

Education In Jamaica

The Ministry of Education and Youth has overall responsibility for policy direction of education. Tuition is heavily subsidized at the primary and secondary levels. A number of schools are run by churches and private groups and many receive subsidies from the government.

Students at the primary level formerly gained access to secondary education either by automatic promotion to secondary schools, all age, junior high, new secondary and comprehensive high or by selection to secondary high or comprehensive high schools through the Common Entrance Examinations (CEE). This examination was phased out in 1998 and replaced in 1999 by the curriculum based National Assessment Programme.

Programme (NAP).

The National Assessment Programme/
Grade Six Achievement Test (NAP/GSAT)

The National Assessment Programme is a component of the Primary Education Improvement Project. The goal of the programme is to assess the academic achievement of students at the primary level. Four assessments are done throughout the course of the programme.

- Grade One Readiness Inventory

- Grade Three Diagnostic Test

- Grade Four Literacy Test

- Grade Six Achievement Test (GSAT) The first Grade Six Achievement Test or GSAT took place between March 27 and 28, 1999. Already it has been reported that the new exams have produced a change of attitude in students, as there is virtually none of the anxiety and worry many used to face in the days leading up to the now defunct Common Entrance Examinations.

The Reform of Secondary Education (ROSE) project is a five year project (1993-98), designed to lead to improvements in secondary education in the first phase for all students in grades 7-9, and in the second phase, for all students in grades 10-11. To date, approximately 20,000 students in 65 schools have been exposed to the newly developed curriculum. Also, a number of in-service and pre-training workshops have been held for teachers, student teachers and college lecturers under this programme.

With the five year project in grades seven through to nine now completed, the programme is now concentrating on changes to upper secondary education (grades ten and eleven).

The three year pilot project, which has already started, seeks to identify the necessary changes made to upper-secondary level education. As a result, the approximately 185 students will spend an additional year in high school.

Tertiary education is offered by the University of the West Indies (a regional institution); the University of Technology; the Edna Manley College for the Visual and Performing Arts (which combines the schools of art, dance, drama and music); College of Agriculture, Science and Education; G. C. Foster College of Physical Education and Sports; Northern Caribbean University (formerly West Indies College) and twelve teacher training colleges. There are also fourteen community colleges, a dental auxiliary school, a Vocational Training Development Institute, twenty-nine vocational training centres and six Human Employment and Resources Training (HEART) vocational training institutions.

Since the 1970s, the Jamaican Movement for the advancement of Literacy (JAMAL), has been working to eradicate adult illiteracy. Over the last seven years, some 113,878 persons have enrolled in its classes islandwide. Its programme is organized by a core of professional workers, supported by a network of volunteers. The success by JAMAL and other educational programmes was reflected in a survey done in 1994 which revealed that 75.4% of all Jamaicans were literate.

source : www.jis.gov.jm