

Improving Education in Dominica

by

[Lester Telemaque](#)

The following proposals are submitted for serious discussion. It is the author's intention to present them to the Ministry of Education as soon as possible. Your input and criticisms are necessary so that they can be incorporated in the final paper. Please use the Forum below to post your comments. Thanks..

PRIVATE SECTOR INVOLVEMENT

I wish that the private sector would take a positive role in Dominica's educational system. As my very first contribution to the casual board forum I mentioned that the government can give incentives to businesses who adopt schools. The incentives can take the form of tax breaks. These schools will then be provided with the fundamental materials needed to improve the quality of education. The schools can be provided with books and computers among other basic necessities. The general upkeep of the schools would also be the responsibility of the company.

The rationale for this is that government is totally unable to fully maintain the schools and give the thrust to our youngsters which is necessary in this era.

MENTORING PROGRAMME

This basically will be for persons to offer themselves to act as mentors to our young men and women. The students will stay after school and persons will help them with their assignments and through dialogue attempt to shape the lives of the young people in a positive way. The volunteers can participate in a training programme funded through central government, local governments or through funding agencies. I think that training is necessary to help volunteers to understand and cope with the many psychological problems that our youth will face.

The rationale for this is too many of our youth have no-one to turn to. They are extremely vulnerable and are easy prey for the vultures in our society.

In this light I also recommend that school buses will have to be purchased to ensure that students are brought home after their tutoring sessions.

PARENTAL COUNSELING - TEACHING PARENTS TO PARENT

This is pretty self explanatory. Some parents have absolutely no idea how to care for their children. A program can be put in place to have counselors help parents to better understand their children. This will be more for their benefit of those parents who have delinquent children. By collaborating with the welfare division and the schools, the ministry can run the programme and ensure the the parents who need the help the most get it or the children might have to be placed in foster homes.

READING AND WRITING

A recent national assessment showed that more than 70% of our young people are not reading up to their grade level. The government wants to try new programs and test them in certain schools. I am fervently opposed to this. I am of the view that a comprehensive Language Arts program is needed and should be inclusive of remedial as well as advanced level instruction. Reading specialists should be in every school in Dominica. Due to financial constraints, I think that at least one specialist should be assigned to two primary schools in the country. In the same vein, I think that a guidance counselor should be assigned to every school to help combat the many psychological problems that we are faced with.

JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER

The need for a juvenile detention center in Dominica is of paramount importance. Too many of our young people, are placed into the prisons with seasoned criminals and come out of prison with the view of committing more crime. I think that the kids can be sent to a center where the focal point will be on rehabilitation and not incarceration.

TEACHER TRAINING

I think that the ministry is doing a commendable job in its efforts to train teachers. However, I think that more refresher courses are needed for teachers who may have trained years ago and are not familiar with new educational trends and practices. In addition to that I think that the ministry should be a little more vigilant and make more impromptu visits to the schools to ensure that teachers are in fact working.

With all the demands being placed on teachers the salaries are still paltry. We are losing our teachers to the private sector and to other Caribbean islands. This administration has its hands full and so do the teachers. What is needed, is for the executives to afford teachers a little more respect. Teachers are frustrated but are still able to put these frustrations aside and deal with the children. These proposals here are by no means sufficient, but I think that with your help we can do much more. The future of our country is at stake and in particular our young men are being maligned by the young women.

*Lester Telemaque is a primary school teacher by profession. If you wish to communicate with him through another medium, his address is : Pointe Michel, Dominica
Tel: (767) 448-7598/4806*

© Lester Telemaque: Re-publication with author's permission only.

[Back to Policy, Politics & Society](#)