.3 Evaluate all the standardized examinations that students pursue throughout their school life to determine relevance and complementarity with expected outcomes.

CA10: Consider a national assessment programme for secondary schools with stackable certification.

CA10.1 Map present and potential use of micro-credential-based certification in the secondary school system.

CA10.2 Pilot a framework governing the use of stackable certification and micro-credentialing.

CA11: Enhance the capacity of the MOEYI for implementation monitoring and evaluation of curriculum.

CA11.1 Review resource allocation, with a view to building the human capacity of the MOEYI to monitor and support curriculum implementation and evaluation

CA12: Strengthen the structure for curriculum governance and implementation monitoring

CA12.1 Expand the Core Curriculum Unit to facilitate integration of specialists for assessment for teaching and learning and psychosocial support.

CA12.2 Implement a robust programme of ongoing training for Curriculum Monitoring Officers to support curriculum implementation workshops.

CA12.3 Assign dedicated human and non-human resources for monitoring how curriculum implementation happens for a range of stakeholders including teacher training and other tertiary institutions.

CA12.4 Strengthen regional offices to offer contextualised training and curriculum support to schools

CA12.5 Strengthen school-based curriculum leadership to improve the fidelity of NSC implementation.

CA12.6 Provide a specific programme for change management to support curriculum implementation training.

Out of School Factors

The school environment is a microcosm of the society, communities and homes in which children live. Factors in the society, community and homes influence children's learning in the classroom directly, and also indirectly, through school attendance. These factors external to the academic environment have been termed "Out of School Factors" in this report.

Research in the United Kingdom identified minority children; children with special educational needs or disabilities; those with social, emotional and mental health needs; those with low school achievement; victims of bullying, poor relationships with teachers and not feeling a sense of belonging at school, home/family dysfunction, and life trauma as those most at risk for exclusion.²⁵ This is substantiated in the Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions, which, in 2017, found that ***money problems, limited interest in school, family problems, pregnancy, and expulsion were the leading reasons for school dropout prior to grade 11*** (or reaching the age of 17).²⁶ The tables below show the breakdown by region and by socio-economic quintile. Many of these factors not only impact school exclusion and attendance, but also impact ability to learn once in school.

²⁵ Planning Institute of Jamaica. Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions. 2018.; Timpson, E. Timpson review of school exclusion. Department for Education. 2019.

²⁶ Planning Institute of Jamaica. Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions. 2017.

Table 6 Reasons for children not staying in school prior to Grade 11 (by area and by per capita consumption quintile group)

Area	Per capita consumption quintile groups		
	Kingston MA	Other Towns	Rural Areas
Reached terminal grade	22	12	13
Money problems	15	37	21
Pregnancy	15	13	17
Expelled	7	13	9
Not interest in school	26	19	25
Family problems	12	4	8
Others	2	3	8
Total	100	100	100

	Per capita consumption quintile groups				
	Poorest	Second	Middle	Fourth	Richest
Reached terminal grade	21	13	19	0	4
Money problems	19	30	26	13	24
Pregnancy	26	13	4	29	0
Expelled	6	16	8	5	10
Not interest in school	19	21	24	45	13
Family problems	4	0	11	7	48
Others	4	8	7	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions (2017)

Early evaluations of Jamaica's Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programme, the Programme for Advancement through Health and Education (PATH) have shown positive impacts. The PATH programme has been identified as being among the top CCT programmes.

Student Interest

In order to increase children's interest in school, schools must meet children's current and future needs in terms of curriculum content and implementation, co-curricular experiences and school connectedness. Schools have traditionally evaluated children's success purely in terms of academic measures. However, non-cognitive skills have been shown at a minimum to be as important as academic skills, and often of greater importance, in success in adulthood. Teaching of non-cognitive skills through social and emotional learning (SEL) programmes and emotional intelligence are associated with an 11 percentile increase in academic performance.²⁷ Furthermore, every child needs to have basic STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) skills, requiring more practical and hands-on teaching. There is also increased emphasis on creativity, critical and systems thinking, and adaptive and life-long learning.²⁸ These require new, more practical, approaches to teaching and teachers trained in effective delivery of STEM programmes.

Impacts of Poly-victimisation on Children

Local research has confirmed that poly-victimisation significantly impairs children's reasoning cognition and learning and, particularly in boys, is associated with increased likelihood of disruptive and aggressive behaviour, both of which impair success in adulthood.²⁹ Childhood stress and early life adversity, including exposure to conflict and violence, parental loss, family instability, traumatic life events, and peer victimization (bullying) are also associated with long lasting effects associated with shortened telomere length.³⁰ However, there is accelerated shortening under conditions of high cell

²⁷ Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D., & Schellinger, K. B. (2011). The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: a meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions. *Child development*, 82(1), 405–432. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2010.01564.x>

²⁸ McKinsey Global Institute. "Technology, Jobs and the Future of Work". February 2017. <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/employment-and-growth/technology-jobs-and-the-future-of-work#>

²⁹ Samms-Vaughan M, Lambert M. The impact of poly victimisation on children in LMICs: the case of Jamaica. *Psychol Health Med*. 2017 Mar;22(sup1):67-80. doi: 10.1080/13548506.2016.1274411. Epub 2017 Jan 29. PMID: 28133980.

³⁰ Telomeres are repeat sequences of DNA that cap the ends of chromosomes; they typically shorten over time with cell replication.

stress and inflammation and they are a biomarker for aging and early mortality and morbidity.³¹ Helping children and families recover from trauma, and reduce toxic stress are critical to childhood recovery.

Unattached Youth

In 2020, an estimated 22.4% of youth were neither in employment, education or training (NEET) and were deemed unattached youth, representing an untapped proportion of the labour force, who are not engaged in any productive activity.³² About one quarter of unattached youth only attain an educational level up to grade 9. School dropout, poor educational outcomes and the lack of adequate skills training has contributed to the increase in “unattached youth” that has reached almost one out of three young people between 14 and 24. *Additionally, as a result of the COVID19 pandemic, young persons at the terminal grades in academic years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 would have had disruptions to school leaving processes and transition to work or higher education. This is likely to increase the proportion of unattached youth, who are also more likely to be involved in crime and violence.*³³

Services for Children with Disabilities

Children with disabilities worldwide are often excluded from school and/or discriminated against within schools. *A recent situational analysis on persons with disabilities (PWD) indicated that the type, quality and coverage of services, programmes and products offered to PWDs were inadequate or unequally distributed.*³⁴ *Where services existed, there was imbalance in geographical spread, with services primarily concentrated in Kingston.*

OSF1: Improve social protection for children in poverty by using research to support targeted investment.

OSF1.1 Conduct research on social protection coverage for poor children.

OSF1.2 Prioritise investment in schools in neighbourhoods where poor children/ PATH recipients are concentrated.

OSF2: Improve social protection for children in poverty by targeting improved efficiency and enhancement of PATH.

OSF2.1 Improve system of PATH targeting for poor children.

OSF2.2 Increase budgetary support to schools to ensure provision of meals, books, uniforms for children from lower socio-economic groups and for children on PATH programme.

OSF2.3 Increase budgetary support to child assistance component of PATH.

OSF3: Use a partnership approach to expand social protection support for students.

OSF3.1 Provide a co-ordinating mechanism to facilitate school administration of social protection support.

OSF3.2 Increase personal/community/corporate investment in schools through establishment of Past-Student week.

³¹ Rentscher, K. E., Carroll, J. E., & Mitchell, C. (2020). Psychosocial Stressors and Telomere Length: A Current Review of the Science. *Annual review of public health*, 41, 223–245. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-publhealth-040119-094239>

³² Planning Institute of Jamaica. *Survey of Living Conditions*. 2018.

³³ Unattached youth are defined as persons 15 – 24 years who are either not in school, unemployed or not participating or engaged in any training programme.

³⁴ Wilson-Scott S & UNICEF. *I Am Able. Report on the Situational Analysis of Children with Disabilities in Jamaica*, 2018

OSF4: Increase children's interest in school through curriculum revision and expanding teachers' capacities to meet their needs.

OSF4.1 Increase capacity of teachers to meet the non-cognitive and socio-emotional needs of children and adolescents.

OSF4.2 Increase capacity of teachers to modernise teaching and learning and meet children's current cognitive and learning needs

OSF4.3 As part of overall review and revision of children's curricula give equal weight to cognitive and non-cognitive skills.

OSF4.4 Revise children's curricula to meet current cognitive and learning needs

OSF5: Increase engagement of students at all levels in extra-curricular activities (ECA)/life skill intervention programmes

OSF5.1 Use data to guide extra-curricular implementation.

OSF5.2 Coordinate implementation and monitoring of extra-curricular activities

OSF5.3 Establish partnerships for implementation of extra-curricular activities.

OSF6 Increase student access to peer and adult mentors at primary and secondary levels.

OSF6.1 Use data to assess where mentorship programmes are needed

OSF6.2 Coordinate implementation and monitoring of mentorship programmes at primary and secondary schools.

OSF7: Increase school connectedness through a variety of mechanisms

OSF7.1 Expand school leadership to include other stakeholders.

OSF7.2 Provide students with a variety of opportunities to practice and improve their academic, and non-cognitive skills.

OSF7.3 Utilise a variety of methods in each area of classroom activity to address the diverse needs and learning styles of students.

OSF7.4 Provide opportunities for students of differing abilities to interact and develop friendships and promote teamwork.

OSF7.5 Establish communication norms in the school.

OSF8: Implement measures to ensure that schools at all levels are safe havens for children, protecting them from violence and providing early identification and initial management for victims of childhood trauma.

OSF8.1 Improve capacity of teachers and guidance counsellors to identify signs of child trauma and to provide initial intervention through training in mental health/psychological first-aid.

OSF8.2 Scale up effective programmes that utilise alternative forms of discipline to address behaviour challenges in schools.

OSF8.3 Increase access to guidance counsellors.

OSF8.4 All school leaders trained in promoting safety in schools

OSF8.5 Amend the Education Act to ban corporal punishment in schools at all levels

OSF8.6 Develop a structured referral system for children who are victims of trauma

OSF9: Ensure legal and policy framework in place to address rights of children with disabilities

OSF9.1 Finalise and/or operationalise existing laws and policies that address the rights of children with disabilities.

OSF9.2 Develop a comprehensive and sustained public education programme on childhood disabilities, including their rights.

OSF10: Provide adequate services for early identification of children with disabilities and behaviour disorders.

OSF10.1 Conduct research to accurately identify the prevalence and types of developmental disabilities

OSF10.2 Implement all aspects of the national early childhood screening programme for early identification of children with developmental disabilities and behaviour disorders.

OSF10.3 Improve access to diagnostic and assessment services.

OSF10.4 Develop and implement an integrated cross-sectoral national screening and intervention programme for disabilities and behaviour disorders at the primary level.

OSF11: Enable schools to better support children with disabilities and behaviour disorders and their families, through the provision of resources and training.

OSF11.1 Improve access to educational services for all children with disabilities and behaviour disorders.

OSF11.2 Increase the capacity of all teachers to practice inclusive education.

OSF11.3 Increase provision of social support through the PATH program for families of children with disabilities.

OSF11.4 Improve access to therapeutic services for children with disabilities and behaviour disorders by increasing available human resources.

OSF11.5 Use school-based support teams to improve access to support services for children with disabilities and behaviour disorders.

OSF11.6 Co-opt the assistance of schools in the establishment of parent support groups.

OSF12: Enhance coordination of support for children with disabilities and behaviour disorders and their families.

OSF12. 1 Include provision of services to children with disabilities and behaviour disorders in school inspection reports.

OSF12.2 Establish an oversight body to co-ordinate and monitor implementation of strategies to improve services to children with disabilities.

OSF13: Develop and/or expand successful Alternative Educational Programmes (AEP) in areas of socio-Economic Deprivation.

OSF13.1 Increase access to successful AEPs.

OSF13.2 Develop and/or expand access to successful Government of Jamaica programmes such as the CAP and NYS programmes

OSF13.3 Pilot an alternative education curriculum in collaboration with the PSOJ.

OSF14: Increase parent and community engagement with schools.

OSF14.1 Include parental and community involvement indicator in school inspections at all levels.

OSF14.2 Increase capability of schools to engage with parents and community

OSF14.3 Implement micro enterprise programme at schools targeting parents.

Responding to COVID

It is only over time that the full extent of learning loss among Jamaican school children due to the COVID pandemic will be known. Notwithstanding, interventions are needed immediately if the situation is to not get worse. While a Recover Smarter Plan has been announced by the MoEYI to address the learning loss and other covid-related educational challenges, it is likely that the programme will include both students who were disengaged during the pandemic, as well as those who did not fall in the disengaged category. *The challenge for schools in implementing this plan will be accommodating the recovery for*

students who were disengaged while concurrently ensuring the learning and regular progression of their peers.

At the onset of the pandemic, the pivot to an online teaching mode was sudden and resulted in a plethora of approaches and initiatives. After more than a year of online teaching, many lessons have been learned about what technologies, apps, teaching methodologies and approaches work best for the Jamaican context. In addition, there is a growing bank of online content covering the curricula of primary through tertiary levels. Some of these resources were commissioned by the MOEYI. ***There is scope for scaling up best practices, documenting what did not work, and making widely available to both teachers and students the abundance of online resources that now exist.*** This includes capitalising on the wide stakeholder involvement and community engagement that has been seen as a result of the pandemic. ***It is important not to lose the momentum created by the re-engagement of the community in education that has been occasioned by the pandemic.***

COV1: Set a target of 3 years from the 2021/22 school year to map, curb, and recover from learning loss, focussing on students already in the system or who have just exited the educational system.

COV1.1. Increase instructional time in schools by one hour for the most affected using the extra lessons model.

COV1.2 Consider suspending the placement value assigned to grades 4 and 5 PEP exams and use only grade six PEP results for placement for the next three years.

COV1.3 Provide opportunities for those leaving secondary school over the next three years to pursue a 'recovery year'

COV2: Immediately evaluate the online teaching experience with the aim of capturing best practices.

COV2.1 Task an appropriate unit within the MOEYI to collaborate with the JTC on capturing the best online teaching practices emerging over the past year.

COV2.2 Keep an inventory of MOEYI approved online resources and expand existing (e.g., MOEYI, JTC, JTA) online repositories.

COV3: Capitalize on the current interest and engagement of community and private sector stakeholders in the educational process.

COV3.1 Create an inventory of initiatives not initiated by the MoEYI in support of education.

COV3.2 Negotiate on behalf of the education sector for new incentives, and the extension of present concessions offered by the private sector

COV3.4 Create a track-a-student Hotline

5. The Tertiary Sector

In his remit to the Commission, the Most Honourable Prime Minister noted that a key goal of the Commission is to develop a path to Jamaica truly becoming a part of the 4th industrial revolution. Any attempt to propel Jamaica forward in this direction must place emphasis on the role of the tertiary sector. The research and innovation necessary to drive that push will invariably emanate from these institutions. In addition, the development of a flexible and creative thinking workforce will be impacted by these institutions. Given its importance within a context of constrained budgets, the sector must be a vibrant, efficient sector that is strategic in nature and facilitates access to all Jamaicans irrespective of their socio-economic background.

Governance of the Tertiary Sector

Few pieces of legislation currently exist relating to the tertiary education sector. The Education Act (EA), 1980 makes very few references to the sector, including a definition of the level of education, and the types of institutions that comprise the sector. Among the major institutions governing the sector are the University Council of Jamaica (the national quality assurance agency for tertiary education) and the Jamaica Tertiary Education Commission (established as the main oversight body for the sector). Since establishment, there has been an overlap of functions, with both bodies maintaining independent registers of institutions, programmes, and standards to be maintained. Despite intentions by both bodies to operate a regulatory body and impose sanctions on institutions not meeting the standards and requirements as articulated, neither body has been able to do so, due to the absence of legislative means to impose these intended sanctions for related breaches. While the UCJ has powers to grant awards and distinctions, and set requirements for them to be granted, its legislation does not expressly give it powers to penalise institutions that fail to register or meet its standards. The J-TEC, on the other hand, was established through a Cabinet Decision, and the related legislation has been in draft for well over a decade.

Notwithstanding these individual institution-related pieces of legislation, ***the system lacks an overarching law governing the higher education sector which outlines the philosophy for the sector, the relevant authority/ies and their roles, as well as a clear articulation of the government's responsibilities with regards to funding of programmes.*** The current Education Act deals largely with guidelines for governing primary and secondary institutions. Tertiary institutions are very different from primary and secondary institutions and should have a separate legislation to treat with this complex area.

Strategic Oversight of the Tertiary Sector

There is currently limited strategic oversight of the tertiary sector. Data is often non-existent and as such policy decisions are being taken within a context of limited data and analysis. There is urgent need for a comprehensive Higher Education Policy that not only establishes the funding model for institutions, but also sets the strategic framework for the development of the sector.

Financing the Tertiary Sector

Jamaica's investment in tertiary education is considered high when compared with countries at similar stages of development. The GoJ provides funding to government owned or affiliated institutions at the tertiary level. While the Ministry's commitment to funding these public institutions has typically included salaries, and may include funding for other purposes, or one-off grants for capital projects or otherwise, the MoEYI has not been able to furnish a definite formula for the determination of grants to institutions. Funding for education at the tertiary level arbitrary and lacking in transparency. ***The per student allocation is not consistent across institutions and there is no discernible basis for some allocations. The funding mechanism is therefore in need of urgent revision.*** Issues affecting funding of this sector include inadequate investments in infrastructure at the tertiary level, unequal funding of publicly owned institutions or students at that level, resulting in funding challenges of several institutions, inefficiencies in the operations of these institutions, and misalignment of institutional offerings with the demands of the labour market.

Equitable Access to Tertiary Education

The issue of equitable access to tertiary education was a key concern of the Commission. Targets for increased access were outlined in the Vision 2030 Plan, and in consecutive sector plans. Jamaica has not been able to meet these targets and is not on the way to achieving same. Currently, the enrolment

rate is 27% which is below the Vision 2030 targets as well as what obtains in major economies. Recent data from the World Bank indicates that access to primary education has been largely equitable and the gap has narrowed in early childhood, secondary and tertiary education. Despite these positive developments, ***the gap by socioeconomic level, gender and geographic location persists at the tertiary level (this is also seen at the secondary level). As such males, students living in rural areas, and students from socially and economically disadvantaged populations are less likely to access tertiary education.***

One issue precluding access to tertiary education is a lack of private funding to pursue tertiary studies. This was evident in the dropout rates as well as the consultations with representatives from the student body. There was overwhelming consensus that the SLB was not a preferred option for many students. This has led to students attempting to work full time and study full time and also to the inability of many students to remain in their programmes. The 2019 CaPRI study of the cost of a tertiary education also showed that non-tuition expenses such as travel expenses, meals, housing (whether on or off campus) were an important element of the costs faced by students and was one of the reasons for students dropping out of programmes.

The Need for Needs-Based Testing

Currently, most scholarships are based solely on academic achievement, but given the need to improve equitable access, ***the GOJ should allocate most scholarships on a means-tested basis.*** In alignment with the general shift toward models that pursue equity, education systems have tended to prioritise the use of means-testing, specifically in the financing of tertiary education. Awards of scholarships, grants, and bursaries though historically primarily merit-based, have shifted to employing mechanisms that assess not only student performance, but also the student's capacity to cover the cost of study.

Labour Market Challenges

Jamaican students have long lamented the challenges related to job-seeking during and after the completion of tertiary studies. In a consultation with students of prominent higher education institutions in Jamaica, the Commission was advised that ***some of the challenges experienced in job-seeking were due to the failure of institutions to adequately prepare students for expectations in the job market.*** According to the students, some programmes at the tertiary level are highly theoretical and do not provide students with the necessary practical exposure or experience required to provide value in the employment context.

Partly as a result of these labour market challenges, emigration rates from Jamaica are quite high. The brain drain concern is acute given the significant investment made by the government to educate these students. One key concern is the non-payment of student loans upon migration. Currently, there is no mechanism to share information with foreign credit bureaus so that this debt is reflected on the credit history of the individual. This is a critical step in moving forward to address this issue.

TER1: The Higher Education Act and Policy should be finalized and passed into law without further delay.

TER1.1 J-TEC should be fully established as the Higher Education Authority

TER1.2 Collapse the Tertiary Unit of the MoEYI into J-TEC

TER1.3 Develop a Consortium arrangement for teachers' colleges similar to what has been done for CCCJ.

TER1.4 Tracer studies should be done by the Higher Education Authority to determine not just the employment status of graduates, but also to ascertain the alignment of employment to achieved qualifications and the levels of underemployment seen

TER2: Enhance the ability of UCJ to continue its quality assurance in a changing tertiary market

TER2.1 The UCJ Act should be amended to better reflect its mandate and core functions; regulations should also be drafted as a corollary to the Act.

TER 2.2 All tertiary institutions should be registered and accredited with the UCJ so as to better ensure quality in the system.

TER3: Funding for tertiary institutions should be based on the principles of equity and access and should be aligned to the government's strategic priorities.

TER3.1 Funding to sector allocated in a more transparent manner focusing on a formulaic determination of a base grant (based on the number of students taught), a research grant, and a special strategic alignment grant is supported.

TER4: A small percentage of funds allocated to tertiary institutions should be linked to some performance criteria. This is commonly practiced globally and would add to the accountability of these institutions.

TER5: Re-examine the functioning of government entities established to provide funding support for tertiary education. It is clear that the infrastructure in many institutions is not fit for purpose and these institutions are often sacrificing quality in a bid to enrol as many students as possible to cover overheads. Funding for these institutions need not only come from direct grants from the GOJ budget, but instead could be garnered from existing structures such as the SLB and the NET.

TER6: Examine the SLB to ascertain whether loan criteria can be adjusted to better facilitate increased demand by students, with particular attention placed on students from low-income families (possibly greater focus on means testing in lieu of having a guarantor).

TER6.1 Focus also to be placed on more stringent means of collection/enforcement (e.g. arrangements with local and foreign credit bureaus). The idea is if the SLB can tighten up on collection at the back end, then maybe it can relax lending criteria particularly for low-income borrowers.

TER6.2 Consideration could also be given to lengthening the loan repayment period.

TER6.3 The SLB also factor non-tuition expenses into the overall allocation of loans (add 10% premium to assist in non-tuition expenses)

TER6.4 Explore possibility of SLB packaging debt in a manner that will allow for private sector involvement in providing finance.

TER6.5 Explore a repayment model based on income upon graduation. This would lessen the burden on students who have not been able to find employment after graduating. This approach would also allow for greater equity where payments are made on a sliding scale based on income after graduation.

TER7: The role and functioning of the National Education Trust (NET) should be examined to assist in the identification of additional funds for the tertiary sector especially in relation to the execution of capital projects. Although the NET is not exclusively focused on tertiary education, it is included here because of its potential to raise non-governmental sources of finance for capital investment in education. Such capital investment is also urgently needed at the tertiary level.

TER8: Most government scholarships at the tertiary level should be provided via needs testing. Currently, most scholarships are based solely on academic achievement, but given the need to improve equitable access, the GOJ should allocate most scholarships on a means-tested basis.

TER9: A voluntary saving scheme should be established through a public-private partnership wherein parents (up to a prescribed income level) are allowed tax free saving toward their children's tertiary education

TER10: A functioning Tertiary Education Management Information System (TEMIS) should be developed. There is an urgent need to enact a TEMIS to track all aspects of data related to tertiary institutions. These include enrollment and dropout data, tracer studies after graduation, as well as allocations to institutions and scholarships and grants awarded.

TER11: Develop a framework for micro-credentialling aligned with the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The UCJ is currently exploring a quality assurance framework to treat with emerging trends (such as micro credentialling and stackable credentials) and this effort should be accelerated.

TER12: Operationalise the National Qualifications Framework

TER12.1 The NQF should be enshrined in policy (short-term) and legislation (long term) and establishing the structures for the Framework to operate

TER12.2 All higher education institutions should be required to operate according to the NQF through a mapping of their programmes on to the Framework

TER12.3 It should be a statutory requirement for all institutions to function within this TER12.4 Framework, thus institutionalizing the alternative pathways for lateral and vertical movements within the tertiary system.

TER12.5 Embedding within the functioning of the NQF the recognition of prior learning

TER12.6 Empirical research must be done around the creation of tertiary system with different institutions offering different programmes but with complementarity between the entities. This research must also explore the level of shared services that would be possible between the entities.

TER13: The tertiary sector (especially community colleges and some universities) should partner more effectively with private sector entities to provide on the job training in learning hubs in the organizations

TER14: Empirical research must be done around the creation of tertiary system with different institutions offering different programmes but with complementarity between the entities.

TER15: Steps should be taken to improve the provision of critical information to prospective students on labour market trends, strategic priority areas, and tertiary options available to them

TER16: Eliminate sources of inefficiencies such as under-enrolment and duplication of programmes across tertiary institutions

TER16.1 Operational review of tertiary institutions to more clearly identify areas of inefficiencies

TER16.2 Return to the policy of specialization in teachers colleges where programmes/subjects with lower enrolment numbers are offered by a maximum of two institution.

TER16.3 Support and encourage collaboration between institutions to jointly deliver programmes.

TER17: A capital investment fund should be created to fund investments in necessary upgrading projects throughout the tertiary sector

TER17.1 A capital fund should be established and seeded with \$2billion to be distributed through a competition where institutions can submit capital projects that are aligned with the

strategic priorities of the GOJ and can revolutionize course delivery especially in technical areas.

TER17.2 There should also be enhanced use of online learning platforms to not only widen local access, but to also tap into international student markets.

TER18: Introduce measures to compensate for the lost income-earning potential of tertiary graduates who leave the island

TER18.1 Introduce measures to bond the beneficiaries of any government support for an appropriate length of time (for example, scholarship and SLB recipients)

TER18.3 Introduce longer moratorium period for SLB loans for graduates who remain in Jamaica

6. TVET in Jamaica

A sub-committee of the Commission examined the state of TVET education in Jamaica. It was decided that TVET in the schools is integrally related to the work of the HEART-NSTA/Trust programme which will be thoroughly reviewed in the next phase of the Commission's work. Recommendations on this sector will therefore be provided in the report of the second phase of this Commission. An agreement for technical cooperation from IDB to support this review has been reached and an international consulting agency to assist our investigation has been identified. The report of the second phase of the Commission should be available by the middle of 2022.

7. Infrastructure and Technology

Technology

Educational facilities of the future must be built on a strong technological foundation to support asset management, student and teacher engagement and quality internet accessibility for all. The digital transformation of Jamaica's education has been accelerated by the pandemic, with the sector being forced to leapfrog in adjusting to the new realities. Despite this pandemic induced jump, however, it has been clear from data on attendance, and assessments provided by the MoEYI, that thousands of students have been left behind. Nevertheless, research done on internet penetration in Jamaica shows that the majority of schools in the public education system have, since the COVID-19 pandemic, been given access to the internet, with the MoEYI reporting that 997 of 1332 publicly funded infant, primary, and high schools have arrangements with at least one of the nation's telecommunications providers.³⁵

Several schools received upgraded internet services since the start of the pandemic, while some are also benefitting from sponsorships for internet services by private donors. This report points to the continued gaps in access to internet resources in Jamaica, the relationship between socioeconomic background and internet/device access, and highlights challenges to the effective use of internet and other technology resources in the Jamaican education system. Several reports and studies, including the 2004 Report from the Task Force on Educational Reform, refer to not only the need to provide access to the internet in schools, but increasing the need to enhance the learning experience through the use of technology, to explore the use of technology for distance learning, and importantly, to ensure students are prepared to enter the world of work, no doubt requiring competencies in ICT. This Commission found that the public education system continues to lag behind its peers in terms of use

³⁵ Data Provided by the MoEYI, "Internet Connectivity in Schools". 2021.

of technology in the education system, and in the digitization of processes, having observed that paper-based processes were still prevalent and heavily used in schools, regional offices, and central ministry.

Infrastructure

Having a good school environment with quality infrastructure that is conducive to student learning is a critical consideration in budgeting and agenda setting in education policy. There is a relationship between safe and healthy learning spaces and educational outcomes, including through economical upgrades to existing spaces, and through carefully crafted school building designs that take into consideration student needs and comfort. This report highlights that school buildings are dated, and in varying states of disrepair.

Processes for maintaining and repairing damage to school infrastructure are inefficient, leading to lengthy wait times and additional costs for emergency repairs. Furthermore, budget and resources earmarked for infrastructure upgrades and annual maintenance work are woefully inadequate to fill the needs of the nation's schools. There is also an evident lack of standardized software for back-end services streamlined across the levels of the education system, including for the reporting of infrastructure issues, needs, and in monitoring the disbursement and use of school equipment. It is noteworthy that capital expenditure had the lowest expenditure rate, with 23 percent of the allocated amount in 2019 not being used.³⁶

Many schools lack key infrastructure such as modern laboratories and equipment while there is waste in other areas such as textbooks, desks and other resources. At the Tertiary level, institutions lament the poor quality of infrastructure, which, in many cases, has seen few upgrades since construction. on ensuring that the technology and infrastructure at the tertiary level is kept current.

Initiatives such as solar energy, green buildings, and other sustainable solutions are especially important for rural schools and those in predominantly lower socioeconomic communities which have always struggled with high electricity costs.

There is a clear, urgent need to improve the safety and security of students, teachers and staff using the school facilities before, during and after school. This has heightened the need for perimeter fencing. Though there is an ongoing project by the MoEYI to build such fences at schools in need, the project is constrained by its financial limitations.

The recommendations highlighted in this report are intended to facilitate more efficient use of time and resources, and produce an overall improvement in the student learning experience. Among the key recommendations are:

IT1: Increase government expenditure on school maintenance from 1% to 3% of the annual budget

IT2: Deploy an information system for management of school buildings and equipment, including registers of school buildings, assets and equipment as well as school maintenance visits, maintenance requests and intervention management

IT2.1Simplify, centralise, and automate the maintenance request and approval processes

IT2.2 Implement service level agreements between MoEYI Maintenance and Schools to ensure service level delivery

IT3: Introduce processes for continuous review and replacement of outdated equipment

³⁶ idib

IT4: Improve coordination between procurement and stock management

IT5: Introduce a special purpose fund for tertiary infrastructure improvement labs and other education assets

IT6: Renew commitment to prioritising and investing in infrastructure to support cultural, athletic and social growth and development including more green spaces, athletic fields and equipment, music and theatre assets

IT7: Establish a special purpose fund to upgrade assets related to cultural, athletic and psychosocial development in schools

IT8: Regularly assess and meet specific infrastructure needs of specialized institutions including sports institutions, STEAM and special education institutions across all levels

IT9: Procure additional security cameras and on-site security personnel to enhance safety & security on school campuses

IT10: Continue the implementation of security fencing programme

IT10.1 Continue to encourage and seek external funding to support the roll out of the security fencing programme, through the National Education Trust, or otherwise

IT10.2 Negotiate group bulk procurement of fences and other required material for wider and faster roll-out of the programme

IT11: Introduce modern, sustainable standards for buildings

IT11.1 Make buildings more energy efficient by mandating all new buildings to be built with energy and water conservation technologies implemented

IT11.2 Undertake further investment in the roll-out of solar panels for school and Ministry-owned buildings to gradually reduce energy costs

IT11.3 Design buildings with audit meters for each department so each unit can manage their network – areas that are being utilised.

IT12: Develop specialized labs at the secondary level to be used as a way for lower level students to have exposure to different STEAM areas, through visits to various technology centres by parish

IT13: MoEYI should continue to deploy broadband infrastructure to increase penetration across the island including WiFi and other access points.

IT13.1 Improve school connectivity and ensure availability of established standards for minimum IT equipment in all public schools (with priority given to infant and primary schools).

IT14: Investment in new software platforms should be made to enhance governance, accountability and improve productivity and efficiency to the school level. This includes financial software and education and information management system

IT14.1 Ensure that efforts are in place to upskill public sector workers that will be responsible for managing and operating new software

IT14.2 Appoint a Chief Information Officer to manage the digital transformation processes of the education sector, and routinely provide reports on this process and areas for improvement

IT15: Require that the Broadcasting Commission of Jamaica dedicate a number of bands on the digital spectrum for education

IT16: Develop guidelines for the safe and secure use of online learning platforms, including guidance for schools on discipline and decorum in the online learning space

IT17: Continue rigorous upskilling and training for teachers who may be technophobic or less technologically savvy

IT18: Deploy technology in the cloud or virtualized environments to save costs of system deployment

IT19: Ensure implementation of strong cybersecurity software and hardware systems acquire licenses in bulk to minimize costs

8. Finance

Transformation of education in Jamaica requires careful consideration of how this change will be financed. This section of the report of the Jamaica Education Transformation Commission has two purposes. It sets out the financial principles or frameworks that should guide the prioritisation of the detailed recommendations of the overall report, wherever those recommendations have material cost or revenue implications. It also sets out recommendations for major changes to the way that Jamaican education is financed. We propose that all recommendations be assessed with respect to the adequacy, efficiency and importantly the equity of the financing arrangements. In addition, we propose that for each recommendation, there be some consideration as to whether the educational opportunity ought to be provided to a greater or lesser extent as a public good (financed from taxes) or as a private good (financed by households in line with their preferences and ability to pay). Finally, we propose that recommendations be viewed in a comparative light, and some effort be made to benchmark the proposal against international best practices.

The Framework of Adequacy, Efficiency and Equity

An effective education finance system is based on the fulfilment of three key objectives: adequacy, efficiency and equity. Adequacy and equity dictate the provision of the number of resources for all students to learn, irrespective of their background. Efficiency requires an examination as to whether the funds that are available for education are used to the fullest extent possible. These underlying concepts were used as the basis upon which this review of the financing of education in Jamaica was conducted.

The Public Goods and Private Goods Framework

Alongside adequacy, efficiency and equity is a related framework that also deserves policy attention. At each level of the education system – be it pre-primary, primary, secondary, tertiary or technical and vocational training – a share of the overall education spend can and should be generated from private resources (including student loans) and a share of the overall spend can and should be generated from public resources, including dedicated taxes and the consolidated fund. Naturally, the share of the education spend that comes from private funds will need to have a more direct relationship to informed individual private preferences and the varied resource endowments of different individuals. The share that must be organised and controlled through the power of the state would most naturally be the parts of the education system that have the attributes of a public good and/or represent the delivery of the core educational products that we generally believe are linked to the fundamental rights of all Jamaicans.

The Comparative Framework

Another perspective from which the financing of education should be considered is a comparative framework. Where appropriate, the outcomes in respect of the adequacy, efficiency and equity of our system of financing education are benchmarked against the performance of our geographic and economic peers as well as those countries that have successfully achieved results that accord with our long-term national goals. Similarly, we are able to draw on comparative insights from national peers and role models about which aspects of the education system might benefit from relatively higher contributions from public finance or, conversely, be able to allow for higher reliance on private financing. This overarching assessment has led to the following conclusions:

- i. Relative to its peers, Jamaica makes an adequate financial contribution to education. That is, Jamaica's public contribution to education as a share of its GDP and as a share of its budget is in line with international norms and higher than its regional peers.

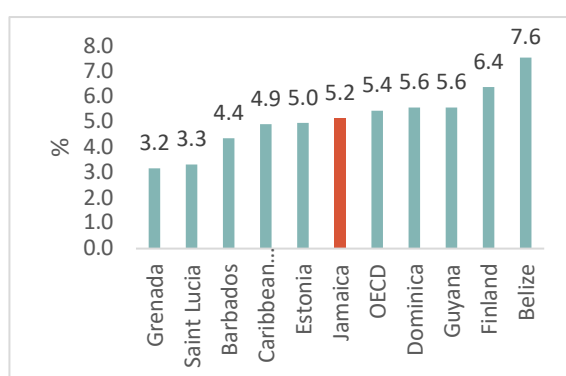


Figure 6 Government expenditure on education as a share of the GDP (%), 2017 or latest

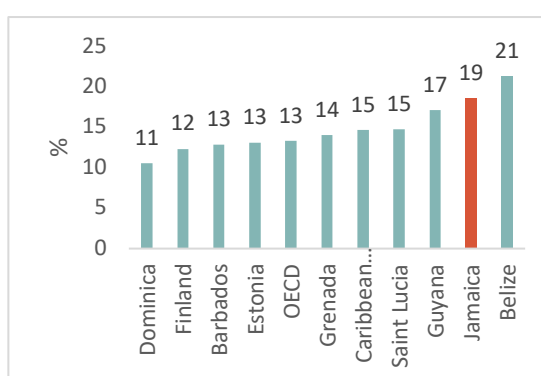


Figure 7 Government expenditure on education as a share of the total government expenditure (%), 2017 or latest

Source: World Bank/UNICEF PER – Education in Jamaica

- ii. Jamaica's public commitment of financing to pre-primary education appears to be inadequate, relative to its peers. Jamaica can benefit from a systematic and programmed re-allocation of public funds from other levels of education to pre-primary education.

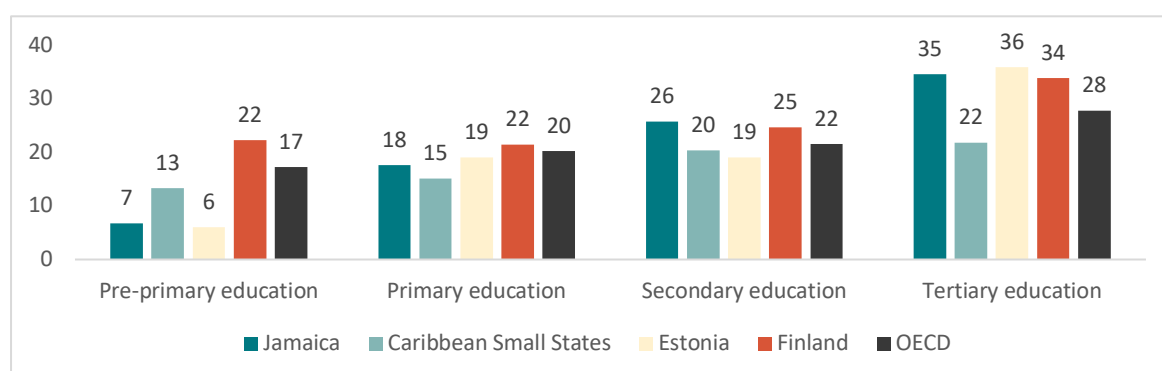


Figure 8 Jamaica and benchmark countries. Per-student expenditure as a share of GDP per capita (%), 2015 or latest

Note: Jamaica: Adding the school feeding program. Caribbean small states average excludes Jamaica.

Source: UNESCO UIS (2020) and World Bank calculations based on Statements of Expenditure of the Jamaica's MoEYI (2020)

- iii. Jamaica can improve educational outcomes at the primary education level with more public funding. There are also opportunities for a more efficient application of household and public spending on primary education to emphasize better staffing and staff compensation and possibly to organise school meals and transportation more efficiently.
- iv. Jamaica's public contribution to tertiary education exceeds that of its peers, notwithstanding lower enrolment. Jamaica's tertiary education system can be enhanced with an increased focus on attracting private spending which can, in turn be generated from more productive use of the capital allocated to the Students' Loan Bureau. Jamaica's public spending on tertiary education can also be rationalised to support a broader range of institutions more equitably, and this in turn can address issues of enrolment.
- v. Jamaica's public financial commitment to Technical and Vocational Education, through direct taxes for HEART/NSTA Trust (HEART) significantly exceeds that of its peers and appears to exceed its capacity to effectively use the funds to certify enrollees. ***Jamaica could benefit by taking legal measures to re-deploy funds earmarked for HEART to the more formative levels of the education system.***

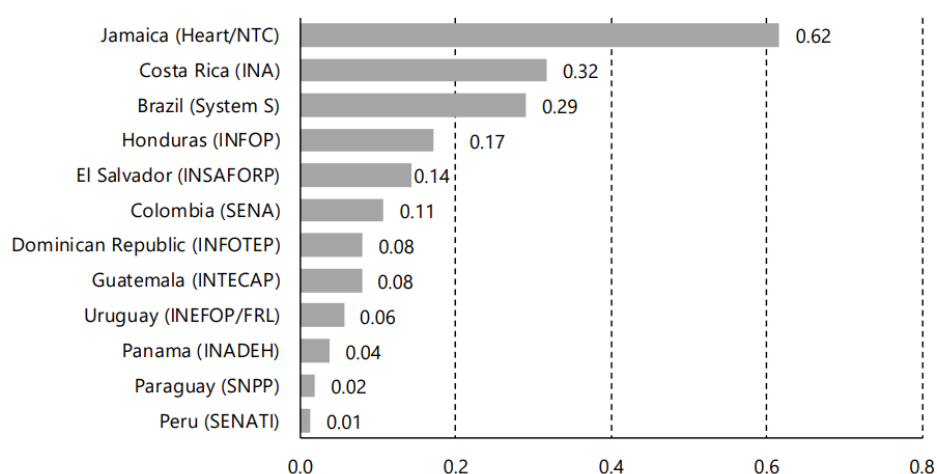


Figure 9: Latin America and the Caribbean (selected countries): TVET related payroll tax revenues, 2017 (percentages of GDP)

Source: Hanni, Michael. "Financing of education and technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in Latin America and the Caribbean." (2019).

- vi. Jamaica's funding commitment to capital expenditure on education appears to be inadequate. It is proposed that a detailed review of the utilisation of educational assets be undertaken with a view to repurposing or divesting under-utilised assets to fund capital investment. In line with increased prioritisation of capital expenditure, traditional multilateral and donor sources should also be tapped.

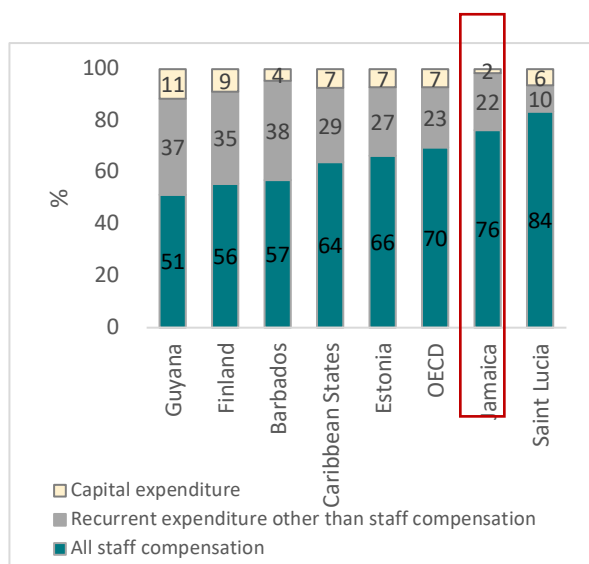


Figure 10 Jamaica and benchmark countries. Expenditure composition by economic classification, 2016 or latest

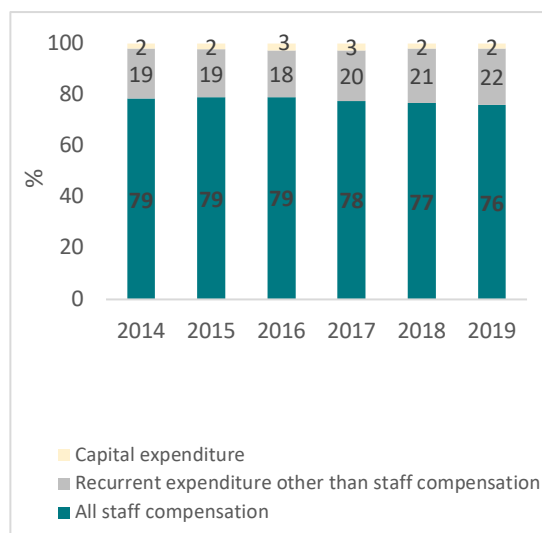


Figure 11 Jamaica. Expenditure composition by economic classification, 2018/19 and 2019/20 or latest

Note: (i) Caribbean small states average excludes Jamaica and includes: Guyana, Barbados and Saint Lucia (ii) For Jamaica and comparators, the spending distribution do not consider subventions and grants (iii) Jamaica: Excluding grants to university education, which makes up about 12 percent of the total education budget (2019/20). If grants to universities are included as recurrent expenses excluding salaries, the total expenditure on staff compensation would be 67 percent and recurrent expenditures other than staff compensation 32 percent.

Source: World Bank/UNICEF PER – Education in Jamaica

- vii. The system of parental contributions should involve a progressive system of school fees, wherein middle and high-income households are required to contribute to financing the cost of their children's education, while poor households that cannot afford such contributions are exempt (but are the beneficiary of a comparable level of per student state support). The parental contributions will not necessarily be expended on the schools to which their children attend, but rather will be allocated to all schools on a per-student basis. Nevertheless, the penalty for noncompliance and the enforcement arrangements for collection of non-payments will never include prohibitions on student enrolment or attendance.
- viii. Jamaica must accept the reality of educational setbacks due to the COVID 19 pandemic and the reduced school attendance and student engagement that resulted from curfews and quarantines. Proactive one-off budget allocations over the next two years will need to be made to mitigate against these recent challenges to the educational system and aggressively seek to remedy learning loss arising from COVID-19. This initiative should also seek to maintain and lock in some of the technological advances in education (such as national on-line but in school teaching options) that arose, and are now available, because of COVID.

FIN1: put in place policies to materially increase the level of private financing for tertiary education through (a) student loans, and (b) to the extent practicable, from amounts that can be harvested from household savings if there is increased public funding at the pre-primary and primary levels and more efficient organisation of household expenditure on school transport and school feeding.

FIN2: Identify underutilised capital – particularly real estate assets -- for (a) re-purposing within education and the wider public service, (b) increased utilisation (including across the educational system) or (c) divestment (to raise funds for further re-investment).

FIN2.1 Undertake a detailed review of the utilisation of national educational assets and the market values for underutilised assets and opportunities for divestment

FIN2.2 Explore further multilateral/ bilateral partnerships to facilitate both project management and capital investment.

FIN2.3 Closely examine the role and functioning of the National Education Trust to ascertain whether and how more can be done to leverage private capital for such purposes.

FIN3: Reallocate funds to education from other parts of the budget; and/or seek emergency funding from international development partners

FIN4: Cascade Public Resources from Vocational Training towards Primary and Early-Childhood Education

FIN4.1 Publicly fund a greater share of early childhood education

FIN4.2 Increase private funding and private engagement in the provision of vocational training.

FIN4.3 Complete a specific study to refine HEART's institution's understanding of the job market and, in particular, the preferred entry-level skill sets for growth sectors

FIN4.4 Identify a range of marketable vocational skill sets that can benefit from more intensive private sector engagement with a view to (a) shifting towards a cost-sharing model with industry in relation to these skill sets, and (b) shifting towards a contributory model (based entirely on loans) for a small subset of marketable skills.

FIN4.5 Shift resources now located within HEART for at-risk youth to the secondary school level to allow for the earliest stage intervention possible, with a corresponding cascading of resources to primary and pre-primary education.

FIN4.6 Place greater emphasis on increasing HEART's certification rate (in part by devolving the focus on remediation to other levels of the education system) to maintain the overall level of certifications by the institution.

FIN5: Re-examine the school feeding and PATH programmes with a view towards expanded and enhanced support to low-income households to meet the costs associated with sending their children to secondary school

FIN5.1 Re-orient the school feeding programme to cover students in the most immediate need, especially those at the early childhood and secondary levels who do not attend school for five or more days per month

FIN5.2 Consider standardising feeding programmes within parishes; thus, possibly realizing benefits from economies of scale

FIN5.3 Acquire technical assistance to investigate how cost-savings can be used to expand and enhance support to low-income households to meet costs associated with sending children to secondary school

FIN6: Revisit aspects of the No-Fee Policy at the Secondary Level

FIN6.1 Consider constructive policy options that (a) allow for greater enforcement of auxiliary fees by households that can pay, and (b) provide increased targeted support to schools to substitute for amounts that would otherwise be due as auxiliary fees from low-income households.

FIN6.2 Additional resources should be provided through a progressive system of school fees, wherein middle and high-income households are required to monetarily contribute to financing the cost of their children's education, while poor households that cannot afford such contributions are exempt without penalty. The parental contributions will not necessarily be

expended on the schools to which their children attend, but rather will be allocated in a redistributive manner to the schools which serve a larger proportion of economically disadvantaged youth.

FIN6.3 Alternatively, if it is found that parental contributions are adversely impacted by this manner of redistribution, measures could be implemented to reallocate GOJ resources from secondary schools which collect higher tuition fees from parents, to those for which little or no such fees are collectible.

FIN7: Increase Access to Tertiary Education for the poor through the implementation of short-term and long-term measures to ensure that low- income households are able to access sources of financing for tuition fees.

FIN7.1 Re-examine the functioning of the Student Loan Bureau

FIN7.2 Complete an assessment to quantify and demonstrate the net financial returns from investment in tertiary education, by profession and by tertiary institution.

FIN7.3 Improve the availability of Student Loans by relaxing certain requirements on the basis of need. The particular requirement for review is the maximum loan amount as well as the guarantee requirement. Student loans that cover tuition only do not allow for sufficient resources to cover the full requirement of transport, accommodation and school supplies.

FIN7.4 Needs based lending for these funding requirements can possibly improve school performance and repayment potential.

FIN7.5 Improve the enforcement of collections. This should include emphasizing credit reporting, both locally and internationally, and the engagement of private financial services to handle origination and data management.

FIN7.6 Establish a 'brokerage' or 'referral' function within SLB in which referrals are made to private institutions that are able to offer credit on comparable or competitive terms.

FIN7.7 Improve the systems necessary to increase the disbursement rate, including by supporting private financial services firms in loan disbursement based on pre-agreed criteria and agreed rates of interest.

FIN7.8 Realise loan assets by mobilising private sector resources to acquire performing loans from the SLB on commercial terms to allow for increased capacity for further loans.

FIN7.9 Over time, increase the share of private funding for tertiary education to allow for the re-allocation of public funds to other levels

FIN8: Establish a voluntary saving scheme through a public-private partnership wherein parents (up to a prescribed income level) are allowed tax free saving toward their children's tertiary education. The details are provided in the Tertiary section of the extended JETC report.

HOW JAMAICAN STUDENTS RE-IMAGINE THEIR EDUCATION (UNICEF)

On behalf of the Commission, UNICEF Jamaica conducted a study of Jamaica's students' views and goals for their education. The following is a summary of its findings.

Students were engaged around four grounding questions:

- a. Why should we Reimagine Education?
- b. What do you think the purpose of school should be?
- c. Is the education that you are receiving achieving that purpose and keeping youth engaged? If not, why?
- d. Is there anything that is not taught in school that you would like to learn?

Student feedback to the first question overwhelmingly revealed a general feeling that there is a need to reimagine education because the traditional classroom is rapidly changing, especially with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. They were all clear that education was vital to their success in the world – and for some, the only way out of poverty. Their feedback to questions two, three and four were aligned across all schools: students imagine a more equitable classroom, enthusiastic and empathetic teachers, expanded curriculum and engaging lessons. The students identified priority areas of focus for the future of education which could be grouped into four distinct pillars:

i. Equity and Inclusion

1. Inclusive education catering for diverse learners

ii. Relationships in Learning

2. Teacher-student collaboration
3. Empathy and compassion
4. Parent and teacher motivation

iii. Curriculum Content

5. Real-life experiences
6. Varied curriculum that caters to interests
7. Leadership skill development
8. Physical and co-curricular activity

iv. Teacher Capacity and Lesson Delivery

9. Active engagement
10. Blended learning

Students were highly appreciative of the opportunity to express themselves in a safe, non-judgmental space and felt that their opinions were valued and mattered.

CONCLUSION

The Jamaican education system is presently mired in both a learning and institutional crisis. The country has, over the last few decades, succeeded in increasing access to public education, by increasing spaces available at the pre-primary, primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. Nevertheless, despite providing almost universal access at some levels, the country has been unable to evade, or recover from a harrowing learning crisis, which is largely a result of chronic social issues, and a less than favourable economic environment for many of its citizens. This is evidenced by the scores of students who leave the different levels of education, and matriculate to higher levels, without having met set standards of achievement. However, given its prioritization and resources, the education system has done far less than was possible to overcome the social and economic obstacles to learning faced by its students.

This report has highlighted several elements of this learning crisis that perpetuate the breakdown of structures and the ongoing failure of the education system to meet its intended objectives. Noteworthy are: the presence of an ineffective and overly complex governance structure with little accountability, that has been tarnished in recent years by cronyism and corruption leading to its present state of crisis; persistent failure to pass key legislation; the absence of a modern, relevant educational philosophy guiding policy direction; underuse of data in decision making; and an unrelenting implementation

deficit. Sixteen years following the conclusion of the 2004 Task Force on Education Reform, several of the recommendations, though accepted and debated, are yet to be implemented.

The Commission concludes that by some important measures, the adequacy of our educational finance – relative to our GDP – is appropriately aligned with that of our peers, particularly when private contributions to our educational system are considered. Despite this general adequacy, the Commission has found that the return on investment in education has been sub-optimal, and that education expenditure has been misaligned with the country's imminent needs; placing too much emphasis on remediation, and too little on building a sound student foundation. Unfortunately, by many important measures, we do not compare favourably with our peers in respect of the efficiency or equity of our education finance. In particular, some of our peers are achieving superior educational outcomes for the same proportional spend.

We conclude that early childhood education in Jamaica is woefully underfunded, though the sector receives a high level of private investment, vis-a-vis other levels of education. Despite increased public expenditure in this area, the quality of care and training being provided to children is inadequate, and fails to meet local demand or children's developmental needs. The Early Childhood Commission has also performed inadequately in regulating and enhancing the quality of the nation's many early childhood institutions, the great majority of which presently operate without a permit. Furthermore, although public funding of primary education in Jamaica can be described as "pro-poor", our system's reliance on private funding at the primary level allows for large disparities in the education finance available to different students with better privately financed students achieving better performance. The same applies at the secondary level, where disparate levels of parental contributions to the public school system lead to outcomes where better performing schools benefit from higher parental contributions. At the tertiary level, we observe markedly different levels of public financing across institutions. There is an opportunity to re-balance and rationalise public spending per-student across tertiary institutions.

Creating a world-class educational system" and ensuring inclusivity implies a transformation in the structures both managing and delivering education in Jamaica, and a transition to a new philosophy for education and educational success. Achieving this reform will require adhering to the five fundamental principles outlined earlier, namely: organizational coherence in the governance of education, internal and external systemic alignment in its functioning, a pedagogic transformation focused on the instructional core of learning as a collaborative process, a revision of the curriculum grounded in the complementary learning of STEAM and SEL disciplines, and the vigorous pursuit of equity.

If these recommendations are to be successfully implemented it is essential that all relevant leaders buy into and take ownership of them, that they are understood and communicated to all stakeholders and implementers at all levels of the education system, that there is accountability for all involved in the implementation process, and that there is constant monitoring and review of how the recommendations work in practice, with a view to adapting them to real world circumstances. In light of the failure to implement the administrative and other internal reforms recommended by the 2004 Task Force, we are also strongly of the view that the implementation of our recommendations must be conducted by a body external to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information.

We are confident that a transparent and accountable education ministry, reorganized along the lines recommended in this and the previous commission of 2004, efficiently implementing the recommendations we have proposed, under the guidance of a watchdog body, will be able to deliver the educational outcomes that our students badly need and eagerly seek.

Appendices

Appendix 1: List of Acronyms

AI - Artificial Intelligence	NCR - National Children's Registry
APSE - Alternative Pathways to Secondary Education	NCSAMT - National Committee for Selection & Appointment of Master Teachers
BBC - Brain Builder Centre	NEI - National Education Inspectorate
CAP - Career Advancement Programme	NER - Net Enrolment Rate
CAPE - Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination	NESP - National Education Strategic Plan
CARICOM - Caribbean Community	NET - National Education Trust
CCCJ - Council of Community Colleges of Jamaica	NGOs - Non-Governmental Organizations
CCT - Conditional Cash Transfer	NPSC - National Parenting Support Commission
CDA - Child Development Agency	NQAA - National Quality Assurance Agency
CIT - Curriculum Implementation Teams	NQF - National Qualifications Framework
CMT - Curriculum Monitoring Teams	NSC - National Standards Curriculum
COT - Classroom Observation Tool	NSLC - National School Leaving Certificate
COVID - Coronavirus	NSP - National Strategic Plan
CPFSA - Child Protection and Family Services Agency	NSTA - National Service Training Agency
CSEC - Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate	NTA - National Training Agency
CTI - Community Training Intervention	NUYP - National Unattached Youth Programme
CVQ - Caribbean Vocational Qualification	NVQ-J - National Vocational Qualification of Jamaica
CWD Children with Disabilities	OCA - Office of the Children's Advocate
CXC - Caribbean Examination Council	OECD - Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
EC - Early Childhood	OPC - Office of the Parliamentary Counsel
ECA - Extra-Curricular Activities	PATH - Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education
ECC - Early Childhood Commission	PEP - Primary Exit Profile
ECD - Early Childhood Development	PER - Public Expenditure Review
ECE - Early Childhood Education	PIOJ - Planning Institute of Jamaica
ECI - Early Childhood Institutions	PISA - Programme for International Student Assessment
ECP - Early Childhood Period	PLC - Professional Learning Community
EDUFI - Finnish National Agency for Education	PMEU - Programme Monitoring and Evaluation Unit
EMIS - Education Management and Information System	PPRJC - Piloting Protocols for the Revised Jamaican Curriculum
EO - Education Officer	PWD - Persons with Disabilities
ESTP - Education System Transformation Program	QEC - Quality Education Circle
ETC - Education Transformation Commission	REA - Regional Education Agencies
ETP - External Training Provider	ROI - Return on Investment
GDP - Gross Domestic Product	SABER - Systems Approach for Better Education Results
GNAT - Grade Nine Achievement Test	SAU - Student Assessment Unit
GOJ - Government of Jamaica	SDA - School Development and Accountability
GSAT - Grade Six Achievement Test	SDG - Sustainable Development Goal
HEART - Human Employment and Resource Training Trust	SEL - Social and Emotional Learning
HEI - Higher Education Institution	SIP - School Improvement Plan
IADB/IDB - Inter-American Development Bank	SLB - Students' Loan Bureau
ICT - Information Communication Technology	STEAM - Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics
ILO - International Labour Organization	STEM - Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
IOM - International Organization for Migration	TALIS - Teaching and Learning International Survey
IQ - Intelligence Quotient	TCJ - Teachers' Colleges of Jamaica
IT - Information Technology	TEMIS - Tertiary Education Management Information System
ITP - Initial Teacher Practice	TOR - Terms of Reference
JBTE - Joint Board of Teacher Education	TTI - Teacher Training Institution
JCDC - Jamaica Cultural Development Commission	TVET - Technical and Vocational Education and Training
JCPD - Jamaica Council for Persons with Disabilities	UCJ - University Council of Jamaica
JMD - Jamaican Dollar	UK - United Kingdom
JTC - Jamaica Teaching Council	UMIC - Upper Middle-Income Countries
JETC - Jamaica Education Transformation Commission	UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
J-TEC - Jamaica Tertiary Education Commission	UNICEF - United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
LAC - Latin America and the Caribbean	US - United States
LMS - Learning Management System	USAID - United States Agency for International Development
LSS - Leadership for Safer Schools	UTECH - University of Technology
M&E - Monitoring and Evaluation	UWI - University of the West Indies
MoEYI - Ministry of Education, Youth and Information	
MOHW - Ministry of Health and Wellness	
MOOCs - Massive Open Online Courses	
MOU - Memorandum of Understanding	
NCE - National Council on Education	
NCEL - National College of Educational Leadership	

Appendix 2: How the Report was Produced—The Consultation and Collaborative Process

The report was produced through the engagement of a wide range of stakeholder’s consultations both at the local and international levels. These include key stakeholders across the education system to include the Ministry of Education Youth and Information, agencies and departments of the ministry, schools, universities and colleges, the Opposition Spokesperson on Education, The Jamaica Teachers’ Association, The Private Sector Organisation of Jamaica and other key international players.

A total of thirty-one (31) meetings were held by the general Commission using the virtual platform. Additionally, over fifty (50) meetings were held with other stakeholders by the six (6) subcommittees.

The main objectives of the meetings were to determine the various challenges/issues, gaps and weaknesses affecting the education system and to identify ways to improve existing systems, introduce new measures, or to fully remove those that no longer served the industry. The Commission took a keen interest in the 2004 Taskforce Report on Education and also the agencies implemented following the recommendations of the 2004 report.

Representatives from the various sectors

Prime Minister of Jamaica

- The Most Honourable Andrew Holness ON, PC, MP

Ministry of Education, Youth and Information

- The Honourable Fayval Williams, MP. Minister of Education
- The Honourable Robert Nesta Morgan, State Minister of Education
- Dr. Grace McLean, Permanent Secretary (Acting)
- Dr. Kasan Troupe, Chief Education Officer (Acting)
- Mrs. Winnie Berry, Assistant Chief Education Officer, Core Curriculum and Support Services
- Dr. Clover Flowers, Assistant Chief Education Officer, Core Curriculum and Support Services
- Mr. Sandpha Bennett, Senior Education Officer
- Mrs. Shereen Davy Stubbs, Senior Education Officer
- Dr. Tamika Benjamin, National Mathematics Coordinator
- Dr. Andre Hill, National Literacy Coordinator
- Mrs. Terry-Ann Thomas Gayle, ACEO, Assessment and Administration
- Ms. Barbara Allen, Chief Technical Director
- Dr. Phylcia Marshall, Assistant Chief Officer - Tertiary Unit

Former Ministers of Education

- Rev. Ronald Thwaites, Former Minister of Education, Youth & Information
- The Honourable Karl Samuda, Former Minister of Education
- Mr. Alando Terrelonge, Former Minister of State in the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information

Agencies of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information

National Education Inspectorate (NEI)

- Mrs. Maureen Dwyer, Chief Executive Officer

Jamaica Teaching Council (JTC)

- Dr. Winsome Gordon, Chief Executive Officer

National Parenting Support Commission (NPSC)

- Ms. Kaysia Kerr, Chief Executive Officer

National College for Educational Leadership (NCEL)

- Dr. Taneisha Ingleton, Principal/Director, National College of Educational Leadership

National Education Trust (NET)

- Ms. Marcia Phillips-Dawkins, Chief Executive Officer
- Ms. Latoya Harris, Director, Donor & Partnership Management

National Education Commission

- Ms. Merris Murray, Executive Secretary

Jamaica Tertiary Education Commission (JTEC)

- Dr. Dameon Black, Chief Executive Director

Opposition Spokesperson on Education & Team

- Dr. Angela Brown-Burke and other representatives, Opposition Spokesman on Education
- Mrs. Elaine Foster-Allen, Former Permanent Secretary - Ministry of Education Youth and Information
- Dr. Canute Thompson
- Mrs. Yvonne McCalla Sobers
- Mrs. Rasheen Roper Robinson
- Ms. Latania Thomas

Jamaica Teachers' Association

- Mr. Jasford Gabriel, President

Jamaica Association of Principals for Secondary Schools

- Mr. Linvern Wright, President

Tertiary Sector

The Mico University College

- Dr. Asburn Pinnock, President

Moneague Teachers' College

- Mr. Howard Isaacs, Principal

Shortwood Teachers' College

- Dr. George Dawkins, Principal

The College of Agriculture Science and Education (C.A.S.E)

- Dr. Derrick Deslandes, President

University of the West Indies (UWI)

- Professor Dale Webber, Principal, Mona Campus
- Dr. Marcia Rainford, Director, School of Education
- Ms. Zoya Kinkade Clarke, Head of the Early Childhood Section of the School of Education

Joint Board of Teacher Education (JBTE)

- Dr. Joan Hernandez, Director

HEART/NSTA Trust

- Dr. Janet Dyer, Managing Director
- Mr. Edward Gabbidon, Chairman of the Board of Directors
- Mrs. Kenesha Campbell, Director, Strategic Partnership, Research and Innovation
- Ms. Christine Gittens, Senior Strategic Planning Director

Jamaica Union of Tertiary Students (JUTS)

- Mr. Everton Rattray, President
- Ms. Christina Williams, Vice President

Church and Trust Schools

- Anglican Schools: Most Rev. Howard Gregory, Archbishop of the West Indies
- United Church of Jamaica: Rev. Dr. Gordon Cowans, Moderator of United Church of Jamaica & the Cayman Islands
- Methodist Church Schools - Bishop Christine Benguche, Head of the Methodist Church - Jamaica Methodist District
- Trust Schools: Dr. Brian Morgan, Leader of Trust Schools in Jamaica

University Council of Jamaica (UCJ)

- Professor Errol Morrison, Chairman
- Mrs. Althea Heron, Executive Director

Students' Loan Bureau (SLB)

- Mr. Nicholas Scott, Chairman
- Mrs. Charmaine Rose Anderson, Deputy Executive Director

Northern Caribbean University (NCU)

- Dr. Lincoln Edwards, President

The Caribbean Maritime University

- Professor Gordon Shirley, Chairman
- Professor Evan Duggan, Interim President

National Secondary Students Council

- Mr. Cheslan Douglas (President)
- Mr. Jadon Hewitt (General Secretary)
- Ms. Ree-Anna Robinson (PRO) Immaculate Conception High School
- Mr. Jamaul Hall, Munro College
- Mr. Ajae Clacken, Munro College
- Mr. Nichardo James, Spanish Town High School
- Mr. Orane Hanson, Manchester High School,

Jamaica Prefects' Association:

- Mr. Michael Forbes, Outgoing President
- Mr. Shemar Grant, Outgoing Region 6 Vice President

Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)

- Ms. Cynthia Hobbs, Lead Education Specialist
- Dr. Diether Mendoza Beuermann, Lead Economist, Caribbean Country Department
- Ms. Sabine Rieble-Aubourg, Lead Education Specialist
- Ms. Augustina Thailinger, Economist
- Ms. Adrianna Viteri, Education Economist
- Mr. Gregory Elacqua, Principal Education Economist
- Ms. Carolina Mendez, Education Specialist

Early Childhood Commission

- Mrs. Trisha Williams-Singh, Chairman
- Mrs. Karlene Degrasse-Deslandes, Chief Executive Officer

United Nations Children’s Emergency Fund

- Ms. Mariko Kagoshima, Head of UNICEF
- Dr. Rebecca Tortello, Education Specialist, UNICEF

Private Sector Organisation of Jamaica (PSOJ)

- Mr. Keith Duncan - President, PSOJ
- Ms. Jacqueline Sharp - Vice President, PSOJ
- Mrs. Greta Bogues – Chief Executive Officer, PSOJ
- Ms. Eva Lewis - Honorary Secretary, PSOJ
- Mrs. Mariame McIntosh Robinson - Vice President, PSOJ
- Ms. Melanie Subrati - Vice President, Jamaica Chamber of Commerce
- Mr. David Wan - President, Jamaica Employers’ Federation
- Mr. Richard Pandohie - President, Jamaica Manufacturers and Exporters Association
- Ms. Gloria Henry - President, Business Process Industry Association of Jamaica
- Mr. Clifton Reader - President, Jamaica Hotel & Tourist Association
- Ms. Lois Walters - President, Human Resource Management Association of Jamaica

Independent Schools Association

- Dr. Faithlyn Wilson, President

The World Bank

- Mr. Shawn Powers, Economist, World Bank Education Global Practice
- Ms. Ingrid Bjerke, Co-led the Early Childhood Development Project

Tufts University

- Professor Marina Bers, Chair, Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Study and Human Development, Tufts University
- Eliot-Pearson, Chair, Department of Child Study and Human Development

Other Stakeholders

- Ms. Jean Hastings, Former Executive Director, Education System Transformation Programm
- Mr. Chris Treadwell Former Assistant Deputy Minister, Province of New Brunswick, Canada
- Mr. Gunther Neubert, Managing Director, German Chamber of Commerce Abroad
- Dr. Herbert Gayle, Youth, Violence Specialist

Appendix 3: Co-opted Members – Subcommittees

Tertiary

- Mrs. Maxine Henry Wilson, Former Minister of Education
- Mr. Damion Brown, Group Chief Investments Officer, JMMB
- Dr. Adian McFarlane, Asst. Prof. of Economics, King’s University College at Western University

Governance, Administration, Leadership and Legislation

- Mrs. Lisa Soares, Founder/CEO Great People Solutions (G.P.S.) Limited

Teaching, Curriculum and Teacher Training

- Mr. Carlyle Thompson, Principal, Southborough Primary
- Dr. Steven G Kerr, Board Member, Sam Sharpe Teachers' College
- Ms. Sian Williams, Specialist, Early Childhood Development
- Dr. Renee Rattray, Education Consultant
- Dr. Carmel Roofe, Deputy Dean Graduate Studies and Research, Faculty of Humanities and Education, UWI Mona, Curriculum and Instruction Specialist
- Dr. Marcia Rainford, Director, School of Education, Faculty of Humanities and Education, UWI Mona
- Dr. Rebecca Tortello, Education Specialist, UNICEF Jamaica
- Dr. Marsha Smalling, Principal, Glenmuir High School
- Ms. Kelly Magnus, Jamaica Country Lead, Fight for Peace
- Mrs. Terry Ann Collins-Fray, Faculty of Science and Technology, The UWI, Mona (Secretary)

Finance

- Mrs. Sheryl Brown-Wray, Director, Budgets, MoEYI
- Mr Rohan Purcell, Regional Financial Controller, Region 2, MoEYI

Technical and Vocational Education and Training

- Mr. George Lewis, Principal, Rodger Clarke High School
- Dr. Kethurah Williams-Howell, STEM and Education Consultant
- Professor Halden Morris, Retired Professor, UWI / Electrical Engineer
- Ms. Priscilla Deans, Monitoring & Evaluation Manager
- Dr. Carolyn Hayle, Former Executive Director HEART/Formal Chairman UCJ
- Ms. Andria Givans, Principal, Naggo Head Primary School

Infrastructure and Technology

- Mrs. Maureen Wong, Principal, St. Richards Primary/Acting Education Officer, MoEYI
- Professor David McBean, Executive Director, Mona School of Business and Management
- Mr. Junior Bennett, Lecturer, Industrial Engineering Department, UTech

Office of the Prime Minister

- Mr. Alok Jain, Consultant
- Ms. Merle Donaldson, Chief of Staff

Secretariat:

- Mrs. Dillette Hope-Webb Director, School Feeding, ZBB Project, MoEYI
- Ms. Stephanie Sewell, Senior Consulting Officer, JETC Secretariat
- Ms. Christal Parris-Campbell, Jamaica House Fellow, OPM

Interns/Research Assistants

- Ms. Alexia Craig
- Ms. Erica Harris
- Mr. Travis Barrett
- Mr. Lance Scott
- Mr. Kenneil Jackson

Vision

Transforming our Education System to Enable All Jamaicans to Fulfil Their Potential and Contribute to Jamaica's Development in the 21st Century.