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# CONTENTS

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS** .................................................................................................................. 2  
**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS** ............................................................................................................. 4  
**INTRODUCTION** ............................................................................................................................... 5  
**ACCESS** ......................................................................................................................................... 6  
**EQUITY** ............................................................................................................................................ 7  
**QUALITY** .......................................................................................................................................... 8  
Curriculum Development & Assessment .................................................................................................. 8  
Classroom Instruction ............................................................................................................................. 9  
Literacy and Numeracy .......................................................................................................................... 10  
Technical and Vocational Training ........................................................................................................ 11  
Information and Communication Technology in Education ..................................................................... 11  
Human Resource/Training ..................................................................................................................... 12  
Support Services .................................................................................................................................. 13  
Governance and Management .............................................................................................................. 15  
School Management ............................................................................................................................ 15  
General Topics for Quality/Improvement ............................................................................................. 16  
**Conclusion** ....................................................................................................................................... 17
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BEEP                               Basic Education Enhancement Project
CAMDU                              Curriculum and Material Development Unit
CARICOM                            Caribbean Community
CCSLC                              Caribbean Certificate of Secondary Level Competence
CPEA                               Caribbean Primary Exit Assessment
CSEC                               Caribbean Secondary Education Certification
CSME                               Caribbean Single Market and Economy
CVQ                                Caribbean Vocational Qualification
CXC                                Caribbean Examination Council
EMIS                               Educational Management Information System
ESDP                               Education Sector Development Plan 2015-2020
ICT                                Information and communications technologies
IT                                 Information Technology
MDT                                Multidisciplinary Team
MOE                                Ministry of Education, Human Resource Development & Labour
MST                                Minimum Standards Test
NELU                               National Enrichment Learning Unit
NGO                                Non-Governmental Organization
OECS                               Organization of Eastern Caribbean States
PTA                                Parent Teacher Associations
SALCC                              Sir Arthur Lewis Community College
SBA                                School Based Assessment
SEN                                Special Education Needs
TVET                                Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNICEF                             United Nations Children's Fund
UNESCO                             United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USE                                Universal Secondary Education
UWI                                University of the West Indies
INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Education, Innovation, Gender Relations and Sustainable Development is charged with the mission of ensuring that our education system is transformative, equitable and meaningful to the holistic development of all learners. To achieve this mandate, the Ministry engages in constant reflection and reformation. Access to up-to-date, valid and reliable information provides policy makers and planners with the necessary tools to make informed decisions in the process of initiating, instituting and sustaining required changes within the system. Thus, engagement in continuous and relevant research is vital.

Prior to implementing new initiatives or policies, the Ministry conducts internal assessment reviews and consults key stakeholders. This is done through surveys and group consultations. Further, the Ministry attempts to nurture a culture of research and knowledge sharing within the education system through strategies such as the promotion of action research in its schools. In order to facilitate this process and ensure the necessary empirical data is available, periodically the Ministry revises and publishes a Research Agenda.

The Research Agenda outlines a set of research priorities for the education sector and is reflective of national reform concerns. A critical document shaping this agenda is the Education Sector Development Plan (ESDP) 2015 – 2020. Currently, its implementation is ongoing. Drafted in alignment with the goals of regional and international frameworks such as that of OECS, CARICOM and UNESCO, the ESDP aspires to bind all efforts and energies to produce meaningful results for all learners and by extension the nation. It specifically aims at increasing access to and improving the quality and relevance of education at all levels. This is done via the promotion of excellence and raising the levels of literacy, numeracy, overall achievement and civic responsibility of all learners. The Research Agenda is a critical avenue which will assist with the implementing, monitoring and evaluating of the ESDP as it highlights some challenges and concerns that may warrant investigation.

Similarly, the Research Agenda serves as a guide to persons who desire to undertake research within the education sector. It provides a platform upon which academic researchers and students can focus their studies as well as dialogue with other researchers and funding agencies. Persons who complete research in the areas identified are encouraged to avail themselves to opportunities provided for sharing the findings/results of their research with the Ministry and its partners.

This Research Agenda is organized thematically. The research priorities have been categorized under three specific areas namely, Equity, Access, and Quality. To provide a greater focus, the themes concerning Quality are classified under a number of sub-headings. This is to facilitate easier identification of areas of interest for persons who wish to engage in educational research. A number of areas on the previous Research Agenda are repeated. This is because they continue to be priorities for the Ministry and its stakeholders.
SAINT LUCIA

Ministry of Education, Innovation, Gender Relations and Sustainable Development

SUBJECT: RESEARCH AGENDA: SUGGESTED THEMES

ACCESS

Education is recognized as a basic human right. Therefore, educational institutions and policies must strive to give equal opportunity for ALL students to take full advantage of the educational services available. Many factors such as gender, race, disability, income and educational attainment may hinder this. Below are some areas in need of examination in relation to access:

1. Survey of school conditions, facilities and equipment.
2. Incorporation of Pre-K programmes at primary schools.*
3. Bridging the Digital Divide: Accessibility to ICT training and use in the classroom and in homes.
4. Opportunities and challenges for institution of mobile library services in rural areas for both students and non-students.
5. Investigation of the equitable access of children with various disabilities to educational opportunities*
6. Full ‘Inclusion” of students with special needs: Readiness, Effectiveness and Impact*
7. Investigate the level of inclusive education in Secondary Schools.
8. An investigation into the transiting of students from various levels of the education system: Early childhood to primary schools, primary to secondary schools, secondary to post-secondary/ tertiary.
9. Exploration of provisions for adult education/second chance opportunities (school drop outs, males...).*
10. The feasibility for alternative pathways in an education system.

Students of Dunnottar School
EQUITY

Education is a key driver of social, cultural and economic change. It is a critical determinant of what an individual does and enjoy in his/her adult life. It is as such an ideal that all learners will receive a fair opportunity to realize their interest and attain their dreams. The MOE seeks to achieve educational equity in providing equal opportunity for learners, fairness in instructional delivery, support and equitable conditions throughout the educational system. Studies can be explored in the following area:

2. A comparison of the Public Perception of Selected Schools: Low vs. High performing primary and secondary schools.*
3. An evaluation of the MOE’s Partial Zoning Policy. *
4. An investigation of effective strategies for stimulating male adolescents’ interest in school.
5. An assessment of the psychosocial services provided by the Ministry of Education: Counselling Services, Transportation Subsidy, School Bursaries, Insurance etc. *
6. An evaluation of the SEN programmes in general education schools.
7. Audit of national provisions for special education/ gifted students.*
8. Teachers’ and principals’ perceptions on the provision of accommodations in national examinations (MST & CEE).
10. Promotion of Students: Age or competence?*
11. An investigation of equitable instruction for children with various disabilities to educational opportunities.
12. A study of the societal and economic factors which may contribute to the cognitive challenges among students.*
13. Male Participation in Adult Education Programmes: Case study of NELU courses.

Clendon Mason Memorial
A core corporate principle guiding the Ministry is a commitment to quality. The MOE aims to build a culture of quality throughout the education sector via the services offered, its facilities, partnerships formed and leadership. At all levels and in all we do, we strive for distinction. Attaining or sustaining a high standard requires constant monitoring and evaluation. The subsections which follow illustrate a few of the areas that can be studied to help in keeping us accountable to our mandate.

**Curriculum Development & Assessment**

1. Curriculum Content: Core and optional content, its relevance and modernization.*
2. Evaluation methodologies for curriculum, and modalities for improvement of existing methodologies.
3. Provisions in the curriculum in areas that support the development of gender balance.*
4. The review cycle of the curriculum in all subject areas.
5. The value of sports in education.
6. An investigation into Alternative/ Authentic forms of Assessment: Primary and secondary schools.*
7. What are the implications of National Assessment/ Minimum Standards Tests (MST) results on students’ performance at the Common Entrance Examination?
8. Language Planning: A review of National Literacy Policy in Saint Lucia *
9. The introduction of kweyol language into the formal education system.*
12. Correlational studies into the performance of students in the MST and its influence on the development and planning of remedial programmes.*
13. An investigation into the perceptions of parents, teachers and students of Common Entrance Examinations/MST.
14. Case Studies on students scoring below national mean at the Minimum Standards Tests and Common Entrance Examination: Student motivation, behaviour, expectation on entering secondary schools, parental involvement and other variables.*
15. An investigation into the factors contributing to the low entries for technical subjects at CSEC.
16. The impact of CCSLC on student performance at the secondary school level.
17. An assessment of the relevance of the CXC/ CSEC curricula in meeting the needs/demands of the Labour Market in Saint Lucia.*

18. An investigation into factors that contribute to a decline in the number of students who choose to sit the CSEC proficiency examinations in areas such as separate sciences, arts (History, Geography, Literature...)*

19. A Longitudinal study into students’ performance on Grades 2, 4, 6 and CSEC examinations.

20. Bridging the gaps between industry standards and school curricula standards: Development of soft skills/ emotional intelligence/ life skills.*

21. The use of Saint Lucian cultural forms and practices in the development of Theatre Arts.

22. Review of the absence of History and Geography at some secondary schools.

23. The introduction of the Caribbean Primary Exit Assessment (CPEA) in Saint Lucia.

24. Review of the implementation of the Early Childhood Care and Education Curriculum Framework.*

25. The impact of CAMDU on the Education System*

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Students of Gros Islet Secondary School

Classroom Instruction

1. An assessment of Literacy and Numeracy development at key stages of the education system.

2. Modern vs. traditional classroom methods

3. Investigation into the use of assessment in planning and execution of classroom instruction.*

4. An investigation into the barriers to effective planning in the instructional process.

5. An investigation into the use of Differentiated Instruction.*

6. The performance of principals as instructional leaders.*

7. The effectiveness of structured cultural programmes in promoting national pride.
8. Instruction and learning at the lower grade levels and the appeal/appropriateness of activities to students.

9. The effects of Physical Education instruction on primary school students.

10. The reintroduction of Home Economic and Agricultural Science in primary schools.

11. Specialist Teachers in Primary Schools: Case study on effectiveness of specialist teachers (Dennery Primary School and Montessori School)*

12. Virtual tutoring and after school programs.

13. Assessment of the quality component of the BEEP programme.

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**Literacy and Numeracy**

1. The impact of Ministry of Education summer training in Literacy and Numeracy at the primary level.

2. An analysis of factors that contribute to the poor performance in English and Mathematics at the primary and secondary levels.*

3. Reading practices of children and adults, and the use of the Public Library Services.*

4. An investigation of the Jolly Phonics programme at the primary schools.*

5. Examining the correlations of gender and literacy practices, habits, and abilities in primary school children.

6. The impact of parental involvement on reading abilities and interests of K-2 students.*

7. An assessment of the quality of Literacy and Numeracy Instruction during Early Childhood programming.*

Technical and Vocational Training

2. TVET in relation to for labour market.
4. Examination of strategies for TVET programmes to exploit the diversity of skills and competencies of Saint Lucians
5. TVET Curriculum Reform in Saint Lucia: National Qualification Framework.*

Food & Nutrition Class in progress

Information and Communication Technology in Education

2. Provision of technology-based instruction in all subject areas: Providing and integrating technology in the 21st Century classroom.*
3. The impact of ICT on the education system in Saint Lucia after seventeen (17) years (1999-2016).
4. The impact of ICT use outside school on student motivation/learning outcomes.*
5. Cost-benefit analysis on the use of technology in the education system.
6. The Principal as a Technology Leader: Managing change.*
7. The role of science and technology in Saint Lucia’s education system
8. Investigating the feasibility of IT certification programs as an alternative to CSEC IT at the secondary schools
10. Review of the potential uses of ICTs to accommodate special needs/at-risk students/ gifted students.

Students of Ciceron Secondary School

Human Resource/Training

1. An evaluation of Teacher Training Programmes in Education (SALCC, MOE, UWI):
   Their present configuration/ Needs Analysis of Teacher Training
   Effectiveness in preparing teachers for classroom practice *
2. An audit of existing Human Resource Skills within the Education sector.*
3. Orientation programing for new teachers/ principals and Ministerial staff.
4. Meta-Analysis of Teachers’ Appraisals conducted within the last five years.
5. Reforming Teacher Education: Impact of CSME, CARICOM’s Proposal for Teaching Councils
7. Teacher Performance: A comparative study of teacher performance and years of service before and after attaining permanent status.*
8. Ethics and Professionalism: Dealing with poor performance among permanent staff.*
10. A comparative study on the impact of teaching and learning among graduate trained teachers and graduate untrained teachers.
11. Investigation into the effectiveness of office assistants, bursars, secretaries and other administration staff in education sector.*

12. Tracer study on secondary and tertiary graduates.

13. Training needs of library workers in the effective acquisition and management of information resources and the effective delivery of information.

14. Early Childhood Educators: Training, competence, ability to cater to student with special needs

15. The professional impact of study leave with pay and without pay.

16. The role of curriculum officers in a changing educational environment.

Support Services

1. Factors contributing to student dropout: Prevention Strategies for at risk students.*

2. An investigation into the impact of counselling on indiscipline in primary and secondary schools.

3. How effective is “Second Step”: A social/emotional programme used in grades K-2 to foster students’ social/emotional development.

4. The extent to which special programmes introduced in schools cater to the needs of gifted children.*

5. Reasons why children do not attend school:
   a. Who are those children?
   b. Where are they located?
   c. What are the reasons for non-attendance?*

6. An investigation into the use of developmentally appropriate practices in the infant years (K- Grade 2) of primary education in Saint Lucia. *
7. Teacher perception of students: The impact on teaching and learning
10. The effectiveness of parent conferencing.
11. Implementation of a parenting program for parents of at risk students and secondary school students.*
12. School Community Partnerships; Home-School relationships/links.
13. Comparative analysis of the relationship between bullying and students from homes where domestic abuse is present.*
14. Capacity of student support services in Saint Lucia.
15. Review of students participating in welfare programs: School Transportation Subsidy and School Feeding Programme, Bursaries.*
16. A critical analysis of the School Feeding Programme (schools, parents and students participation).
17. Strengthening the School Feeding Programme through agriculture.
18. Changing lifestyles and eating habits of children through the School Feeding Programme and canteen.
19. Establishing a School Feeding Programme Policy for Saint Lucia.
20. An investigation into the satellite kitchen vs school based kitchens in a School Feeding Programme.
21. Assessment of school resource centres, libraries and computer laboratories.
22. Learning Resource Centers: An effective model
23. Needs assessment of the human and material resources of library services.
24. Computerized information system for library services.
25. Investigating the impact of thrift cooperatives in schools.
27. Audit of disorders among children within the education system
28. Perceptions and misconceptions about special education.
Governance and Management

1. Investigate inter-school networking for improved information sharing and management.*

2. Development of a database with core information on the quality of each school’s management.

3. Communications and Networking within the MOE, Departments, Units, Sub-Offices.*

4. EMIS in practice

5. Policy guidelines for the modernization of library services.

School Management

1. Management of school funds.

2. Current human resource management policies.


4. A review of the roles and functions of the District Education Officers and District Offices in carrying out the mandate of the MOE.*

5. Accountability in the education system in Saint Lucia.

6. Role of the Saint Lucian Principal.

7. Impact of the gender of school Principals on discipline, ethos, school climate and morale.


10. An investigation of the discipline practices of primary schools/secondary schools.

11. Effectiveness of school suspension on improving students’ behavior.

12. An in-depth study into the effects of the removal of corporal punishment and use of alternative forms of discipline.*

13. An investigation to determine the most effective model of management for special needs schools.

14. Review of the governance structure of public schools (School boards).*

15. The role of the PTA in school management.

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General Topics for Quality/Improvement

1. Effectiveness of a formal school review system.

2. The development of minimum facilities standards for schools.

3. The engagement of student councils in school improvement and school effectiveness.

4. School context and our changing environment: Implications for effective planning.

5. Input vs Output: A study of school’s performance versus the resources at their disposal.


8. An investigation into the impact of Child Friendly schools.*


10. Impact of the decentralization of services on schools.
12. An investigation into the factors that contribute to teacher stress/ burnout at public schools*
13. Review of the USE policy and practice- Post 10 years study.*
17. Statistical analysis of MDT cases.*
18. Inter-School Sports: Tracer study of top athletes after they graduate
19. Exploration of a volunteer programme as part of the secondary school exit examination*
21. An evaluation of the ESDP: What is it, whose plan and is it working?*

**Conclusion**

The Ministry of Education, Human Resource Development & Labour is committed to improving the quality of our education system and recognizes the role which research plays in this process. Therefore, necessary support is granted to individuals seeking to undertake studies within the sector. Requests for permission to carry out research in Public Schools must be written on the prescribed form obtainable from the Corporate Planning Unit of the Ministry. Through the Research Officer support is given to students/persons conducting research in education. The Officer can be contacted for further information and clarification of themes in the Research Agenda as well as assistance in accessing available relevant documentation/literature and consultation on the research process. Upon completion of studies, researchers are encourage to share their final document or findings with the Ministry.