

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this booklet is to provide answers to some of the many questions asked by teachers who serve the Department of Education.

The conditions of service for Government Officers, instructions for the conduct of public business, the code of discipline, and other matters are embodied in **The Bahamas Government General Orders**. This document enables officers to readily understand their rights and obligations and the conditions of service generally. Some of the information on the following pages can also be found in **General Orders**.

GENERAL BACKGROUND

The Commonwealth of The Bahamas, an archipelago of predominantly narrow, low-lying islands, spreads over some 100,000 square miles in the western Atlantic Ocean just south of Florida. The total land area is approximately 5,350 square miles. There are twenty-two (22) inhabited islands, and transportation between the islands is often by air, although frequent use is also made of the inter-island mail boat services.

The Department of Education in The Bahamas is, therefore, faced with the task of providing education for a school population scattered over wide areas.

The summer months are often hot and humid. Hurricanes or tropical storms have been known to frequent the area. The conditions imposed by the geography of the country are therefore very different from those to which many non-Bahamian teachers are accustomed. Moreover, conditions in the two (2) most heavily populated islands, namely New Providence and Grand Bahama, differ in many respects from those prevailing in the other islands.

By comparison with North America, living costs are high and accommodation is expensive. In the Family Islands, accommodation for teachers is subsidized by the Government. Teachers from the United Kingdom and North America should be prepared for a different lifestyle from that experienced in their respective countries.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Ministry/Department of Education is to provide opportunities for all persons in The Bahamas to receive the education and training that will equip them with the necessary beliefs, attitudes, knowledge and skills required for work and life in an interdependent, ever changing world.

PHILOSOPHY AND BELIEF STATEMENTS

Education in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas is the principal vehicle for promoting the development of individuals and the nation as a whole. It is essential to enhancing the quality of life of our people.

It reflects our nation's ideals, values, beliefs and customs. It affirms that all human beings have an undeniable right to an education, one that will enable them to understand their privileges and responsibilities in the community.

Its specific focus is to prepare youth to become active citizens who will become a caring and compassionate people, and who, as life long learners, will continue to improve the quality of life for themselves and others.

Hence, the philosophy, which under girds the education policies and informs the provision of education, formal and non-formal, in The Bahamas is grounded in the following principles. :

- a. a belief in the intrinsic worth of every human being and the protection of human rights;
- b. a belief that all people should have the right to an education which fosters a sense of self-worth and an improved quality of life that will enable them to be fulfilled at all stages of their lives;
- c. a conviction that educators, parents, students, young adults and the wider community must share with the government the responsibility for the success of the educational enterprise.
- d. an uncompromising commitment to the pursuit of

excellence by teachers, trainers, learners and all who are associated with these educational enterprises;

- e. a belief in the ability of the teaching/learning process to unlock and draw out the fullest potential of the individual;
- f. a belief in the value of the differing gifts and aptitudes of individuals, and in the importance of these differences in an inter-dependent society;
- g. an appreciation of the significance and value of the rich diversity of The Bahamas and its people, and of the responsibility of the educational process to reflect and respond to that diversity; with tolerance and understanding;
- h. an appreciation of the natural and cultural heritage of The Bahamas;
- i. a recognition of the obligation of all citizens to contribute positively to their society, and of their right to enjoy its benefits;
- j. a commitment to those qualities which are recognized in the preamble to the Constitution of The Bahamas as being essential to the preservation of the freedom of our people:

“self-discipline, loyalty, unity and an abiding respect for Christian values and the rule of law “
- k. a belief in those principles of democracy upon which our independent nation was established and which ought to be reflected in all aspects of the education process; and
- l. a recognition of The Bahamas as part of a wider world community which it must value and with which it must interact productively;

GOALS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF BAHAMAS

PRIMARY GOAL: To ensure that all persons in the commonwealth of The

Bahamas develop physically, mentally, socially and spiritually in order to function responsibly and productively in an increasingly, dynamic, scientific, technological and complex society.

To achieve the primary goal of the Department of Education the following sub-goals have been established.

SUB-GOALS:

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

1. To provide high quality teaching/learning experiences which foster functional literacy, promote tolerance, discipline and responsibility; and meet the academic and vocational needs of all persons.

ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

2. To strengthen the capacity of the Department to plan, manage and evaluate the education system more effectively making it more responsive to national/global development.

HUMAN AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

3. To provide opportunities for professional growth, foster teamwork, strengthen communication and establish competency within the Department workforce and throughout the community.

PARTNERSHIPS

4. To strengthen linkages at the national, regional and international levels to promote the development of the education system and youth programmes.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

5. To provide an integrated approach to Information Communication Technology to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the administrative process to support and enhance educational programmes.

PRESERVATION AND PROTECTION OF CULTURAL PROPERTIES

6. To preserve and make accessible the literary, documentary and cultural heritage of the Bahamas and promote literacy for all.

EDUCATIONAL POLICY AND OBJECTIVES

Educational Policy in The Bahamas is mainly embodied in the **Education Act 1962**, (*Statute Law, Revised Edition 1996*), which contains provisions regarding the central

administration of education under the Ministry of Education, the Statutory System of Education, Independent Schools and other General Provisions.

Under the **Education Act**, the Minister of Education holds responsibility for providing resources and services for all maintained schools. Currently there are two hundred and six (206) schools of which one hundred and sixty one (161) are maintained.

Among the provisions mentioned in the **Education Act**, the following are especially worthy of note:-

Section 4:

1. The duties of the Minister shall be to promote the education of the people of The Bahamas by the progressive development, in so far as the resources of the Minister permit, of schools and other educational establishments devoted to that end.
2. The purpose of such development shall be to enable the children of The Bahamas to understand their privileges and responsibilities as members of the community, to contribute to the progress and well-being of the country by the full development of their natural abilities and to earn an adequate livelihood as adults.
3. It shall be the duty of parents of every child of compulsory school age to cause him to receive full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Government has always viewed education as one of the vital elements in the drive for economic growth, social justice and equality, and the general improvement of the way of life for all Bahamians. Our education policy reflects our national policy and objectives, which have been enunciated as follows:

- the quest for greater self-sufficiency;
- the security of our people;
- the enrichment of a sense of the dignity of labour;
- national pride and loyalty;
- the development of personal attributes based on Judeo-Christian values.

The Statutory Education System is organized in four (4) progressive stages:

Primary
Junior High,
Senior High, and
Further or Tertiary

Many children entering primary school would have received pre-school experiences.

It is realized that the early experiences of a child are important to the child's future educational development. Hence, the Ministry continues to assist operators of pre-schools to implement programmes, which enable young children to develop readiness skills for formal education. The Ministry has also attached pre-school units to selected primary schools in New Providence, Grand Bahama and some Family Islands.

Primary level education aims at achieving literacy and numeracy skills as well as inculcating social skills, positive attitudes and a sense of cultural identity. The objectives are to provide a programme with a definable six (6) year scope and sequential framework and to develop in pupils a constructive attitude towards self, towards learning and towards their country.

Junior and Senior schools are comprehensive in nature and programmes cater to the complete range of abilities and aptitudes so that they reflect and minister to the needs and aspirations of the wider society. To this end, academic and fine arts courses, as well as pre-vocational experiences in subjects such as hotel catering, business studies and the industrial arts are included in the school curriculum.

Further education studies are available at The College of The Bahamas, the apex of our educational system. Its purpose is to provide a comprehensive national and community-oriented programme. The College of The Bahamas Act (1995) has established the College as an autonomous four-year degree granting institution, with effect from 1 July 1995.

The objectives of The College of The Bahamas include:

- a. the advancement of the intellectual, social and cultural life of all Bahamians;
- b. the advancement of knowledge about the promotion of the understanding of the Bahamian society;

- c. the provision of a centre of research and development in The Bahamas;
- d. ensuring that further education is geared to the manpower requirements of the Country.

Over the last twenty-three (23) years much expansion has taken place in terms of physical facilities and school programmes. This has been in keeping with our national and educational policy with regard to the development of our human resources. The Bahamas continues to consider education as an investment in its citizens, as it believes that lasting economic growth will be determined by the skills and attitudes of its citizens throughout The Commonwealth.

The Education Act makes provisions for compulsory education for pupils between the ages of five and sixteen (5 & 16) years, but pupils who have attained the age of sixteen (16) years and who are capable of benefitting from the type of education and instruction available, are allowed with the permission of the Director of Education, to remain at school until their nineteenth (19th) birthday.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

The Ministry of Education has responsibility for all educational institutions in The Commonwealth of The Bahamas.

The primary level covers grades one to six (1 - 6), after which pupils transfer to the Junior High level (*grades 7 - 9*) and then to Senior High (*grades 10 - 12*). These levels are fairly distinct in Ministry of Education schools in New Providence with slight variation in Ministry of Education Family Island schools, where some All-Age

schools remain.

Schools are categorized as follows:

Pre-School	Ages 4 to 5
Primary	Ages 5 to 11+
Junior High	Ages 11+ to 14+
Senior High	Ages 14+ to 16+
All-Age	Ages 5+ to 16+
Special Schools	All ages, catering to students having severe learning disabilities

There are two hundred and six (206) schools (*including pre-schools*) in the school system of The Bahamas - one hundred and sixty one (161) are fully maintained by Government and forty-five (45) are independent schools. Of the one hundred and sixty-one Government schools, fifty (50) are situated on New Providence and one hundred and eleven (111) are in the Family Islands.

Appendices i, ii and iii show the level and distribution of Government and Independent schools.

DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION

Up to 1945, the progress of education in The Bahamas was closely tied to that of the economy. Periods of economic prosperity saw attendant progress in education, while lack of progress or even regression was, in part, the result of economic stagnation. Additionally, the period was characterized by the existence of poorly equipped teachers and the non-existence of a system for upgrading teaching skills. The late 1950's saw the development of tourism and with it some advances in education.

A positive step was taken to improve teacher training in 1950 with the opening of a Teachers' Training College. However, this was short-lived and the College closed its doors in 1957. Teachers were then sent to the United Kingdom for training. A new Teachers' College was established in 1961. The establishment of The Training College was one of the many recommendations of the **1958 Houghton Report**, which also led to the passing of the 1962 Education Act.

Internal self-government was achieved in 1964 and in 1967 majority rule was ushered in. This political change had far-reaching effects on the development of education. With the achievement of full internal self-government in 1964, the Government embarked upon a determined course of assessment and reassessment of its educational system by local and foreign experts. The **Hope Report** of 1968 considered the development of secondary education in The Bahamas; the **Leys Report** of 1968 examined the development of The College of The Bahamas; and the **Williams Report** of 1969 produced a document on the future direction of technical education in The Bahamas.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

(a) Teachers are expected to:

1. Attend school every day, attend PTA Meetings, School Assemblies, Open House, Parent Days, House Meetings and other school functions.
2. Be punctual to school, classes and special functions.
3. Set appropriate instructional objectives relevant to lesson content; prepare necessary teaching aids and methods within a specified time.
4. Cover content within a specified time using appropriate questioning

techniques, teaching aids, providing for group and individual work and assistance.

5. Encourage maximum student participation through oral, aural, written or practical activities in the classroom, on field trips as well as home assignments.
6. Check notebooks regularly; set, conduct and grade pre and post test units to determine the extent to which the student has mastered material taught.
7. Encourage acceptable behaviour, class attendance, punctuality, adequate preparation, and proper care of materials and equipment.
8. Maintain appropriate interpersonal relationships with students, colleagues, administrators and parents.
9. Maintain overall classroom organisation and management conducive to the learning environment, e.g.: furniture arrangement, display of students' work.
10. Update and maintain all required records, e.g.: schemes of work, lesson plans, forecasts, mark books and class registers.
11. Perform all the duties of a homeroom teacher if so assigned.
12. Cover classes during the absence of other teachers.
13. Maximize the total development of the student by creating a learning environment through the use of extrinsic rewards (*stars, merits, stamps, display of work, certificates, etc.*) and encourage development of intrinsic behaviour such as self-esteem/self-worth.
14. Participate in at least one (*I*) workshop per year and keep abreast of current trends in education.

(b) Department Heads are expected to:

1. Act as the Department's instructional and Administrative Leader.
2. Design curricular materials for the department.

3. Organize content materials for teachers in the department.
4. Assist/advise and consults the Principal on matters related to departmental schedules.
5. Develop and evaluate new and special programmes.
6. Plan and assess departmental needs.
7. Supervise teachers and students under his/her charge.
8. Co-ordinate and supervise all departmental examinations and tests.
9. Assist with school discipline.
10. Call regular departmental meetings and conferences.
11. Keep departmental records.
12. Assist with other duties that may be assigned.

(c) **Senior Masters/Mistresses are expected to:**

1. Assist with all matters related to the school.
2. Assist with assemblies.
3. Assist with Discipline.
4. Supervise Lunch Vendors, Yard Duty and Security Staff.
5. Prepare for emergencies/Staff Meetings.
6. Assist with Special Events, viz: Fun Day, Speech Day, etc.

7. Assist with School Clubs, House System, Prefects, Student Council and Committees.
8. Assist with Staff and Organization Cards and Class Registers.
9. Assist with examinations.
10. Assist with Physical Plant and Furniture.
11. Assist with other duties the Principal may assign.

(d) Year Heads are expected to:

1. Monitor classes in his/her assigned level (Year) to determine the needs of students.
2. Advise guidance counselors, administrators, teachers and school welfare officers about the special needs of deprived students (socio economic).
3. Encourage academic and social growth of students.
4. Monitor the attendance of students and ascertain the reasons from parents of chronic absentees.
5. Liaise with Heads of Departments in developing grade level competitions.
6. Co-ordinate Year Assemblies to:
 - a. motivate students as well as to re-enforce the goals of the school;
 - b. develop a sense of cohesiveness within the grade levels;
 - c. address common problems or issues of students who are at similar levels of maturation;
 - d. recognize and reward deserving students;
7. Supervise after school detentions. To ensure the areas occupied by and

adjacent to the assigned grade level are kept clean.

8. Publish Honour Roll and Principal List for grade level.
9. Assist with discipline.
10. Initiate at least one major program for the term.
11. Assist with other duties that may be assigned.

(d) Team Leaders – (TEAM TEACHING SCHOOLS) are expected to:

1. Plan and ensure that suitable work is provided for all ability groups.
2. Lead in evaluating teaching activities. Exercise supervision over the teaching and non-teaching staff attached to the centre, and contribute to and encourage the academic and professional development of the team.
3. Implement the prescribed basic curriculum and make appropriate proposals pertaining to it.
4. Be responsible for organizing substitutions for absent teachers in the centre.
5. Assume responsibility for administrative matters in the centre.
6. Obtain adequate supplies for the daily operation of the centre
7. Assume responsibility for the overall discipline of the centre
8. Act as a custodian of all government property including school supplies and equipment, and report building defects in the centre to the Senior Mistress/Senior Master.
9. Assist with other duties the Principal/Vice Principal/Senior Master/Mistress may assign.

The Senior Teacher is expected to, in addition to carrying out the duties and responsibilities of Trained Teacher II.

1. Undertake subject – specific research.
2. Design and develop school – based and national curriculum guidelines.
3. Assist with the professional development activities at school, district and national levels.
4. Be a resource person for the areas of subject specific resource material, current teaching and learning strategies and quality record-keeping, classroom management and lesson preparation techniques.
5. Assist with the design and development of grade level assessment tests and alternative assessments.
6. Assist with scheduling, teacher supervision and program/curriculum evaluation.
7. Assist with the establishment of school goals VISION MISSION statements, and instructional policies.
8. Supervise teaching practice or practical.
9. Subscribe to journal, periodicals, etc.
10. Submit (at the end of each academic year) a portfolio reflecting the following:
 - (i) Research undertaken and the subsequent findings
 - (ii) Copies of the curriculum modules, learning and teaching resource materials developed.
 - (iii) Lists of the
 - a. Professional Development activities organized, facilitated or participated in
 - b. Journals/periodicals/newspapers to which

Subscription/contributions were made

c. Educational Partnerships established

(iv) Design & Implementation procedures of the Projects undertaken.

In addition to the duties and responsibilities outlines for the Senior Teacher, the **Master Teacher** is expected to:

1. Be the academic and professional leader in planning, instruction classroom management and curriculum matters.
2. Develop and co-ordinate mentoring programmes for beginning teachers and staff members who require on-the-job assistance.
3. Lead the development of the Vision/Mission Statements, instructional policies/procedures and school-based/national curriculum guidelines.
4. Develop and pilot curriculum modules, remediation and enhancement programmes to complement existing courses.
5. Establish partnerships with schools/districts to promote networking and teacher/student exchanges.
6. Lead professional development activities that ensure teacher awareness of and sensitivity to current issues and recent innovations in education.
7. Undertake specific school/district based projects (individually or as a group) related to:
 - Attitudinal surveys
 - Action research or intervention in the classroom
 - Best practices
 - Current Instructional practices
 - Curriculum/Evaluation Alignment
 - Methods for improving and assessing student achievement
8. Lead in the establishment of criteria for high-performing/quality schools.

9. Develop and revise performance appraisals for evaluating teacher effectiveness and promoting teacher development.
10. Contribute to journals, newspapers etc., publish educational materials, participate in professional development seminars, and present research findings to relevant stakeholders.
11. Submit (at the end of each academic year) a portfolio reflecting the following:
 - (i) Research undertaken and the subsequent findings
 - (ii) Copies of the curriculum modules, learning and teaching resource materials developed.
 - (iii) Lists of the
 - d. Professional development activities organized facilitated or participated in
 - e. Journals/periodicals/newspapers to which subscriptions/contributions were made
 - f. 5Educational partnerships established
 - (iv) Design & implementation procedures of the projects undertaken.

II GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

Guidance Counsellor

Guidance and Counselling is a developmental process aimed at helping each student make wise decisions, and suitable educational and occupational goals, and resolve, and cope with, or overcome personal problems.

The various aspects of Guidance are:

Educational
Vocational
Personal and Social

The role of the Guidance counsellor is to

provide students with a service which directly supports and compliments the work of the classroom teachers.

Their duties are to:

1. Work with administrators, teachers, students and parents in acquiring a better understanding of students; needs and how to deal with them.
2. Liaise with administrators and teachers about performances of students and the implementation of programmes geared to helping students with educational, vocational, personal and social problems.
3. Participate in Parent/Teacher Conferences and give assistance in regard to interpretation of students' grades and possible reasons for lack of motivation and progress in school work.
4. Arrange with administrators and teachers to visit classes in an effort to motivate students toward higher academic achievements.
5. Provide students with information on topics that would enhance their overall development.
6. Arrange for resource persons to discuss topics related to the overall welfare and well-being of students.
7. Keep abreast of job demands and guide students in the development of their special talents and abilities accordingly.
8. Assist the Principal in providing school transcripts, and give guidance in regard to completion of students' confidential cards.

9. Collect and maintain current materials on educational, occupational and personal/social topics for students references.
10. Liaise with Social Workers, School Nurse, School Doctor, School Psychologist and Speech Therapists in matters pertaining to individual students.
11. Initiate with appropriate professional personnel, case conferences in an effort to bring about better understanding of a problem and arrive at a workable solution.
12. Participate in promotional and student placement exercises.
13. Assist in identifying students with learning difficulties.
14. Help the student adjust to changes and pressures of adolescence.
15. Assist with the administration, supervision and interpretation of tests and questionnaires, which relate to the student.
16. Motivate students to seek counselling on their own volition through a creative and continuous programme of orientation to counselling.
17. Sensitize the community and civic organizations to the needs of students in an effort to gain their support and involvement.
18. Conduct research designed to measure the effectiveness of individual and group counseling and other guidance services in promoting the maturity and educational development of students.
19. Assist with other duties that may be assigned.

IV LIBRARY PERSONNEL (Teacher Librarian - Library Clerks)

The Library is an information centre, therefore it should be organized and managed to provide a good source of information for students and teachers.

At primary level, library instruction should be informal and be integrated into the regular visits by students who go to the library to do research or get a book to read. The librarian should take advantage of working with each student to solve an information based problem and in doing so to help the student learn library skills.

Students entering high schools should have already acquired the research and study skills they need and should only require an orientation or refresher programme at the beginning of the year in order to acquaint themselves with the school library and its operation.

Duties and responsibilities include:

1. Organizing and managing the school Library. Keeping the shelves in order. Creating and updating the Display board. Organizing the work spaces to attract and support students who want to work there.
2. Working with teachers in order to support their information needs in support of the curriculum.
3. Preparing an orientation programme that shows students how the library functions. This should be very brief.
4. In concert with teachers, gathering of materials that support projects or assignments.
5. Supervising the clerical and sub-clerical staff in their work in the library.
6. Providing support for students as they search for materials needed to do the assignments given by teachers. In doing so, informally teach them to use the library properly.
7. Providing interesting leisure reading materials for students.
8. Promote leisure reading in the school.
9. Teaching library skills and supervising the clerical and sub-

clerical staff in their delivery of library instructions.

10. Attending staff meetings and planning sessions so as to be conversant with staff and students' needs and to be able to advise on library resources/services available.
11. Cataloging and classifying collections in accordance with Ministry of Education policies.
12. Maintaining a card catalogue of holdings.
13. Selecting a loan system to meet unique needs of the school as well as Ministry of Education requirements.
14. Selecting and acquiring materials to meet needs of students and staff (educational, informational, recreational).
15. Promoting library through such vehicles as displays, book fairs, select bibliographies, brochures, orientation for target groups.
16. Producing materials to augment library use.
17. Preparing and submitting end of term statistics and annual reports on library activities (or as required by Ministry regulations).
18. Performing other duties that may be assigned

It is desirable for the school library to be available to students and staff before and after school, during break periods, and at lunch times. To facilitate this, staff must be able to take their break and lunch periods, either before or after the regular times - this usually translates into limited time-tabling of the library just before or just after lunch.

Clerical Library staff are expected to observe the same hours as other administrative personnel, so most libraries should be open until 4:00 p.m.

The Teacher Librarian may be a professional librarian or a Trained Teacher

with additional qualifications or expertise in Library Science.

THE CURRICULUM

**..... Promoting the intellectual, emotional,
social, & physical well-being of each child.....**

The Curriculum, which determines the citizens of tomorrow, is the heart of the education system. It caters to the development of the students' intelligence, attitudes, knowledge and values. It is a flexible and relevant document, which articulates what students are expected to know and be able to do at various points in their school lives. In addition to these expectations or goals, the curriculum includes recommended teaching and learning resources and activities and suggested assessment practices.

The Department is aware that a significant gap exists between the *taught* and the *learned* curriculum; that the *tested* curriculum strongly influences what is actually taught and that what students actually learn is affected by the attitude of both teachers and students.

As we in the Department seek to make school learning more productive and meaningful, and as we seek to help students acquire the competence to be active, valued members of their communities, we have developed through community support, quality curricula which reflect a deep understanding of students' needs and abilities.

The curricula at both primary and high school levels attempt to provide a *goodness of fit* between what students are learning in school and the interests and demands of their lives outside school. Each curriculum promotes opportunities for teachers to respond to students' intelligences, learning styles and learning preferences.

As each curriculum is based on the expectation that all students can achieve the learning goals at all levels, all teachers are encouraged to become creative and flexible and to use the curriculum to build students' competence in the activities of real life. Teachers are expected to ensure that our children can *make sound decisions, read critically, work collaboratively and think globally.*

Developing the curriculum for the thirty-three (33) subjects being offered in our schools is the responsibility of officers in the Humanities, Technical/Vocational, and the Science and Technology Sections. The **Humanities** subjects are *Language Arts, Visual Arts, Spanish, French, Social Studies, Religious Studies, Health and Family Life, Performing Arts, History, Geography, Civics*. Subjects in **Technical/Vocational** are *Commerce, Accounts, Typewriting, Technical Drawing, Carpentry, Electrical Installation, Auto Mechanics, Plumbing, Welding, Masonry, Home Economics, Hospitality & Training, Cosmetology, Computer Studies, Office Procedures, Economics, Electronics, Small Engine Repair and Cluster/Modular Program*. *Mathematics, the Sciences, Agriculture, and Physical Education* make up the **Science & Technology** component.

The following **overviews** highlight the instructional and assessment expectations for each Subject:

THE HUMANITIES SECTION



LANGUAGE ARTS

Language Arts is the core of the curriculum. The ultimate aim of a Language Arts programme is to prepare students to communicate effectively in speech and writing. A strong language programme is essential and should reflect:

- Teaching styles that complement students' learning styles;
- Meaningful experiences pertaining to Bahamian and global situations;
- Opportunities for collaborative learning experiences;
- Opportunities to express self;
- The use of technology;
- Good teacher language modeling; and
- Parent / sibling involvement in literacy-related activities.

In preschool, primary and high schools Language Arts skills are developed along a continuum. It is therefore of vital importance that teachers become more proficient in Language Arts instruction, make classrooms language-rich, schedule instruction appropriately and use relevant materials. The Language Arts teacher should provide students with a clear purpose for learning. Students should see and make the connections between real life situations and what they are learning, - listening, speaking, viewing, reading, writing, grammar and usage, handwriting and literature.

Teaching should be student-centered. Through the administration of various types of Language Arts related assessments (individually and group- administered), teachers should diagnose the needs, prescribe what is needed, and establish flexible learning communities where students' strengths are built upon and their weaknesses addressed. In these communities students should be provided with opportunities to develop language skills in challenging and interesting simulated and "real life" experiences, if they are to become effective listeners, prolific writers and fluent speakers. It is also essential for students to distinguish between Bahamian dialect and Standard English. Every effort must be made for students to receive adequate practice in the oral use of Standard English. This type of interaction will enhance students' social skills, and allow them to acquire healthy self-concepts and much needed language confidence.

At every level, Language Arts should be taught in an integrated manner and reinforced in content area subjects. This integration should be encouraged through the block scheduling of strands. Ideally, these blocks should be scheduled during the first periods of the day.

Teachers should aim to integrate Literature in the development of other Language Arts skills. Through exposure to Literature students will, among other things, develop critical thinking skills, appreciate the universality of human emotions and values, and experience a deeper understanding of themselves and others.

The physical layout, instructional charts, games and students' work should reflect what is currently being taught. The reading corner should offer a variety of materials from which students can choose. These may include, but are certainly not limited to, picture books, chapter books, stories, informational books (content related, language arts related, biographies), poetry books, newspapers, magazines, flyers and brochures. Many textbooks are available to assist in the teaching of Language Arts. Recognizing the availability of print and non-print materials that may be used during Language Arts instruction, teachers are encouraged not to become textbook addicts.

Students at the primary and high school levels write national examinations. Third and sixth grade students sit the *Grade Level Assessment Test* (GLAT). Both examinations

assess listening and reading comprehension and written communication. Additionally, at the third grade level, grammar and usage, and spelling skills are assessed in separate components. At the end of the ninth and twelfth grades, students write the Bahamas Junior Certificate (BJC) and the Bahamas General Certificate of Secondary Education (BGCSE) Examinations respectively. Both Examinations assess listening, reading comprehension, and written communication.

Literature is normally assessed as a separate component during internal and school-based national examinations. Situations vary for the two national examinations, the Bahamas Junior Certificate (BJC) and the Bahamas General Certificate of Secondary Education (BGCSE). AT the BJC level, assessment of literary skills is included in the Literary Appreciation section of the Language examination. At the BGCSE level, Literature is written as a separate subject with emphasis on response to an unseen extract, set texts and the production of a Coursework Folder.

Indeed, Language Arts is the pathway to literacy. The diligent teacher will seek to creatively develop language confidence through a variety of techniques and strategies.



HEALTH AND FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION (HFLE)

The overall goal of Health and Family Life Education is to empower children and youth to make life-enhancing choices, which they will carry into adulthood.

Instructional Process

Health and Family Life Education is a comprehensive, life-skilled based curriculum which is taught from grades one through twelve. Aspects of HFLE are incorporated in the Pre-school curriculum. HFLE is divided into three (3) major components, one of which is taught each term.

Example: (Term 1 The Family, Term 2 Health and Well-Being, Term 3 Community Living)

The Health and Family Life Education Curriculum includes instruction, as is appropriate for the age of the student, in areas such as the family structure, family roles and responsibilities, growth and development, human sexuality, disease control and prevention, substance abuse prevention and managing the environment.

The fostering of laudable attitudes and values is set alongside the knowledge component, and the emphasis is on helping children develop the personal and social

skills they need to become responsible, independent and contributing adults. These life-skills include problem-solving, decision-making, Critical and creative thinking, self-awareness, the ability to empathize, coping with emotions and resistance skills.

Evaluation Procedures

In Health and Family Life Education classes, students and educators are afforded the opportunity to explore life together in a positive learning environment. Teachers are expected to evaluate student performance throughout the year and submit a grade, which will contribute toward the student's GPA. The following evaluation teaching strategies are recommended but should not be viewed as exhaustive in addressing the needs of different kinds of learners.

- Projects (encouraging creative expression)
- Research (providing key information)
- Post-tests, Pretests, Quizzes
- Portfolios (organizing key information)
- Games (developing critical thinking/problem solving skills)
- Role Play (developing critical thinking/problem solving skills)
- Written and Artistic Expression (sharing thoughts, feelings and opinions)
- Field Trips

Health and Family Life Education Services

The Health and Family Life Education Unit provides a number of services through the Adolescent Health Education Programme in New Providence and the Family Islands. These include workshops and sensitization sessions for teachers, parents, student peer leadership training and informational booklets on health issues for the wider community.

The activities of the Health and Family Life Education Unit, the home, school and community all combine to provide students with the required knowledge, skills, values and attitudes so that they are able to graduate from the education system as fully functioning, self-confident, responsible

individuals and citizens.

ART & DESIGN PROGRAMME



‘Art Education is for all students. It provides learning opportunities for the artistically talented, as well as the many students who may never produce art outside the classroom’.

Students also have the opportunity to demonstrate their multiple intelligences every day as they practice problem solving and critical thinking, and learn about history and culture through art.

The Art and Design programme includes fine arts, graphical design, observational study, art appreciation and creative crafts. Art is a form of communication and a means of expressing ideas and feelings. Art and Design can complement literature, mathematics and science by developing visual perceptions and aesthetic experiences and the broadening of cultural horizons.

In Fine Arts students are exposed to aspects of line, form, shape, interrelationship of objects, composition including perspective and the development of depth and texture by the use of colour and tone. In Graphical Design students work on patterns as developed through line and form, which involves letter formation as used for logos, posters signs and book jackets. Observational Study covers studies of natural and man made forms. Art appreciation examines all areas of art history, with an emphasis on the works of Bahamian arts and crafts persons.

Students are exposed to both the indigenous crafts and international crafts in the Creative Craft section of the programme. The indigenous crafts include straw, shell, junkanoo, pottery, quilting, Spanish work and carving. The international crafts include jewellery making, batik, tie dying, printing, stained glass, puppetry, macramé, string art and photography.

Students are prepared for the National Examinations in Art and Design, the Bahamas Junior Certificate (BJC) grade 9 and the Bahamas General Certificate of Secondary Education (BGCSE) grade 12.



MODERN LANGUAGES

The Modern Language curricula are designed to provide students with target language competence by developing the four communicative skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Cognizant of the fact that no language is static, and given the interdependence between language and culture, the curricula also aim to develop an awareness and appreciation of the evolving nature of the language as well as of the diverse cultures found in Hispanic and Francophone communities.

PRIMARY SPANISH:

At present, there are Spanish teachers in all primary schools in New Providence and the principal Family Islands. At this level, students are offered Spanish instruction in Grades 4-6. Grade 3 students may be offered Spanish in instances where the school population is very small. The Primary Spanish curriculum guideline emphasizes listening and speaking -the first two of the four skills developed during normal linguistic progression.

Extended research on second language acquisition has shown that children at the primary school level - ages 6 to 11 - are more receptive to foreign language studies than older children. Some of the research findings include: 1) children's ability to master the pronunciation of the language being studied; 2) students' heightened sensitivity to, and appreciation of other cultures; and 3) greater cognitive development with higher order thinking.

Teachers of Spanish at the primary level are encouraged to focus on these two skills, but not to the exclusion of the reading and writing skills. Emphasis is to be placed on the development of these two skills through:

- ü Songs - carefully chosen for content, pronunciation practice and cultural insights
- ü Rhymes - also carefully chosen for content, stress and rhythm
- ü Drama/Role Playing

The *!Viva el Español!* series of textbooks, workbooks and audiotapes is available to facilitate the instructional programme. Basic materials such as tape recorders, text-related tapes, blank tapes, charts and flash cards are provided by the Department of Education. Teachers are expected to make good use of audio and visual aids. Some schools provide television monitors and access to computers. Teachers are encouraged to be innovative in their preparation of instructional aids.

Classroom assessment should be well correlated with classroom instruction, reflecting the emphasis on the development of speaking and listening skills. Classroom experiences should provide students with the skills that they will require in order to interpret assessment instruments accurately and perform proficiently.

As with all language learning experiences, the Primary Spanish classroom is to have an anxiety-free, learner-friendly climate. Teacher-student rapport is very necessary, as are interactive learning centers, the posting of instructional and motivational posters/charts, and the display of students' work.

Modern Languages at the High School Level - Spanish & French

WHY?

Apart from being a source of personal enjoyment and fulfillment, knowledge of a second language is valuable for a number of reasons. It empowers students to:

- strengthen their first language skills
- enhance their critical and creative thinking skills
- become more tolerant and respectful of other cultures
- increase their chances for success in the job market
- discover other cultures and a new view of their own culture
- access more people, places, music, websites and other information limited by monolingualism

WHAT?

The French and Spanish programmes prepare students to perform effectively in an increasingly challenging world by providing them with the skills they need to communicate in a second language. To make the curriculum relevant to students' lives, knowledge and skills are taught in contexts that reflect their interests, experiences and real life situations.

Although differing in intensity depending on the level of the students, the Modern Language programmes aim to develop the students' oral communication (Speaking and Listening) along with Reading and Writing skills integrated with an understanding of francophone and hispanic cultures.

The Modern Languages national examinations for school leavers, **BGCSE**, offers four compulsory components: Speaking, Listening Comprehension, Reading Comprehension and Writing.

HOW?

The target language should be the language of communication in the classroom as far as possible. In this way students can practise Spanish/French and consistently hear them spoken. Eclectic methods and varied resource materials, apart from textbooks, are encouraged to accommodate the range of ability levels of the students. Some examples are:

Strategies:

Cooperative learning

Peer coaching

Total physical response

Role playing, discussions & brainstorming

Utilizing multiple intelligences and learning style strategies

Instructional Resources:

Realia

Computers

Learning centres

Tape recorders

Audio and video cassettes
Overhead projectors
Television and video
Instructional software



PERFORMING ARTS

Music's firm position in the school curriculum may be due to its power as an activity, but its basic essence is art, (*the ability to symbolize the feelings of humankind that cannot be put into conventional language*).

The Performing Arts Unit comprises Music, Theory, Instructional Music, Dance and Drama. Through these media, students are given the opportunity to create, analyze, interpret, visualize, organize, compose and perform. Upon completion of an intensive course of studies in the performing arts at primary and high school levels, the students are well-prepared to pursue a vast range of careers in the field of the arts.

As the performing arts have a great impact on the culture of the Bahamas, touching the social, spiritual, physical and educational aspects of our experiences; the instructional programmes are carefully designed to augment, promote and enhance these areas.

Music is taught to all students at the primary and junior high levels and is optional at the senior high level. Dance is only taught at the junior and senior high levels, although at the primary level there are a few schools which are prepared for special functions by trained dance teachers. Drama is only offered at the senior high level because of the shortage of drama teachers.

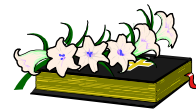
In studying the arts, students learn about artistic principles and elements that are common to all the arts. Dance and drama share techniques in preparation and presentation, and require similar interpretive and movement skills. Music, like dance, communicates through rhythm, phrase structure, and dynamic variation having classical, traditional and contemporary compositional features.

Students who excel in music at the primary school level are prepared to sit

external examinations such as the Royal Schools of Music or the Trinity College of London grade I. At the junior high level, students are prepared for these external exams at the grade 2 level. Also, students who show a great talent and aptitude for the performing arts at the end of grade 9 can audition to go into the performing arts magnet programme at the Government High School. Those students who opt for performing arts at the senior high level at the end of grade 12 are expected to sit the B.G.C.S.E. examination.

Students involved in the performing arts have numerous occasions where they are able to display and showcase their talents. Some of these events are:- school assemblies, Thanksgiving services, music days, National Arts Festivals, Christmas concerts and many more cultural events.

Music is key to an enjoyable, successful life, therefore students are given every opportunity to achieve this success.



RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Fully embedded in Bahamian culture, is the Christian faith. The Bahamas is a Christian nation. In keeping with this, The Education Act states that Religious Studies should be taught in all schools. The Programme is designed to provide knowledge and experiences that relate to religious beliefs and practices.

Additionally, students are given opportunities to use critical thinking skills to build self esteem, improve academic achievement and develop good moral values that would allow them to contribute to society. Religious Studies provide experiences that help students understand our history, legal system, institutions and customs.

Following the child-centered approach to learning, students are exposed to:

- a) Life and teachings of Christ
- b) Work of the Apostles
- c) Religious festivals, worship, rituals
- d) Moral Issues
- e) Leaders
- f) Other world religions

Teachers are encouraged to assist students in:

- conducting research
- identifying and applying relevant information
- memorizing key concepts
- thinking logically
- formulating conclusions
- making value judgments

Examinations

At the Secondary Level there are two National Examinations. The Bahamas Junior Certificate (BJC) is offered at the end of the ninth grade. The Bahamas General Certificate of Secondary Education (BGCSE) at the end of the twelfth grade. The BGCSE Examination includes a coursework component, which encourages individual research and the use of processing skills. Appropriate achievement assists in entry to tertiary level education or the job market.



SOCIAL STUDIES (PRIMARY)

Social Studies is a synthesis of the Social Sciences. Its primary focus is upon the study of people -individuals, and their interaction with the various groups to which they belong and to those to which they do not. It is the study of people and all their strengths, weaknesses, problems and expectations.

The Social Studies programme includes courses in Religious Education, History, Geography, Tourism, Education and Civics. This programme provides students with the knowledge, values and skills necessary for living in the twenty- first century and beyond.

The Social Studies programme is designed to educate our students to know the rights and duties of Bahamian citizens. Such an aim is fulfilled by the provision of opportunities for a comprehensive examination of the responses of Bahamians to their several environments, for the development of concern for others and a commitment to participate in community affairs, by utilizing the tools pertinent to the Social Sciences.

There have been predictions that in this millennium the population will increase and live longer. The family structure will be altered and technological advancement will reshape the Bahamian society, as well as the world. The only prediction of any certainty is that the world of the future will be marked by continuity and change. Therefore, in order to facilitate this change, the role of Social Studies in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas must be to:

- (i) Equip young citizens with a sound knowledge of The Bahamas
- (ii) Foster nationalism
- (iii) Develop in youngsters a positive concept of self
- (iv) Promote the democratic process
- (v) Foster concern for the environment
- (vi) Teach institutional values
- (vii) Encourage regional and global cooperation

The Social Studies Curriculum, comprising a six-book course on Social Studies and Tourism Education for The Bahamas (published between 1991 and 1996), includes two teacher's guides which provide:

- Step by step instructions on how to use the material in the Students' books to teach the themes
- Ideas on how to extend activities and provide extra practice so that children of all abilities can enjoy learning
- Guidance on how to integrate Social Studies into other areas of the curriculum
- Suggestions on how to use local resources to supplement the text.

The six themes of the Primary Social Studies and Tourism Education for The Bahamas have been built upon the expanding horizons approach for Grades 1-6 as follows:

- Grade 1: Myself, my family, my school
- Grade 2: My community
- Grade 3: My island home
- Grade 4: The Bahamas, our country
- Grade 5: Neighboring lands
- Grade 6: Bahamians, citizens of the world

Examinations are offered for the core subject of Social Studies at Grade 6 in the form of the Grade Level Assessment Test (GLAT) to all primary students, to all ninth grade students at the end of their junior secondary year as the Bahamas Junior Certificate (BJC), and History and Geography are offered at the twelfth grade national examination - The Bahamas General Certificate of Secondary Education (BGCSE).

THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

The Social Science curricula engages students in construction of understanding through disciplined inquiry that has value for their personal lives, for work and for democratic citizenship, in a world that is increasingly culturally diverse and interdependent.

Social Studies at the junior high level, draws upon such disciplines as geography, history, civics and economics and aims to help students to develop the ability to make informed decisions for the public good. Through this three - year course of study, students acquire knowledge of key social science concepts such as democracy, power, culture, environment, and interdependence. They learn about The Bahamas and their roles as citizens, both in their local communities and in the wider world. Through the use of maps and globes, historical evidence and field trips, they learn to organize, synthesize, and evaluate complex information in addressing a concept, problem or issue.

At the end of their course of study, students sit the Bahamas Junior Certificate Examination.

History examines people, nations, institutions and events and how each impacts the local community, the region and the world. Students of History learn how lessons

from the past help to make informed, wise decisions for the future through the analysis of historical evidence and varying points of view.

At the end of the three-year course of study, (Grades 10-12) students of History sit the Bahamas General Certificate of Secondary Education.

Geography, the examination of the earth's physical systems and the people in them, covers five basic themes: location, place, environment, movement and region. Students of Geography investigate, through field- work, aerial photographs, maps, simulations, and computers, how people and environments affect each other. These students have a unique opportunity to learn about the world around them.

At the end of the three - year course of study, students of Geography sit the Bahamas General Certificate of Secondary Education.

Civics helps prepare students at the 10th -12th grade level to be contributing and responsible citizens, valuing their roles in a complex world characterized by rapid social, economic, political and technological change. Through role - play, discussion, simulation, field trips, and collaborative group assignments, students learn to accept and respect differences and to appreciate the role of interdependence in the global village.

Social Science teachers, understanding that students come to us with varied backgrounds and abilities, must address the needs of students in a non-threatening atmosphere, which encourages mastery of skills. Through varied activities and performance assessment tasks, highlighting the multiple intelligences, students must be afforded every opportunity to show what they know, understand and can do.

Teachers must enhance instruction through the use of technology in the classroom making adequate use of the television, the videocassette recorder, the overhead projector, the compact disc player and the computer. Moreover, charts and posters appeal to the visual learner and ought to be an integral part of the instructional programme.

THE TECHNICAL & VOCATIONAL STUDIES SECTION

BUSINESS STUDIES



As the process of globalization continues to shape the Bahamian economic landscape, business education becomes increasingly important for all students. Business educators play a prominent role in this process. Educators must be cognizant that next only to tourism, financial services is a pillar upon which The Bahamas is built. Therefore, in preparing students to take their rightful place in society as productive and responsible citizens, it is critical that they have the chance to study the principles offered in business which aims to develop in them an appreciation for an increasingly globally integrated economy such as is The Bahamas’.

- Because all students will participate in the economic system, all students need to be literate in business
- Because all students will encounter a business environment that is characterized by diversity—both domestic and international—all students need to practice the interpersonal, teamwork, and leadership skills that will help them function successfully in that environment.
- Because all students will use technology as a tool for managing information, all students need to hone the lifelong learning skills that foster flexible career paths and confidence in adapting to a workplace that demands constant retooling.

The overall focus of the curriculum is on continuous quality education. Students are expected to demonstrate mastery of the knowledge, applications, and attitudes that will reinforce workplace competencies. The business studies curriculum also aims to build a strong foundation for those who wish to pursue higher education in various business disciplines. The three-year high school programme in Business Studies is offered during grades 10 – 12

<i>Courses Offered</i>	<i>Overall Focus</i>	<i>Assessment</i>
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