

# **NATIONAL CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK**

**for**

# **DOMINICA**

*December 2004*

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## **1. PREFACE**

The National Curriculum is one of the key activities prioritised in the *Commonwealth of Dominica Education Development Plan 2000-2005 & Beyond* for a “re-engineered” education system (EDP 2003:3) that addresses the twin agenda of expansion and high quality education for all. The National Curriculum is an outcomes-based curriculum that aims to raise achievement levels by meeting the students’ different needs, abilities and maturities.

Inherent in the National Curriculum provision are key policy shifts. First, to universalise access to education for all (EDP p.15) ensures educational opportunities for all children aged 5-16 years. To this end the National Curriculum is outcomes based: an inter-related spiral of learning outcomes designed to meet the developmental levels of all students, including those with special needs, as they pass from grade to grade. The learning outcomes are progressive and balanced not only to promote the cognitive development of every child but also their affective and psycho-motor development. The National Curriculum maintains that every child has the ability to achieve when provided with an appropriate plan, a supportive environment and the basic tools.

A learning outcomes curriculum requires a shift away from teacher-centred methodologies towards a student-centred approach. The focus is on all students achieving learning outcomes and in the process acquiring strategies of how to learn to work cooperatively and to take some responsibility for their own learning.

Third, at all levels of the education system, a change in organisational culture is envisaged: a shift towards democratic, participatory practices employed to facilitate and manage teaching and learning. Inclusive education recognises that a nation needs the full contributions of all the people. To this end, all education stakeholders are encouraged to engage in reflexive action cycles; to engage in dialogue, take decisions, act and accept responsibility for the outcomes. A systematic monitoring and evaluation system will operate at all levels for accountability purposes as part of the Ministry’s shift away from a command centre to a service centre (EDP p.15).

The monitoring and evaluation protocols, crucial to the transformation of an education system, are themselves participatory in nature, environmentally driven, continuous and future oriented for the purpose of ongoing curriculum renewal.

The National Curriculum relies on the strength of all joining together as equals to share the vision and actively participate, in total transparency, as positive “*we can*” members of curriculum teams.

## **2. INTRODUCTION**

### **2.1 Background**

Prior to 1980, the curricula for subjects of both primary and secondary schools in Dominica had, traditionally, been school based. Indeed, until the Curriculum Unit was established within the Ministry of Education in 1998, there were few curriculum guides in the key subject areas at the primary level and none at the secondary level. The primary school curriculum has mainly been driven by the high stakes Common Entrance Examination (CEE), while the secondary curriculum is

largely determined by the Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) syllabi, textbooks and examinations. Two initiatives, however, commenced in 1995, and led to a review of the curriculum.

First, in response to parental demands and in a direct attempt to improve the quality of education, the Ministry of Education adopted a policy of universal secondary education (USE). Implementation of this policy resulted in

- a rise from less than 40% in 1995 to 90% of the intake in 2004
- a greater diversity of students entering secondary schools
- a recognition of low literacy and numeracy attainment at primary level by students especially from the rural, less advantaged areas
- inadequate curricula to meet the needs and interests of an increased, more diverse student population.
- lack of resources of every kind
- different schools adopting different coping strategies
- high repetition rates and frustration among students and staff alike where no curricula changes were made
- the decline in the numbers enrolled in the Junior Secondary Programme (JSP) resulting in the reduction of staff and centres.

The second initiative was the implementation of the Basic Education Reform and the Secondary Education Support Projects. The former project led to, among other things, the establishment of a fully trained Curriculum Unit within the Ministry of Education, while under the latter project secondary curricula were developed in Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. Both projects enabled the expansion of the secondary system and the training of personnel.

However, key challenges still faced the educational system and could be summarised as:

1. The purpose of education under USE had not been clearly defined. The relationship between curriculum and economic and national development had not been elucidated.
2. The primary and secondary curricula were largely exam driven and the suitability of the examination syllabi, particularly at the secondary level, for some students, was suspect.
3. The rationale for the selection of subject combinations at the secondary level was subjective with a result that subjects were offered for which some schools had no comparative advantage.
4. The absence of standards for minimum class size led to the proliferation of very small classes in some schools. For example, an average of 50 secondary classes per year contained less than ten students.
5. The absence of guidelines led to the non-teaching of some subjects (e.g. Health and Family Life) and the marginalisation of others in terms of curriculum time allotted.
6. The role and function of the Curriculum Unit was not fully defined.
7. School-based curricula encouraged a proliferation of secondary textbook requirements that tended to blur the focus of the curriculum.
8. Serious curricula constraints were placed on schools from the paucity of resources.
9. The perception by some that gender imbalances in the curriculum might have been associated with performance differences between the sexes.

The Education Act of 1997 was timely as it sought to address some of these concerns. A critical result of this Act was the statutory requirement to establish a National Curriculum in Dominica. Section 137 states that ‘the Minister shall establish a National Curriculum for public schools and assisted schools’. The goals and objectives of such a curriculum are articulated in section 4(2) (see Appendix 1) in which the Minister is charged with the responsibility of ensuring that such goals are established and pursued.

The aim of a National Curriculum would be to address the concerns set out above and provide clear guidelines to schools regarding the learning outcomes of education, the subjects to be studied and the mode and form of assessments to be administered. As a result a National Curriculum should

- Diminish differences in curriculum offerings among schools.
- Reduce inequality of provision to schools and hence improve equity.
- Improve communication among stakeholders, as the curriculum would be common to all.
- Provide for progress and continuity in learning from grade to grade and from one school level to the next.
- Raise standards by providing schools with clear programmes of study and attainment targets, which could act as national yardsticks to measure performance.

## **2.2 The Development Process**

In June 2001 a three-day consultation was held in Eggleston with some 40 stakeholders. The consultation drew up a framework for the purpose of establishing a National Curriculum. The framework called for the creation of a National Curriculum Steering Committee (NCSC) and National Curriculum Technical Committee (NCTC) to oversee the process.

The NCTC had the responsibility of preparing the National Curriculum documentation while the NCSC, to whom the NCTC reported, was responsible for steering the process by ratifying or proposing amendments as necessary. The NCSC would then, through its Chairperson, make recommendations for approval to the Minister of Education, Youth Affairs, Sports and Human Resource Development.

Following approval of the initial National Curriculum proposals and, in keeping with standard policy development procedures, it was decided to elicit feedback from a wide cross-section of Dominicans. Three feedback mechanisms were approved: questionnaires, ‘Town Hall’ meetings and letters to special interest groups.

Questionnaires asking respondents to identify aims and subjects that should be taught were administered to some 500 persons, stratified by age, gender and location. A further 200 letters with the initial proposals were sent to village councils, large employers, unions, church and other groups. Eleven town hall meetings were conducted at key locations throughout the island. Parents, guardians, teachers, community leaders and officials of the Ministry of Education attended all sessions. People were bussed in from the surrounding communities to the town hall venues to increase representation. The feedback from these meetings, the letters and the questionnaires were recorded, summarised and submitted to the NCTC for analysis. The proposals on the nature and form of a National Curriculum and related policy recommendations owe their being to the consultative process and form the core of this document.

### **3 THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM: PRINCIPLES & VALUES**

The principles and values of Dominica's National Curriculum reflect the needs of the individual learner and society. In terms of the former, the National Curriculum seeks to enable all learners to acquire the attitudes, knowledge and skills required to function productively in the modern world. In terms of the latter, cognisance is paid to Dominica's current and future economic development, as well as the impact social challenges may, and currently do, pose. While it may not be possible to predict future employment trends, a number of thrusts are apparent:

- Further development of Dominica's agricultural sector
- Support to a burgeoning tourist sector
- An interest in the development of financial and other services sectors
- The importance of an information and communications sector
- Support to the growth of a performing arts sector
- Further development of private entrepreneurship and self employment as key factors in the economy

Therefore, the principles and values, outlined below, underscore the above needs and the philosophy of education.

#### **1. Learner-centred**

The National Curriculum underscores that "each child has the ability to learn" (EDP 2000-2005 & Beyond, 2003:6) by placing the all-round development of each child, nurtured by a supportive enabling environment and the appropriate tools, at the heart of the National Curriculum. To this end, every subject provides learning opportunities to promote the individual's spiritual, moral, cognitive, physical, social and cultural development. Schools will be learning communities where students learn how to learn.

#### **2. Learning Outcomes for Achievement**

The NC is focused on all students' achieving the expected learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are the desired knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that all students have to demonstrate that they have achieved, in every subject, throughout the process. Learning outcomes are clearly set out for every subject so that teachers, students and the community all know what the students are expected to achieve at each grade/form.

#### **3. Shared values**

All students should learn and demonstrate, through the explicit and implicit aspects of the national curriculum, such values as compassion, generosity, honesty, patience, discipline, respect, caring for self and others, appreciation of learning, sense of belonging, self esteem and social responsibility.

#### **4. Quality learning experiences**

The National Curriculum Framework is designed to provide a range and variety of quality learning experiences for **all** students in all subjects with particular emphasis on literacy and numeracy to sustain lifelong learning.

## **5. High Expectations**

The National Curriculum aims at the development of high levels of knowledge and skills for all. Teachers and students are expected to perform at their highest levels so that all students, including those with special needs, realise their maximum potential.

## **6. Equity**

“Every student has an equal right to education,” (EDP 2000-2005 & Beyond, 2003:6). The National Curriculum seeks to provide equality of access, participation in and benefit from quality learning opportunities and experiences for all in accordance with their individual needs and abilities. Measures to promote equity include affirmative allocation of resources and appropriate support at all levels of the education system.

## **7. Harmonization**

The Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica (GoCD) is committed to promoting regional cooperation and harmonising national educational directives within the broader frame of the OECS Reform Strategy, (EDPp.14). The National Curriculum, therefore, promotes closer policy and strategy alignment so that member states can collaboratively address, not only local, but also regional and global education/curriculum issues on an ongoing basis.

## **8. Integration**

The National Curriculum integrates the subject content, teaching, learning and assessment both within and across subject areas, where educationally appropriate, to ensure that:

- students experience the subjects as linked and related as they expand their knowledge, skills and competences.
- the learning cycle systematically builds on the learners’ current knowledge and skills
- sufficient time is allocated across schools in order to provide quality learning experiences for **all** students.
- interaction is not only vertical within subject areas but also horizontal across subjects.

## **9. Progression**

The National Curriculum, through the learning outcomes, progressively sets out increasingly complex, deeper and broader expectations of achievement in each subject through the Key Stages. The vertical and horizontal integration referred to previously in (8) above, is to ensure a sound relationship with the conceptual progression from grade to grade and form to form.

## **10. Relevance**

The National Curriculum aims to respond to the needs and aspirations of the Dominican people by integrating into education the desired values, skills, ways of knowing and understanding of the people by starting from what the students already know, value and can do. It aims to enable students to apply school learning to their daily lives as well as use their knowledge and skills acquired from out of school experiences as building blocks to enhance their learning in school.



## **11. Cooperation**

The National Curriculum seeks to promote cooperation and collaboration at all levels of the education system, from the classroom to headquarters, through dialogue, participation in decision making, responsibility for the process and the outcomes and, in so doing, ensure transparency for all stakeholders. This approach will not only enhance capacity and empower participants but it will also foster local ownership and improve the quality education for all, in every school.

## **12. Flexibility**

The National Curriculum Framework is designed to afford considerable flexibility for schools and students to customise the curriculum, subject to minimum policy requirements, to best meet the needs of the students. Schools are afforded 15% of curriculum time for their own choices that can include work experience, field trips, competitive clubs, performances etc. Flexibility in the organisation of the school day to maximise learning opportunities relates to the organisation of the timetable, the classroom, the methods of subject delivery, the use of limited resources and facilities and the choice of subjects offered at KS4. (see Annex 1)

# **4 EDUCATION POLICIES**

## **4.1 Universal Education**

The Education Act (Sections 14 & 27) states that, subject to availability of resources, provision of school education shall be compulsory for every child in Dominica from 5- 16 years and no child shall attend school after s/he has attained nineteen years of age.

## **4.2 Education For All**

Section 137(1) of the 1997 Education Act states that the Minister shall establish a National Curriculum for public schools and assisted private schools. Once established, it would be a statutory requirement that these schools follow this curriculum. In the case of private schools, a permit to operate is mandatory. Such a permit will not be issued unless the Minister is satisfied that 'efficient and suitable instruction equivalent to that provided in an equivalent public school is being, or will be, provided at the private school having regard to the ages and sex of the students attending the institution,' (s. 96(d) EA 1997). That is, the Minister must satisfy himself that instruction given is compatible with the National Curriculum.

Section .79(1) of the Education Act stipulates that parents may, if they wish, educate their children at home. However, permission will only be granted if an education plan for each child is prepared with learning activities that comply with the goals and objectives of s. 4(2) EA 1997 and the individualised plan is based on the established national curriculum (s. 78(3) c), (d) EA 1997).

### **4.3 Special Education Needs**

Students with special needs fall within a continuum ranging from those with severe mental, physical, sensory, communication and behavioural deficiencies to those who are exceptionally gifted and talented. The Ministry of Education's long-term goal is to ensure that as many students with special needs as possible benefit from the goals and objectives of the established national curriculum within the most enabling environment that resources permit. The aim is "that no child shall be left behind".

The Ministry will, as far as possible and subject to availability of resources, seek to meet the needs of all students within the regular school environment. The Ministry believes that the outcomes in early childhood, primary and secondary education are germane to all learners, and therefore where applicable, the curriculum will be adapted or modified through the development and implementation of Individual Education Plans (IEPs). An IEP is an instructional programme tailored to the needs of an individual learner focusing on his/her strengths and weaknesses.

For students with moderate to severe challenges, the Ministry will seek to include functional academic, daily living, self-help and communication skills. At all levels within the education system, alternative instructional and assessment models will be explored and may be adopted. The Ministry will also seek to provide appropriate and affordable technology to aid communication, mobility and the total development of the child thereby enhancing the child's success in the school curriculum.

The Ministry recognises that in providing for these students, it is responding to the diversity of children's needs and abilities, that it is accepting the need for shared responsibility and that it is committed to the universal mandate of providing an appropriate Education For All.

### **4.3 Early Childhood Education**

It is estimated that 70% of students in the 3 to 5 year age group attend pre-schools. These institutions are largely privately owned and operated, though bodies such as the Social Centre and the Christian Children's Fund have offered substantial assistance to these schools in the form of training and grants. Under the new early childhood regulations, the Ministry of Education will, through the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Council, work to ensure that schools are registered and their facilities are in compliance with the regulations. The Ministry of Education will also work closely with the Council to assist them in the development of curriculum whose content is, generally, in line with the national curriculum and is age appropriate.

The Ministry of Education, through the ECE Council, will work to promote ECE with the goal of ensuring universal pre-school attendance. Both Education and Curriculum Officers from the Ministry of Education will work to establish linkages with the ECE Council to seek their advice in matters relating to ECE and to foster better communication between feeder pre-schools and primary schools.

## **4.5 Religious Education**

The Education Act (1997) Section 118(1) lays the responsibility of religious education in assisted schools on the religious community or body that manages such schools ‘in accordance with a curriculum prescribed by that religious community or body.’ Thus, religious education would be a matter for individual schools. Moreover, s. 142(2) EA 1997 stipulates that in all public and assisted schools ‘the school day .... shall begin with collective worship by all students in attendance at the school...’ More specific matters of belief or doctrine for students of public schools will be the responsibility of the family and the churches.

## **4.4 Languages in Education**

In line with the Commonwealth of Dominica Education Development Plan (p.16) and discussions with stakeholder groups, the following will apply:

- The core subject: Languages will require
  - competence in the four language skills, phonics, grammatical structure and literature of English
  - communicative competence in the French and Spanish languages, relevant for socio-economic development.
- The Languages Programme of Study will lay out the basic requirements for achievement in the official standard language
- All Programmes of Study will address literacy across the curriculum and each subject curriculum guide will provide guidelines for optimal implementation.
- The Ministry of Education is cognizant of the importance of the vernacular and it will be used to facilitate the acquisition of literacy skills.

## **4.7 Curriculum Development**

### *Policy statements*

1. The curriculum of every public and every assisted private school shall consist of core and foundation subjects.
2. Programmes of Study will be developed to include knowledge, skills and processes and shall be taught to students of different abilities and maturities.
3. Programmes of study that meet the specific needs of special groups of students or students with special needs will be developed and implemented.
4. Core subjects and Programmes of Study will be determined in accordance with the Education Act.
5. A broad section of the community of Dominica to include key stakeholders and/or representatives of stakeholder groups will be involved in the development of the curriculum.
6. A steering committee shall be established to manage and evaluate the process of curriculum development.
7. A National Curriculum Technical Committee (NCTC) working under the aegis of the National Curriculum Steering Committee (NCSC) shall be established as a working group for the development and implementation of the national curriculum.
8. Subject panels in accordance with the Education Act will be organised to develop syllabi for core, foundation and all other subjects offered as part of the national curriculum.

9. Community service shall constitute part of the national curriculum and shall be a requirement for the completion of the curriculum while at school.

#### **4.8 Curriculum Standards**

##### *Policy statements*

1. Attainment Targets (ATs) will be developed to improve teaching and learning as well as to facilitate the evaluation of the curriculum.
2. Attainment Targets that describe the knowledge, skills and values that students should know, demonstrate and be able to do in each subject at the end of Form 5 will be developed and used as curriculum standards in accordance to the Education Act (1997).
3. Attainment Targets will be consistent with the national goals and developmental outcomes of the curriculum.
4. Attainment Targets for each programme and/or subject area will be developed by subject panels and implemented.
5. Attainment Targets shall be communicated to all stakeholders or stakeholder groups to broaden involvement in the students' achievement of the Attainment Targets.

#### **4.9 Curriculum Delivery**

##### *Policy statements*

1. All teachers should be furnished with the appropriate curriculum guides to facilitate lesson preparation and delivery.
2. Curriculum guides should reflect the local and/or regional contexts and be consistent with the educational and developmental goals of Dominica including training for entrepreneurship.
3. Schools will adhere to textbooks on the official list of recommended texts issued by the Ministry of Education.
4. School-based training and coaching shall be available in the interpretation, contextualisation and differentiation of the curriculum at the appropriate levels for all teachers.
5. Adequate time must be made available for the delivery of the curriculum. The school day must be rationalised to allow all students a minimum of 5½ hours of instructional time and the school year to consist of 190 days of instruction.
6. Curriculum support material(s) shall be made available to facilitate effective lesson delivery.
7. Diagnosis and appropriate intervention of at risk and special needs students will be conducted.
8. A minimum class size of ten (10) students will constitute part of the basic requisite for offering electives as part of the national curriculum as well as cost rationalisation. Schools will be encouraged to collaborate in the facilitation of transfers to ensure efficient delivery of the curriculum where numbers are less than 10 for a particular subject. Approval for class size of less than 10 students must be secured in writing from the CEO.
9. Contact time for secondary teachers without specific positions of responsibility will not normally be less than 80% of the full teaching load. Heads of Department will not normally teach less than 70% loads and deputy principals not normally less than 50% loads.

#### **4.10 Curriculum Assessment**

##### ***Policy Statements***

1. Assessment for formative (continuous assessment) and summative purposes is integral to the National Curriculum.
2. In accordance with the National Curriculum and the Education Act, appropriate continuous assessment (formative) will be undertaken by schools against pre-determined Attainment Targets and their related Learning Outcomes for each Key stage in each subject. National assessments (summative) will be administered to all students at the end of each Key Stage to determine their levels of attainment in core subjects. All assessments at Key Stages 1 and 2 will be used mainly for diagnosing the individual student's areas of need and preparing appropriate remediation and learning programmes to meet those needs.
3. Assessment shall constitute a variety of instruments to include, but not restricted to, homework assignments, projects, group work, tests (written or oral) and portfolios.
4. All assessments must be recorded and timely analysis and reports submitted to the School Curriculum Officer (SCO) and other curriculum officers and supervisors for review and appropriate action.
5. Student assessment reports (Achievement Records) will be submitted, in accordance with the law, to parents/guardians as feedback on each student's performance and attainment.

#### **4.11 Curriculum monitoring and review**

##### ***Policy statements***

1. Monitoring protocols and instruments will be developed and used for accountability purposes to improve teaching and learning and facilitate the ongoing renewal of the curriculum in action.
2. In accordance with the Education Act, subject panels will be created by the Minister to review the curriculum and provide feedback and training to enhance these where necessary.
3. Curriculum officers will visit schools to assess the delivery of the curriculum and provide feedback and training where necessary.
4. Curriculum officers and other school supervisors shall submit monthly reports on the status of the curriculum at schools visited, to the Senior Curriculum Officer (SCO).
5. The SCO will submit a termly report to the CEO on the status of the national curriculum.
6. A comprehensive report on the status and relevance of the curriculum will be produced by the CEO for submission to the Minister of Education, who may table the report in parliament.

## **5 MISSION & VISION OF UNIVERSAL EDUCATION**

### **5.1 Purpose of Education**

The purpose of education in Dominica is to provide all citizens with high quality education and training and facilitate individual well-being and national development (Vision and Mission Statements: Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs, Sports & Human Resource Development 2004).

## 5.2 Vision of the learner

The graduate of the Dominican education system is envisaged as a positive person who is able to communicate effectively with words, numbers, visual images, symbols and sounds, computer competent, skilled in science, technology and their applications, confident, self-reliant, capable of sound moral and ethical judgements, someone who respects and values the well-being of himself/herself, other people, the environment and their inter-dependence: an individual who engages in learning as a lifelong activity and is prepared to make decisions and take responsibility for the results of those decisions at home, at the workplace and in the wider society.

## 6. STRUCTURE OF THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM

The structure of the NCF is governed by the Education Act (1997). The Education Act prescribes the division of the years of compulsory education into 4 Key Stages and that Learning Outcomes will be specified for each core and foundation subject through Attainment Targets and laid out in the Programmes of Study for each subject (s. 139(1) EA 1997).

### 6.1 Key Stages

The National Curriculum, in compliance with the Education Act Section 139(1), is organised on the basis of four key stages. These are compulsory for all school age children and are outlined below:

KEY STAGE	STUDENT AGES	APPROX GRADE/FORM
Key Stage 1	5yrs – 7/8yrs	K – Grade 2
Key Stage 2	8yrs – 10/11yrs	Grades 3 – 6
Key Stage 3	11yrs – 12/13yrs	Forms 1 - 3
Key Stage 4	13/14yrs – 16yrs	Forms 4 & 5

**Key Stages 1 and 2** represent the primary sector and are thus the first stages of formal education undertaken by all children in Dominica. It is during these key stages that a child's character and attitude towards learning life are developed and shaped. Schools should therefore create a safe, engaging learning environment that will motivate the child to learn and achieve.

**Key Stages 3 and 4** represent the secondary sector and span the students' period of adolescence. Schools need to provide a stable and engaging learning environment during, what can be, a stressful period so that students are supported not only to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding to engage purposefully in a rapidly changing world, but also to develop cooperative attitudes and values that will enable them to live and work harmoniously with others.

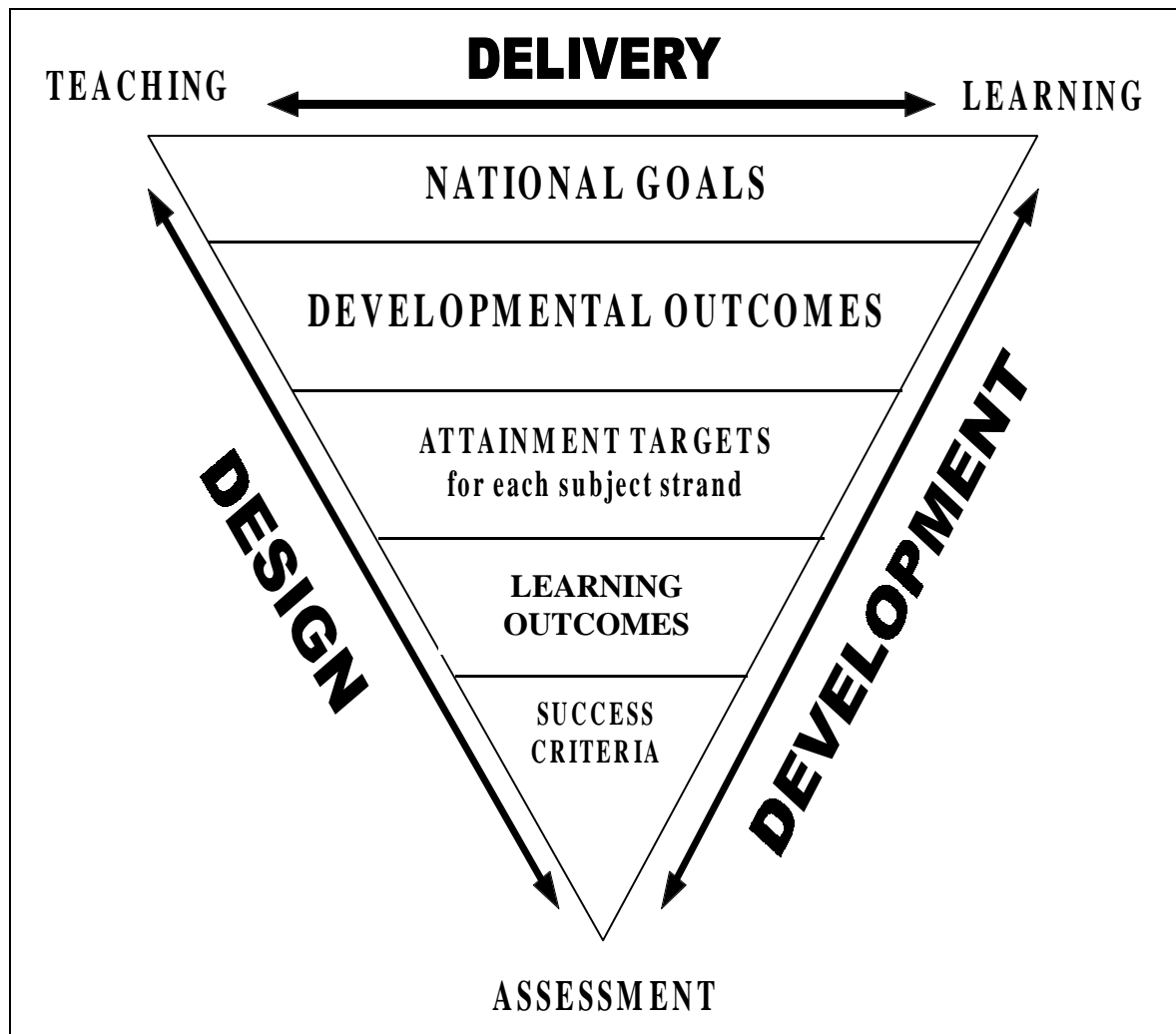
### 6.2 A Learning Outcomes Curriculum

A Learning Outcomes Curriculum is a structured hierarchy of inter-related outcomes that promotes a learner-centred and activity-based approach for all learners to achieve their maximum potential. It

means that learners have to make sense of new knowledge in the context of their existing knowledge and so develop new understandings as learning takes place. The process of learning is as important as the final product. The final product includes the learning outcomes that all learners are expected to achieve in terms of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes by the end of the Dominican compulsory education cycle. The expected learning outcomes are made transparent to all stakeholders, including the students, before teaching and learning begins.

A Learning Outcomes Curriculum recognises that learning at school is only truly beneficial when the learners can transfer or apply the learning to their daily lives beyond the school and can understand that learning is a life-long process. The Learning Outcomes in the National Curriculum, therefore, encourage students to engage in learning as a life-long activity, an essential pre-requisite to keeping pace with the ever-changing world of home and work.

The diagram below illustrates the structure and key design elements of Dominica’s Learning Outcomes Curriculum.



### 6.3 National Goals/Outcomes

Dominica's national goals are derived from national, regional and international documents and agreements. These include Vision 2020, the Education Act 1997, the Educational Development Plan 2003, the Constitution, the OECS Education Reform Strategy (2000). Also included are other documents and agreements from the Principles and Values for Education espoused by the Caribbean region including the articulation of the 'Ideal Caribbean Person' and other regional education documents, the UN Charter for Rights of the Child, Education For All (Jomtien 1990), the Dakar Framework for Action (2000) and other global agreements to which Dominica is a signatory.

The Education belief in Dominica is that all children have the right to education and the ability to learn. The National Curriculum, therefore, aims to promote the all-round development of the individual and to ensure an enabling environment so each child can develop his/her full potential, that on graduation from the education system, he/she will be able to play the role as a productive citizen in society. It aims to prepare citizens who uphold the moral values of society and can act in the interests of a society that is based on respect for equality, human dignity, social justice and democratic principles.

To this end, compulsory education in Dominica aims to provide a range and variety of appropriate, relevant learning experiences within an engaging, stimulating environment to enable *all* students, according to their developmental levels, to attain the knowledge, skills, understanding, attitudes and self-confidence they need for full participation in a rapidly changing world.

The **National Goals** state that school graduates will be:

- Literate in all domains including technology
- Numerate
- Cognizant of the supremacy of the Supreme Being
- Capable of sound moral and ethical judgments
- Skilled in science and technology and their application
- Able to communicate competently and effectively with different people in a variety of situations and in different languages.
- Critical and creative thinkers
- Hardworking with positive work ethics
- Self confident and emotionally secure
- Independent persons but able to work cooperatively with others
- Flexible and adaptable
- Capable of valuing diversity as a source of strength and richness
- Appreciative and protective of the environment and natural heritage
- Knowledgeable and appreciative of their cultural heritage in creative and artistic expressions
- Adopting health-promoting behaviour in their personal lives as well as in their communities with particular attention to prevalent diseases .



- Responsible and capable members of the community, able to contribute to and benefit from the development of their community, country and the world
- applying the basic knowledge and skills necessary for life-long learning, personal advancement, the development of society and the nation

## 6.4 Developmental Outcomes

The Developmental Outcomes are the broad outcomes that all the learners are expected to achieve by the end of the National Curriculum cycle (Key Stage 4) both in and outside the school. They are derived from the national goals and they apply to both core and foundation subjects. They provide the base for the development of the Attainment Targets and Learning Outcomes which all students are expected to achieve as they progress from Key Stage to Key Stage.

### *Developmental Outcomes*

At the end of Key Stage 4, students should be able to:

- communicate competently and effectively in standard English orally and in writing, demonstrating the use of advanced literacy skills with a range of different people and purposes
- read and listen to a variety of texts (print, visual and media) with understanding for the purposes of learning, social interaction and pleasure
- calculate and estimate with speed and accuracy
- apply knowledge, skills and reasoning to their daily lives
- demonstrate the use of different methods, including scientific methods, to solve problems
- use information technology skills competently and effectively for a variety of purposes
- have a working knowledge of a modern language other than English
- exhibit positive work attitudes
- understand and demonstrate respect for the law, the family, society, the rights and responsibilities of others
- understand and demonstrate a commitment to physical fitness, good healthcare and a productive life style
- demonstrate a high level of self-worth
- make sound moral and ethical judgments
- show a capacity to live and work harmoniously with others
- appreciate and conserve the national environment and cultural heritage
- demonstrate a commitment to the community and national development
- demonstrate an understanding of their roles and responsibilities as citizens
- demonstrate different ways to continue learning throughout their lives

## 6.5 Subjects in the National Curriculum

The National Goals of education and the Developmental Learning Outcomes together with societal needs suggest that the National Curriculum is organised into **core** and **foundation** subjects. (s 140(1) EA 1997).

Core subjects run throughout the four Key Stages. They are compulsory for all students through Key Stages 1, 2 & 3. Foundation subjects are optional subjects that students can select for study in

Key Stages 3 & 4. At Key Stage 4 each student shall be required to study subjects selected from the aggregate of core and foundation subjects.

## **6.6 Core Subjects and strands**

Each core subject is defined through the National Curriculum Framework as an organized body of knowledge, skills, values and desirable attitudes that shall serve as a corner stone for further learning. Each core subject has a definition from which its essential strands are derived for learning purposes. Each core subject has no more than five strands where the strands represent the learning intentions. The core subjects are as follows:

### **1 Languages**

Languages and literacy are key to human development and cultural identity. They provide students with the skills to communicate in a variety of ways to a wide range of audiences for different purposes. A basic aim of the Languages core subject is to produce students who are able to use the four language skills to communicate competently and effectively with Standard English texts (oral, print, digital and visual). Students would be expected to express themselves fluently, read different texts with understanding and produce texts for different purposes using a variety of text types.

Additionally, students will be required to attain general communicative competence in either the French or Spanish language as they are considered essential for participation in the business, hospitality and tourism service sectors.

### **2 Mathematics**

The study of mathematics, including mathematics literacy, promotes the ability of the learner to think and reason in precise terms and assists in decision-making. Mathematics involves observing, discovering and investigating patterns and relationships in the real world. Problem solving is a vital aspect of mathematics. The student will learn a variety of problem solving techniques, which should enable him to solve some of the everyday problems of life. Key tools in this area will include process skills of calculating, estimating, modelling and representing data in geometric, algebraic and numerical forms. Mathematics is a key tool used in the study of science, agriculture and computing, thus knowledge of it is essential for further progress in such fields.

### **3 Science and Technology**

Science and Technology education, including scientific and technological literacy, will help students to understand important issues related to the natural world and the environment and sensitise them to safeguarding it. Knowledge of the scientific processes provides students with a valuable way of thinking that will enable them to deal with complex problems, while use of scientific skills will assist students in meeting the needs of people by being able to develop simple practical solutions to problems. The latter goals will be engendered more fully at the secondary level where vocational options in a variety of skill areas will be offered to students.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) will be integrated throughout. The intention is that students will use either the technology or the ICT skills to enhance their learning other subjects.

For example, CD-ROMs could provide individual teaching or practice in basic skills. Increased access to information should improve students' capacity for research, while the use of word processing and spreadsheet programmes can augment students' presentation skills.

#### **4 Agriculture**

In a 'nature island' whose national motto is 'Après Bondie c'est la Ter' a curriculum that fails to pass on to students knowledge of the basics of agriculture would fail to be relevant to the demands of society. To reduce import costs, Dominica must move to growing more of what it needs while looking for niche markets to support its burgeoning economic base. Education in this area will be aimed at providing students with a more scientific approach to the use and appreciation of Dominica's natural resources. A main focus will be on sustainable development and include the cultivation of crops, aquaculture and animal husbandry.

#### **5 Social Sciences**

The study of social sciences, including social literacy, aims to provide students with the necessary experiences, which will allow them to attain the knowledge, skills and attitudes for becoming effective contributing members of their society. Through its study, all students should attain some understanding of human relationships and develop civic responsibilities and competencies. The subject matter of the social sciences is concerned with people and their environment. Thus, students should develop problem-solving skills, which will enable them to participate in social matters geared to meeting the needs of the nation. A national social science curriculum will expose students to the study of world history and geography, some understanding of human relationships and their civic responsibilities with an emphasis on Dominica and the Caribbean. Therefore, students will be provided with a better understanding of the present and a clearer sense of their own identity.

#### **7 Health & Family Life Education**

All students, as they move from childhood into adolescence and adulthood, need to gain knowledge and skills on ways to promote their all-round health: their physical, social, emotional and spiritual well-being as well as ways to prevent and deal with prevalent illnesses and diseases, including HIV and AIDS. The teaching of values and making moral and ethical judgements is included in Life Skills and aims to provide young people with the positive self esteem needed to tackle the pressing social problems of our time. Through such programmes, students acquire skills of decision-making, creative and critical thinking, relationship building and conflict resolution. The content areas of Health & Family Life Education (HFLE) include the social skills of sexuality, parenting, nutrition, managing the environment and personal well-being together with secondary level modules encompassing basic finance, business skills and career orientation..

#### **8 Visual & Performing Arts**

Arts and culture are an integral part of life in Dominica and embrace the spiritual, linguistic, intellectual, emotional and aesthetic aspects of human endeavour within society. Programmes in the visual, performing and creative arts allow students to express and reflect on their own thoughts and feelings. Students will learn to exercise responsibility in choices and decisions and also to value their own and others' creative work. Music, drama and the other art forms play a prominent role in the development of personal and national identity and are an ideal medium for the appreciation and

promotion of our cultural heritage. All aspects of the Visual & Performing Arts are regarded as potential areas for national economic growth.

## **9 Physical Education and Sports**

Physical Education and Sport contribute to the holistic development of young people and in this regard are essential for the quality of education and life-long learning. The physical and emotional healths of young people are fostered during the practice of physical education and sports and valuable social connections are built.

Physical Education and Sports will focus on the physical development of the body through physical activity and healthy lifestyles. Through a wide range of activities, students' physical fitness levels, motor skill development and social development are enhanced.

### **6.7 Attainment Targets**

The Attainment Targets (ATs) are derived from the National Goals and the Developmental Outcomes. The Attainment Targets are what the learners should know, should be able to do and the desirable attitudes and values that they should display in each subject by the end of schooling and therefore they, the ATs, remain the same throughout the Key Stages. Attainment Targets do not stand alone and they are not on a one to one match with the subject strands; rather they collectively form a package to manage the curriculum. The Attainment Targets ensure integration and progression in the development of concepts, skills, attitudes and values through the Learning Outcomes. Attainment Targets do not prescribe content or method.

### **6.8 Learning Outcomes**

Learning Outcomes (LOs) are derived directly from the Attainment Targets. A learner's achievement of the Attainment Targets is measured against the Learning Outcomes at the end of each year and Key Stage. They indicate for each subject strand the agreed basic **depth and breadth** of what learners should know, be able to do and the desirable attitudes and values they should demonstrate or display during, and at the end of, each Key Stage. While the number of Learning Outcomes to be outlined for each Attainment Target is not fixed, they should not exceed a pragmatic understanding of what knowledge, skills, values and attitudes the students can feasibly achieve within the specified curriculum time frame. A learner's progress toward each Attainment Target is seen in his/her ability to perform against Learning Outcomes at increasingly higher levels as he/she moves from grade to grade and from Key Stage to Key Stage. The Learning Outcomes, together with the Attainment Targets are laid out in the Programmes of Study for each subject.

### **6.9 Success Criteria and Learning Outcomes**

Success Criteria (SC) are derived directly from the individual Learning Outcomes. They describe what the learner **must** know, be able to do or attitudes they must display to indicate or demonstrate that they have attained the Learning Outcome. The Success Criteria therefore act as stepping-stones to achieve the Learning Outcome. LOs assist teachers to adjust their teaching methods and design varied learning opportunities to meet the different needs, abilities, maturities and learning styles of their students. The Success Criteria are laid out in the non-statutory Subject Curriculum Guides.

## **7 PROGRAMMES OF STUDY**

Each subject has a Programme of Study (PoS) that defines the subject, its scope and unique features and its contribution to the curriculum. The Programme of Study sets out the Attainment Targets for the subject strands and the expected Learning Outcomes of knowledge, skills, desirable attitudes and values that learners of different abilities and maturities are expected to achieve during and/or at the end of each Key Stage. Thus, the PoS forms the Scope and Sequence chart for the subject areas of the National Curriculum.

Other teacher and learner support materials are provided in non-statutory documents such as the **Subject Curriculum Guides**. The support materials provide guidance on teaching, learning and assessment methodologies and activities that will promote a student's achievement of the Learning Outcomes from year to year throughout the Key Stages.

## **8 TIME ALLOCATION**

The guidelines below are the broad time allocations for each core and foundation subject per week per Key Stage. They are based on the minimum of five and a half hours of instructional time per day (27.5 hours per week) and include the 15% of curriculum time for school choice. The compulsory curriculum should therefore not take up more than 85% of the instructional time available so that schools can use the 15% curriculum time for other subjects (e.g. religious education, indigenous knowledge) or to increase instructional time for timetabled subjects where deemed necessary. It is recommended that schools increase the minimum instructional time to provide sufficient opportunities for all students to achieve the outcomes especially at secondary level.

### **8.1 Time Allocation per Subject per Key Stage per Week**

The subjects are organized and integrated within the 4 Key Stages as follows:

#### **8.1.1 Languages**

Languages include oral French and Spanish from KS 2 onwards. Where children come to school without English as a home language then extra time is allocated to support their acquisition of English and learning is through the vernacular.

#### **8.1.2 Agriculture**

Agriculture is incorporated, as a subject strand, in **Science, Technology and Agriculture** for Key Stages 1 and 2. In KS3 it is elevated to a full, separate subject in its own right and in KS4 becomes a foundation (optional) subject.

#### **8.1.3 HFLE**

HFLE is a core subject and its focus in all four Key Stages is the holistic development of the individual student so that each can acquire the knowledge and skills required to play an effective

role as healthy, responsible citizens in society. It incorporates health, social skills including parenting, domestic finances, career guidance and counselling in KS 3 and KS 4.

#### 8.1.4 ICT

ICT may be timetabled for specific instruction or integrated into the other subjects to promote learning about, and through, information technology.

### 8.2 Subject Time Allocations

The chart below outlines the hours allocated to each subject for each Key Stage in compliance with the five and a half hour instructional period per day **excluding** 15% school choice curriculum time and 20 hours minimum community service per Key Stage.

SUBJECTS	HOURS PER WEEK PER KEY STAGE			
	KS1	KS2	KS3	KS4
Languages	8	8	6	3
Mathematics	5.5	5	3.5	3
Science & Technology including Agric	2.5	2.5	-	3
Science & Technology excluding Agriculture	-	-	2.5	-
Agriculture	-	-	1.5	-
Social Sciences	2	2.5	2	3
HFLE	2	2	2	3
ICT integrated	1	1	1	2
PE	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
Visual and Performing Arts	2	2	2	3

<b>Vocational 1</b>	-	-	<b>2.5</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Vocational 2</b>	-	-	-	<b>3</b>
<b>Vocational 3</b>	-	-	-	<b>3</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>24.5</b>	<b>24.5</b>	<b>24.5</b>	<b>24.5</b>
<b>PLUS: 15% CURRICULUM TIME FOR SCHOOL CHOICE</b>				
<b>20 hours of COMMUNITY SERVICE each year for all Key Stages</b>				

During **Key Stage 1 (Grade K – Grade 2)**, the emphasis is on the development of languages especially basic literacy and numeracy skills. Thus, a minimum of 13 hours per week will be devoted to the acquisition of those skills. Science has been allocated 2.5 hours per week as it incorporates technology and agriculture.

During **Key Stage 2 (Grade 3-6)**, the time allocated to the social sciences has been increased so that elements of history, civics and social justice can be included.

During **Key Stage 3 (Forms 1 - 3)** the time allocation reflects the need for a balanced and broadly based curriculum to both challenge and meet the needs of the students with varying dispositions and attitudes on entering secondary schools under USE and in preparation for awarding the National Certificate of Basic Education.

**In Key Stage 4**, a student shall be required to study a minimum of 5 subjects but usually no more than 7 subjects. Each of the subjects, therefore, has an equitable 3 hours time allocation for the normal maximum number of subjects (7) that the curriculum allows. Students who select the minimum requirement of 5 subjects shall have time for further study in those 5 subjects according to needs as identified through the assessment arrangements. Schools who wish that students take additional subjects may need to arrange extra lessons for them. All KS 4 students shall be required to undertake a minimum of 1.5 hours of PE/Sport per week. This would be extra time for those students who elect PE/Sport as a foundation subject in KS4.

The allocated subject times may not be sufficient for all students in all subject areas. Schools will be encouraged to be flexible in timetabling to meet the different needs of all their students. An increase in the length of the school day or a different time management of the school day may be needed to address these issues.

### **8.3 Community Service**

The requirement for community service is in line with the cultural heritage of self-help and the principle of valuing one's community by giving back as well as receiving.

Community work will be organised so that records of projects and undertakings and the students' participation and achievements are systematically planned and reported to the community organisations, schools and parents, similar to the way in which the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme is recorded and reported. Students in KS 1 and 2 will be guided in the choice of community work by the school, especially by the HFLE and Social Science teachers. It could range from

talking and reading to, and writing for citizens both young and old who are identified as in need, to cleaning the home, school and local environment and visiting the sick in hospital etc. Students in KS 3 and 4 could choose their areas of work, in collaboration with school and community, and could range from work experience, to mentoring activities, to supporting drug awareness campaigns, youth literacy programmes and community cleaning campaigns etc. The 20 hours' community work could be completed in monthly /termly or holiday time blocks.

## **9. ASSESSMENT IN A LEARNING OUTCOMES CURRICULUM**

Assessment is an ongoing process of gathering valid and reliable information (evidence) of a pupil's learning achievement. The evidence will usually be generated through tasks undertaken by pupils; these can include oral presentations, practical tasks, reports, research, tests and examinations and can be carried out not only by teachers, but also by learners (self assessment), or peers, or parents or other education stakeholders.

Assessment is normally seen to have two main purposes. One is *formative* where the aim is to gather information that will enable the next steps in learning to be planned. Formative assessment identifies what a pupil has learned through a particular programme or task and in what areas he or she needs to do more work. Formative assessment is sometimes called *assessment for learning* and is an essential part of the process by which a teacher monitors the progress of an individual pupil and develops the process of learning. Since the learning programme is conducted within the curriculum, formative assessment takes account of the expected learning outcomes but is primarily concerned with supporting the learning steps by which a pupil reaches the expected outcomes than simply measuring whether the outcomes have been met.

The second purpose is *summative*. Here the concern is to determine whether expected learning outcomes have been met as a result of a learning programme. Summative assessment may have a range of purposes including determining the effectiveness of a learning or teaching programme, certificating the attainment of individual pupils, enabling selection or monitoring whether a school or education system is meeting expected targets.

Formative and summative purposes are both important and sometimes overlap. However, it is important to be clear about the differences between the two so that both can make an effective contribution to learning development and pupils' attainment of the expected learning outcomes.

### **9.1 Formative assessment**

Formative assessment is a continuing process and central to good classroom practice. It will be integrated within a teacher's scheme of work and will consist of a large number of assessments conducted over the period of a learning programme. It will use, as evidence, work that a pupil has done in class or at home and will identify those aspects of the work that show clear mastery of particular concepts and skills, and those that do not. On the basis of these judgements, the teacher will work with the pupil to identify new learning goals and agree on a task (or tasks) that has to be done in order to achieve these.

Formative assessment may involve marking classwork or homework, observing the pupil undertaking an activity, listening to reading or speaking or asking questions in class. Pupils then need to know, through effective and constructive feedback, how they have performed and then be



involved in the process of agreeing to new activities. These activities are likely to be many and varied to provide for the pupils' different learning styles and different levels of mastery of concepts and skills. Some of the evidence collected in this process can be selected and compiled by the learner, supported by the teacher, to be put into a container called the Learner's Portfolio together with the Learner's Achievement Record.

Formative assessment is beneficial to teaching and learning because it

- provides feedback on what learners have achieved and so builds up a record of each learner's progress against the primary outcomes for each learning area.
- helps teachers to identify a learner's strengths and weaknesses so that they can help learners to learn and improve through remediation or enrichment support
- involves learners in assessing their own performances and setting their own goals for improvement
- provides teachers with feedback about the methods and assessment techniques they use for teaching so that they can make decisions to improve their teaching.
- encourages more, and better, communication between teachers and learners
- monitors the learners' performances to assist them to perform at their best and at their own pace rather than to pass or fail them all after a test on a specific day.
- provides teachers with detailed insights into learners' progress so that they can report regularly, through the year, to parents.

## 9.2 Summative assessment

It is very common for teachers to set periodic assessments, normally at the end of a topic or unit of work or at the end of a term or year, to identify where pupils have met required learning outcomes. Such assessments are not a substitute for formative assessment but do represent important milestones. At intervals more formal external summative assessments may be used, often in the form of written examinations but often incorporating elements of curriculum-based work that may be assessed by the teacher. Some of these assessments will have important consequences for certification and selection and are generally regarded as *high stakes* assessments.

Summative assessments look back to give an overall picture or snapshot (summary) of a pupil's performance and should be explicitly referenced to curriculum outcomes so that it is possible to identify what an individual knows, understands and can do. However, just using written tests is generally not an effective way of assessing the full range of knowledge and skills that a pupil may have gained so there is considerable value in incorporating significant elements of *continuous assessment*, made over a period of time.

## 9.3 Specific uses of Outcomes- Based Assessment

### Pre-assessment

This is often called *initial assessment* and is used to discover, at the outset of a programme, what a learner already knows or can do. The teacher collects and uses the information from that assessment to identify the individual's learning needs to help in planning the necessary learning programmes and experiences to assist the learners to achieve the expected outcomes. It can also be used for placement of learners in their ability groups.

### Diagnostic assessment

This is one part of formative assessment and is used to find out in some detail where a learner's strengths and weaknesses lie. It may identify what is stopping the learner from learning a certain concept or skill and the information can be used to provide guidance and support in the form of strategies to overcome the barriers. This may include requests for specialist help in the case of children with special educational needs.

### **Systemic assessment**

This is an aspect of summative assessment that provides an external way of monitoring the education system by comparing learners' performance to national indicators of learner achievement. This involves monitoring learner achievement at regular points using nationally defined measuring tools. This information can then be used to evaluate either the curriculum and /or the teaching and learning in order to make improvements at the national level.

## **9.4 Outcomes-based assessment**

The development of a structured curriculum involves the identification of expected learning outcomes and the construction of programmes of study that will enable these to be achieved. Where such a curriculum exists all assessment will be conducted within the framework provided by these learning outcomes. However, as we have already seen, formative assessment will operate within the framework but will not be solely or primarily concerned with whether a particular outcome has been met but rather with what learning steps have been taken and what steps remain to be taken on the path to meeting a required outcome. Summative assessment, on the other hand, is entirely concerned with identifying which outcomes have been met.

The structure that links formative and summative assessment, directly or indirectly, to expected learning outcomes has a number of potential benefits:

- It makes explicit what a learner knows, understands and can do to realize his or her full potential across the curriculum.
- It supports meaningful, relevant learning that is consistent with the taught curriculum.
- It encourages active participation of learners through a variety of different activities and increases their opportunities to achieve the outcomes.
- It supports the integration of learning, teaching and assessment.
- Assessment information may be used for remedial as well as enrichment support.
- There is a clarity of focus in that the outcomes to be achieved are clearly defined in advance for both teachers and learners through negotiation with learners, parents, teachers and other educational stakeholders.
- Some of the fears of assessment that learners have is reduced through an active involvement in the assessment process.
- Involvement in assessment decision-making supports the growth of the learner as a member of a group and as an individual.
- Learners are able to take responsibility for their own learning and develop skills that support greater learning autonomy and the pursuit of life-long learning.

## **9.5 Assessment arrangements**

Under the Education Act (1997: Section 139 (2)) arrangements for the assessment of students shall be made for each of the four key stages. The frequency of these assessments shall be determined by

the Minister. The form and detailed nature of the assessments undertaken to date has been the responsibility of the National Assessment and Examinations Board established in November 1998. The Board, which is chaired by the Chief Education Officer, reports to the Minister.

The following assessment procedures shall apply:

1. National Assessments will be undertaken around the end of each of the four key stages. The overall purpose of the National Assessments for the first two key stages shall be to improve teaching and learning in the school system. The focus of the National Assessment at KS1 and KS2 is therefore diagnostic. The information is to be used to identify and provide support through remediation programmes to those students who experience barriers to learning as well as to design appropriate programmes for children with different special needs.
2. The National Assessment at Key Stage 3 shall have a dual purpose. It shall, with the continuous assessment records for KS3, form the basis for awarding the National Junior Secondary Certificate. Secondly, the students may use their own results against the Ministry of Education's list of selection criteria to decide their subjects for the CXC. The results shall also provide diagnostic information in terms of a student's needs within the subject choices for focused attention during KS4.
3. There will be no distinct National Assessment at KS4. Schools will set their own pre - CXC and other internal examinations and KS4 will end with the CXC and other external examinations.
4. Each student shall receive a National Record of Achievement issued by the school at the end of KS4. The record of achievement shall include the accomplishments of the student in their years of schooling.
5. The National Record of Achievement shall be designed and issued by each school through the Ministry of Education.
6. A structured monitoring system with systematic information flow will be introduced alongside the National Assessments to ensure that students with difficulties are identified and the necessary support programmes provided. This will be essential in KS1 so an Early Identification Checklist (EIC) shall be used to monitor the performance of students from pre-school to the end of Grade 1. The EIC will enable teachers to identify students who may benefit from early intervention.
7. The National Assessment at Key Stage 2 shall replace the Common Entrance Examination, which, with the introduction of USE, shall no longer be relevant. The National Assessment results at the end of KS2 will be shared with the primary and secondary schools to assist them in planning a continuum of quality programmes aimed at assisting students to achieve the learning outcomes across the subjects.
8. National Assessment at Key Stages 1-3 shall be nationally designed and distributed but administered and marked by the schools. All schools will do National Assessments according to the same timetable across the state. Student results shall be recorded on a national report and submitted to the Curriculum and Evaluation Unit, through a national data collection system, by a pre-determined date.
9. Monitoring the administration and marking of National Assessment examinations shall be the responsibility of curriculum and other officers.

Outcomes-based assessment comprises two major components: (a) continuous assessment and (b) summative assessment. Both components are based on assessment activities or tasks that measure a

learner's achievement of the outcomes. These tasks can include oral presentations, practical tasks, reports, research, tests and examinations and can be carried out not only by teachers, but also by learners (self assessment), or peers, or parents or other education stakeholders.

## ***10 TEACHING AND LEARNING***

The Ministry of Education embraces the principle that all students can learn and that they learn by doing; the active involvement of the learner is the critical part of the learning process. Endorsement of this principle requires a paradigm shift from the teacher-dominated class to a more learner-centred approach where the teacher acts as a facilitator of learning. This requires a concomitant shift to curriculum integration as a way of making education more meaningful by recognising the basic process of the human brain that actively seeks for patterns and understanding of experiences through these patterns. Thus, schools should present information in meaningful, connected patterns through thematic teaching, experiential education and interdisciplinary learning that take into account the maturity and different learning styles of the students at each Key Stage.

### **10.1 Learner-centred approaches**

**This is based on the belief that students learn best when:**

- their existing knowledge, skills, interest and understanding derived from previous experience in and out of school is always the starting point.
- information and skills are presented in meaningful, connected patterns based on their previous experiences.
- varied levels of activities are designed to ensure that students explore ideas at a level that builds on their prior knowledge and prompts continued growth.
- they are actively involved in the learning process and so teaching methods are chosen that enable *all* learners to actively participate.
- different teaching strategies, including peer teaching, are used to engage the students' different learning styles.
- learning is organised in a variety of ways to suit the task in hand: e.g. individual work, pair work, learning buddies, group work and whole class work etc.
- different group formations are used: e.g. social, gender, pace, learner support groups (mixed ability) according to students' learning needs
- a variety of techniques is used, such as questioning with open and closed responses, eliciting, explaining, demonstrating, modelling, challenging learners' ideas, checking for understanding, problem solving, drama, games, songs etc.
- tasks are selected that engage the interest of the learners and meet the age, abilities and maturity of the majority in the class or group.
- teachers and students share the continuous assessment information to plan ongoing learning and suggest ways to overcome barriers.
- the learning materials are appropriate and relevant to the students' developmental levels, they stimulate the students so they want to engage and they combine challenge with enjoyment.
- special assistance, where necessary, is provided in after-school programmes and special classes set up for specific subjects.

- teaching materials and resources are available to all teachers in a form that is user friendly and relevant to a learner-centred methodology. That is, they make it clear what **all** learners are expected to learn, the expected outcomes, together with clear suggestions of teaching, learning and assessment strategies.
- teachers listen and heed their students' needs, act fairly and treat **all** students with the same respect.
- they **all** receive genuine care and support for their learning e.g. praise, celebration of every individual's success, however small.

## 10.2 The curriculum design is learner-centred

The curriculum is designed for the application of learner-centred methodologies:

- **Advanced organisers:** a variety of frameworks, ranging from simple to complex, to encourage different thinking skills.
- **Chunking:** the breaking of assignments/activities into smaller, more manageable parts thus providing more structured directions for each part.
- **Compacting:** the process of pre-assessing students, giving them credit for what they already know and allowing them to move ahead in the curriculum.
- **Learning contracts:** the use of proposals prior to beginning projects or units in which the resources, steps towards completion and evaluation criteria are agreed upon with the teacher.
- **Long term projects:** for enrichment opportunities whereby students investigate concepts, issues and topics or individuals.
- **Pre-assessment:** determine what students know about a topic and use that information for the teaching plan.
- **Anchor activities:** on-going assignments that can be worked on independently throughout a grading period or longer.
- **Multiple right answers:** open-ended assignments that focus on the process of problem solving and/or critical thinking.
- **Real world experiences and community projects:** opportunities to undertake performance assessment tasks, role plays, simulations etc. based on authentic situations of interest to students within the community and society at large.

## 11 MANAGEMENT

### 11.1 National level

1. A National Curriculum Steering Committee is responsible for establishing a regional curriculum network to harmonize education with regional bodies e.g. OECS and CARICOM. It shall be chaired by the CEO whose office is responsible for supervising all education reform in Dominica. It should be broad-based so that it represents all education stakeholders from the private and public sectors inside and outside the country<sup>1</sup>. \*

\*explanation of 1,above

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2. The NCSC shall establish a national curriculum network that links all Dominican schools to their respective districts and the districts back to the NCSC for purposes of effective and efficient curriculum information flow within the state.
3. A National Curriculum Technical Committee shall be responsible for the development and implementation of the curriculum under the aegis of the National curriculum Steering Committee and in line with the MoE's approved implementation plan. The NCTC will co-opt persons to join the working groups for specific curriculum activities that target their particular areas of specialisation e.g. Dominica State College (DSC) for teacher training.
4. Curriculum Special Interests Groups (SIGs) shall be established that represent different sectors of Dominica society (Social Concern, faith organizations, Nurses, PTAs, Teachers Union(s) etc.) These groups will meet regularly at predetermined points (e.g. quarterly) to act as sounding boards for the curriculum process. The meetings will be presided over by the chair of the NCTC or the NCTC's Communications Officer. These Curriculum Special Interest Groups will initiate public-private working partnerships that will later assist to monitor and support the curriculum in the districts.
5. Terms of reference shall be collectively developed by and with every curriculum committee and group so that they complement and strengthen one another to contribute to the efficient and effective implementation of the curriculum against the plan.
6. A Communications Strategy shall be developed and coordinated by a Communications Coordinator assisted by the NCTC and other designated persons responsible for curriculum implementation. All current community structures, both formal and informal shall be used for curriculum advocacy and clear guidelines given as to their role and outreach to all stakeholders at all levels. Posters, banners, fliers, newsletters, inserts in national newspapers, radio phone-ins, TV panel discussions shall form part of the strategy.
7. A computerized Education Information System shall be established so educational information from the Ministry (EMIS), districts (DEMIS) and schools (SEMIS), especially that resulting from monitoring and evaluation tasks can be circulated via a feedback loop to facilitate decision making and improve curriculum efficiency at all levels of the education system.

## **11.2 Community Level**

1. Parent-Teacher Associations shall be strengthened/formed at every primary and secondary school with membership, roles and responsibilities clearly delineated in accordance with the Education Act Section 24(1).
2. The PTA shall be responsible, inter alia, for:
  - playing an advocacy and sounding board role during the implementation of the national curriculum and any other educational initiative at their school.
  - Electing a representative to the Board of Management and informing the CEO of that person in writing
  - Supporting the elaboration of the annual school development plan which they should ensure always has a curriculum implementation/delivery component
  - The development of feasible, manageable short term action plans to ensure the effective implementation of the school development plan.
  - Meeting at pre-determined times to discuss progress against the school development plans and make recommendations
  - Ensuring that information and progress reports are transparent and available to all stakeholders of the school through public display and meetings etc.

- Ensuring that the whole school meets to produce their “School Social Contract”. Each stakeholder group affirms their rights and responsibilities, in writing, in relation to quality education provision for *all* children at the school.
- Ensuring that the Social Contract is displayed publicly and serves as the terms of reference for the different school stakeholders.

### 11.3 School Level

1. There shall be increased democratisation at all levels of the education system including school management.
2. Fuller participation in the management and supervision of the curriculum by all stakeholders will be ensured through the formation of PTAs (outlined above) and the formation of other bodies to support the effective and efficient delivery of the national curriculum as intended. These bodies may be:
  - A School Board of Management appointed with roles and responsibilities that are in line with the Education Act (Part 111 Sections 54-72) The School Board of Management shall be responsible for supporting the school and submitting an annual report to the CEO on, inter alia, the following issues (s. 59 Education Act 1997):
    - The discipline of students
    - The attainment levels of all children in the school
    - The delivery of the curriculum
    - The condition of the school and the maintenance of the property
    - Student attendance
  - A Student council that is elected by the whole school and holds regular meetings to deal with student affairs. The agenda and outcomes of these, as for all staff meetings, shall be made available to all stakeholders. The student council shall also have representation at staff meetings and on the Education Advisory Board (Education Act Section 9). The council shall also have the opportunity to contribute to the agenda for these meetings and participate in the decision making process.
3. There shall be a district curriculum committee with membership representing all schools in the district. It shall be chaired by the district curriculum officer and shall provide quarterly reports to the Curriculum and Evaluation Unit who, in turn, will provide summaries of all districts in writing to the office of the CEO. The district curriculum committee shall attend to curriculum issues with attention, inter alia, to establishing a structure and system for closer linkages between Early Childhood Development (Pre-schools) and primary schools as well as between feeder primary schools and their secondary schools. Pre-school and Grade K teachers shall meet and plan together so the transition from a pre-school to formal schooling is smooth and the Grade K teacher can build on what the learner brings to school. Similarly, Grade 6 teachers and the Form 1 tutors should meet and plan together to make the students’ transition from primary to secondary school smooth.
4. The School Principal will act as the curriculum coordinator<sup>2</sup> at every school with the responsibility for coordinating the effective and efficient delivery of the curriculum at their school and ensure the feedback of information from monitoring exercises across the national curriculum network.

## 12 RESOURCING

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<sup>2</sup> Except in very large schools where the Principal will appoint a member of staff to act as the curriculum coordinator.

## 12.1 Financial resources

1. A cost effective implementation plan shall be designed for delivery of the National Curriculum through participatory methods and shall be accepted as a complete package. The resource envelope (recurrent and development) for the whole implementation period shall be costed and agreed to by all interested parties and stakeholders including the GoCD and the Ministry of Education.
2. Funds shall be sourced from different partners through a variety of strategies to support the Ministry's contribution to implement and sustain effective delivery of the National Curriculum.
3. Every child in Dominica has the right to the same quality access to education and, therefore, the Ministry of Education shall **endeavour to** establish endowment funds or grants to make provision for children coming from less advantaged backgrounds, according to pre-determined criteria.
4. Equitable access to education shall be maintained through differential budget expenditure made per student to redress demographic imbalances in curriculum provision.
5. Finances currently disbursed as bursaries and scholarships shall be retained and utilised to assist the most disadvantaged students to have equitable access to universal education.
6. Annual "Curriculum Facilitation Grants" shall be afforded to each primary and secondary school based on their curriculum budget proposals to manage their own needs.

## 12.2 Material resources

1. Attainment Targets and Programmes of Study shall be developed by subject panels.
2. Creative ways to produce other teacher and learner support materials shall be sourced for the provision of a literate environment both inside and outside school. IT, including local sources of Desk Top Publishing (DTP), shall be explored to enhance national capacity in printing and publishing e.g. posters, leaflets, readers, workbooks etc.
3. The Subject Guides shall include exemplar schemes of work, unit and lesson plans as alternatives for teachers to consider in terms of their specific school and learner populations.
4. The private sector including publishers, book companies and sellers shall promote and support annual national competitions to develop local materials for use in schools.
5. A materials/textbook policy shall outline standard guidelines for bidding for procurement, evaluating and selecting the materials against agreed criteria, pricing and purchasing of materials as well as the distribution of the materials to schools.
6. There shall be increased use of **Teaching And Learning Using Locally Available Resources** by teachers in classrooms.
7. Indigenous knowledge shall be incorporated into the Subject Guides as well as into the teaching and learning support materials
8. Well resourced schools shall be encouraged to seek ways to support less resourced schools e.g. school buddy system



1. Sufficient curriculum posts, staffed by officers with professional competence and authority to carry out their curriculum roles and responsibilities within the network shall be established.
2. Members of the community who can assist with the delivery of the priority areas of the curriculum shall be identified e.g. at primary level: read stories to children and at secondary level teach students specific skills such as carpentry, vehicle maintenance, typing, computers etc.
3. A Teacher-Pupil-Ratio (TPR) of 1: 10 shall be established for minimum class size and utilized for the establishment of teacher posts per school.

### ***13 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT***

1. The Ministry of Education will work closely with the Dominica State College and other colleges in the area of teacher education.
2. The Teacher Education and Development structure and system shall be reviewed and re-structured in line with the National Curriculum Framework.
3. A Teacher education policy shall be developed that incorporates a pre-service and in-service component on a continuum where both components are holistic yet interdependent.
4. The Teacher Education programme, for both pre-service and in-service, should be demand led according to national needs or new directions (e.g. USE) based on projections from monitoring reports and research studies.
5. Teacher Education tutors shall be responsible for training teachers for the National Curriculum as well as developing a modular National Curriculum for Teacher Education that would: (a) attract students to the profession and (b) be practically relevant.
6. All educators and managers in the education system shall be trained to implement the NC.
7. The pre-service programme shall integrate the College Based Studies (CBS) with the School-Based Studies (SBS) and assessment of both CBS and SBS shall be combined, according to a pre-determined weighting, for the final evaluation.
8. The pre-service tutors shall establish links with each district so that the Practicum encompasses all districts and allows tutors to support the trainees at schools, provide input into the school's in-service programme as well as play a role in a national induction programme for new teachers.
9. Schools should be clustered, according to geographic proximity, so that they can work together on in-service projects either as groups or individually.
10. Vocational skills education shall be re-organised so that it is more closely linked to the private sector and the world of work. Teachers shall work in partnership with local vocational enterprises to enable students to receive hands-on training and support from local businesses.
11. Alternative, creative, cost efficient ways to conduct pre-service and in-service training shall be explored e.g. Distance Education through UWI or other external universities with customized modular courses.
12. The Communication Strategy shall develop strategies of affirmative action to promote teaching as a valued career and raise teachers' status in the community.

13. A clearly organised appraisal structure and career path shall be established together with an accreditation system that takes prior learning into account. Credits shall be accumulated to provide opportunities for promotion, better pay or entry into qualification courses.
14. A databank of curriculum specialists shall be built and linked into a regional network so that expertise can be pooled.
15. Dominicans who attend education workshops, study tours or conferences, shall share knowledge and skills gained with other stakeholders. The Education Reform Council shall be responsible for selecting people for training opportunities both within and outside the country based on pre-determined, transparent selection criteria.

#### **14 MONITORING and EVALUATION**

1. All curriculum stakeholders including School Boards of Management, Committees, school staff, parents and students shall have a structured role for monitoring and addressing curriculum issues.
2. A clear, coordinated structure with mechanisms for regular monitoring and evaluation of the performance of teachers, students, schools, district and national managers and other support workers shall be established.
3. A cadre of monitors shall be identified at school, cluster, district and national level to form district teams that take a participatory team approach using standardised tools to improve both the quality of teaching and learning and the support afforded to it.
4. School profiles of curriculum delivery shall be used to compile cluster profiles, district profiles and national profiles through the Education Information Systems at national, district and school levels.
5. The information resulting from monitoring exercises shall be evaluated and given to the NCSC, NCTC and other stakeholders for the development of action strategies e.g. remediation, special needs, career and guidance programmes so that the curriculum remains responsive to the needs of the student and society.
6. All education institutions shall use self-evaluation protocols so that performance is triangulated against the individual institution's profile.
7. All schools will be required to complete a Key Stage Standards Monitoring Form that will summarise the progress of students through the Key Stages. At KS1, this will specifically be in terms of attaining key literacy and numeracy targets.
8. To assist curriculum officers, school principals, parents and community persons shall have clearly defined roles for monitoring the education system including the performance of teachers and students.
9. Students' profiles shall be used for monitoring and evaluating the education system.
10. There shall be a system for internal and external monitoring and evaluation of the National Curriculum at pre-determined points for ongoing improvement.

## **ANNEX 1**

### **Flexibility within the National Curriculum**

The framework document outlines the core and foundation subjects that are to be taught in all public and assisted private schools. The actual subject content for these subjects will be defined by the programmes of study and attainment targets to be articulated for each of the four key stages. The framework also gives guidance to schools on the minimum time they should allot to each of these subject areas during any key stage. Within this framework schools have considerable flexibility to customise the curriculum to best suit the needs of their students.

In particular schools are expected to

- Determine their mission and key priorities

Schools are to determine their own goals, objectives and how they will be achieved. The school's mission statement and school development plan (SDP) should clearly articulate these. To achieve some of their targets, some degree of curriculum differentiation may be necessary.

Schools may also decide to

- Alter time guidelines in any particular year group or class so as to better deal with learning difficulties faced by this group

For example, a group of weak readers in Form 1 of a secondary school may be given extra language classes at the expense of other subject areas. The following year the balance is redressed to enable these students to cover areas of the curriculum not covered in Form 1.

- Teach subjects thematically or combine certain subject areas

For example, a school may wish to use a thematic approach in K to Grade 2. No specific subject areas are specifically identified on the timetable. Rather work revolves around themes (e.g. Independence, Christmas, Carnival etc.). Alternately, a school may wish to split certain aspects of a subject area and teach them separately. It should be noted that the curriculum is not determined by the subject name or what elements of the curriculum that are grouped together but rather by the attainment targets.

- Add further subject areas or other activities

In order to achieve their mission, schools may wish to add additional subject areas to the curriculum. Some 10% of the curriculum is given to school choice. To this end, schools can add additional subjects or learning experiences. In some cases schools may wish to extend the school day to provide students opportunities to engage in work attachments, field trips, competitive sports, clubs and the like.

- Apply for exemptions or modifications to the prescribed curriculum

Schools can apply for curricular exemptions or other modifications where it is thought to be in the best interest of the child. Such exemptions or modifications will be made in writing and be subject to the approval of the Chief Education Officer.

The framework allows schools much latitude in constructing their timetables. Schools may decide on

- The number of teaching hours per week, subject to minimum requirements.
- The timetable cycle, that is whether the timetable repeats itself every week, fortnight or other such cycle.
- The lesson length and the number of lessons per day – for example, infant classes may wish to limit some lessons to be of 20 minutes duration, while some secondary schools may prefer to have a five-lesson day with each lesson being of one hour's duration.
- The actual time allocated to any subject, subject to minimum requirements.

- Grouping arrangements of students, that is the use of homogenous, heterogeneous or other grouping arrangements for different activities or subject areas.
- The most effective use of school facilities and resources.

## ANNEX 2

<b>GLOSSARY OF NATIONAL CURRICULUM TERMS</b>	
<b>ASSESSMENT OF LEARNERS</b>	the planned process of gathering information about learners using appropriate tools or systems to enable teachers to give constructive feedback to improve a learner's performance and to report to parents and other relevant stakeholders.
<b>ATTAINMENT TARGETS</b>	learning outcomes that include the knowledge, skills and understanding which students of different abilities and maturities are expected to demonstrate by the end of Key Stage 4
<b>CLASSROOM-BASED ASSESSMENT</b>	Assessment that takes place in the classroom usually by a teacher but can also be by a pupil and /or a group of pupils.
<b>CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT</b>	an ongoing collection of information about what a learner knows, understands and can do based on what has been taught. The process helps the teacher to find out what the learners have learned and / or achieved so that they can adapt instruction to the different learners' needs.
<b>CORE SUBJECT</b>	a subject that runs through all 4 Key Stages and which is compulsory for key Stages 1-3
<b>CURRICULUM</b>	an organised set of theoretical and/or practical learning experiences
<b>DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT</b>	a process that is used to identify a learner's strengths and needs to inform new teaching and learning.
<b>ENRICHMENT</b>	the provision of more challenging learning experiences for those who achieve the required learning results before the majority of the class.
<b>EVALUATION</b>	a judgement of a learner's performance based on evidence from assessment
<b>EXAMINATION</b>	a tool, used periodically, to measure a learner's achievement after instruction for promotion and/or certification, usually carried out at the end of the year or a school cycle
<b>FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT</b>	an interactive and planned process of ongoing assessment for the purpose of providing relevant, useful, and timely feedback to improve the teaching and learning.
<b>FOUNDATION SUBJECT</b>	an optional subject that can run at any time during compulsory schooling.
<b>GOALS</b>	general aims, broader and more general than objectives
<b>IEP</b>	Individual Education Plan – an instructional programme tailored to the needs of an individual learner
<b>INTEGRATION</b>	a process that ensures the learners experience the 6 learning areas as linked and related. It supports and expands their opportunities to acquire knowledge, skills and desirable attitudes across the curriculum.
<b>KEY STAGES</b>	the four periods of compulsory education as defined in s.139(1) of the Education Act (1997)
<b>LEARNING</b>	This indicates for each strand of each subject the agreed basic level

<b>OUTCOME</b>	which learners should achieve at the end of each grade and Key Stage
<b>LEARNING OUTCOMES CURRICULUM</b>	A Learning Outcomes Curriculum considers the learning process as important as the products. It focuses on what the learner can achieve (the outcomes) rather than on the teaching objectives. A learning outcomes curriculum is participatory, learner-centred and activity-based.
<b>NATIONAL CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK</b>	The basic framework setting out what children aged 5 to 16 in public and assisted private schools should learn
<b>PORTFOLIO</b>	This is the deliberate collection of a pupil's own work by the pupil him/herself and shared with the teacher. It is stored in a box or a bag and is the property of the learner. It is his/her evidence of learning, of growth, progress and achievement. Pupils should be proud to show the portfolio to their parents/guardians and other teachers etc.
<b>PROFILE</b>	This is a document that contains details of the pupil 's assessment performances and behaviour. It is usually compiled by the school for administrative purposes e.g. transfer to another school
<b>PROGRAMME OF STUDY</b>	matters, skills and processes which are required to be taught to students of different abilities and maturities during each key stage
<b>PROGRESSION</b>	This is a term used to describe the more complex, deeper and broader expectations of what learners should achieve in each Learning Area as they move from one level to the next
<b>RECORDING</b>	Systematic collection of information regarding pupils achievement levels. It needs a class progress book
<b>RELIABILITY</b>	An assessment tool to assess learners in a manner that would bring the same result if used at different times with different learners but that have the same characteristics e.g. age, class, cognitive ability etc
<b>REMEDICATION</b>	The provision of additional learning experiences for those learners who have difficulty achieving the standards the first time.
<b>REPORTING</b>	Giving feedback on a learner's performance to relevant stakeholders such as learners/ teachers, parents, public, examination board or relevant institutions for appropriate action.
<b>SUBJECT STRANDS</b>	Strands are the key elements of each subject and are derived from the developmental outcomes. They comprise the content which the learner has to demonstrate mastery to achieve the learning outcomes and attainment targets
<b>STANDARDS</b>	Designated basic levels of performance expected from all students
<b>SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT</b>	This takes place at predefined times. It usually comes after a topic or week or term or at the end of a year to assess all that has been learned in that pre-defined time period. Tests and examinations are often used for summative assessment.
<b>SYSTEMIC ASSESSMENT</b>	Assessing the whole curriculum process through summarising the learners' performances nationwide
<b>USE</b>	Universal secondary education – the policy of allowing <b>all</b> students access to five years of secondary education

## APPENDIX 1

### Education Act 1997 Section 4(2)

The Minister is responsible to ensure the establishment and pursuit of goals and objectives that -

- a) Encourage the development of basic knowledge and skills in all persons, including – the skills of
  - i. Literacy, listening, speaking, reading, writing,
  - ii. Numeracy, mathematics, problem solving
  - iii. Information processing, computing
  - iv. Critical and creative thinking skills for today’s world
  - v. An understanding of the role of science and technology together with scientific and technological skills
  - vi. Appreciation and understanding of creative arts
  - vii. Physical development and personal health and fitness
  - viii. The creative use of leisure time
- b) Develop self-worth through a positive educational environment
- c) Promote the importance of the family and the community
- d) Provide opportunities to reach maximum potential
- e) Promote the recognition, understanding and respect for the Constitution, Laws and national symbols of the State
- f) Develop further understanding of the principle of equality between the sexes
- g) Promote understanding of the indigenous people, history, language, culture, rights and values of Dominica and their changing role in contemporary society
- h) Increase awareness and appreciation of the natural environment of the State
- i) Promote a Caribbean identity through regional cooperation and integration
- j) Develop an understanding of the historical and contemporary role of labour and business in society
- k) Prepare the people of Dominica for participation in the Dominican and global society

### *Section 137*

- (1) The Minister shall establish a national curriculum for public schools and assisted schools
- (2) A curriculum established under subsection (1) must be balanced and broadly based and must, in addition to the goals and objectives specified in section 4(2) –
  - (a) promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, intellectual and physical development of students and of society; and
  - (b) prepare students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.
- (3) The Minister may revise the national curriculum whenever he considers it necessary and expedient to do so.