



**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION  
YOUTH, SPORTS and CULTURE**

**QUALITY ASSURANCE AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES (QADS)**

**HEMISPHERIC PROJECT FOR THE PREPARATION  
OF POLICES AND STRATEGIES FOR THE  
PREVENTION OF SCHOOL FAILURE**

**BELIZE REPORT**

**JUNE 2005**

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## **Abbreviations**

ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific group
ACS	Association of Caribbean States
BJAT	Belize Junior Achievement Test
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CIE	Cambridge International Examinations
CSEC	Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate
CSO	Central Statistical Office
CXC	Caribbean Examination Council
ECED	Early Childhood Education & Development
ESS	Education Sector Strategy
ETVET	Enhancement of Technical and Vocational Education Training
GCE	General Certificate of Education
GMT	Greenwich Meridian Time
LRE	Least Restrictive Environment
MoE	Ministry of Education
OAS	Organization of American States
PSE	Primary School Examination
QADS	Quality Assurance and Development Services
SICA	Central America Integration System
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education Training
WTO	World Trade Organization

# **1. INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 Geography`**

Belize is located on the Central American mainland, forming part of the Yucatan Peninsula and lying between 15° 45' and 18° 30' north latitude and 87° 30' and 89° 15' west longitude. It is bounded to the north by Mexico, to the west and south by Guatemala and to the east by the Caribbean Sea. The total land area is 22,960 sq km (8,867 square miles) of which 95% is located on the mainland, and 5.0% is distributed over more than 1,060 islands. It has a sub-tropical climate with average temperatures between 23° and 30° centigrade. It is six hours behind GMT, and the capital city is Belmopan. Total national territory (including territorial sea) is 46,620 sq km (18,000 square miles).

## **1.2 Demography**

The last full population census took place in the year 2000. That year the enumerated population stood at 240,204 a 26.8% increase when compared to 189,392 in 1991. According to the Central Statistical Office (CSO) the major cause of this increase during this period was migration. Central Statistics mid year estimates 2003 approximates the total population to be 273, 700. Of this figure 41% are fourteen years or younger.

Belize consists of six districts, which are comprised of cities, towns and villages. The northern districts of Corozal and Orange Walk consist of predominantly Mestizo and Spanish-speaking ethnic groups. The Belize district is comprised primarily of English-speaking Creole. The Cayo district, located in the centre of the country is more mixed, but the other four districts have Mennonite communities, which form a distinct German-speaking cultural element. Moving south, the majority of the population in the Stann Creek district is Garifuna while more than 60% of the inhabitants of Toledo district are Mayan. Three Mayan languages are spoken across the country, Kek'chi, Mopan, and Yucatec.

## **1.3 Political**

Belize is a sovereign state having gained independence from the United Kingdom on 21 September 1981. It is governed under the principles of a representative democracy with a bicameral legislature based on the Westminster model. The Prime Minister and Cabinet form the executive branch, while the National Assembly forms a bicameral legislature comprising a 29-member elected House of Representatives (to be increased to 31) and a thirteen-member appointed Senate (stipulated in section 61 (1) of The Constitution of Belize). The current elected

House of Representatives consists of 21 members of the ruling People's United Party and eight from the United Democratic Party as determined by the general elections held on 5 March 2003 and a by-election in 2004.

Belize is a member of the United Nations, The Commonwealth, the Organization of American States (OAS), the Non-Aligned Movement, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the African, Caribbean and Pacific group (ACP), the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), the Central America Integration System (SICA) and is a party to numerous conventions and international treaties.

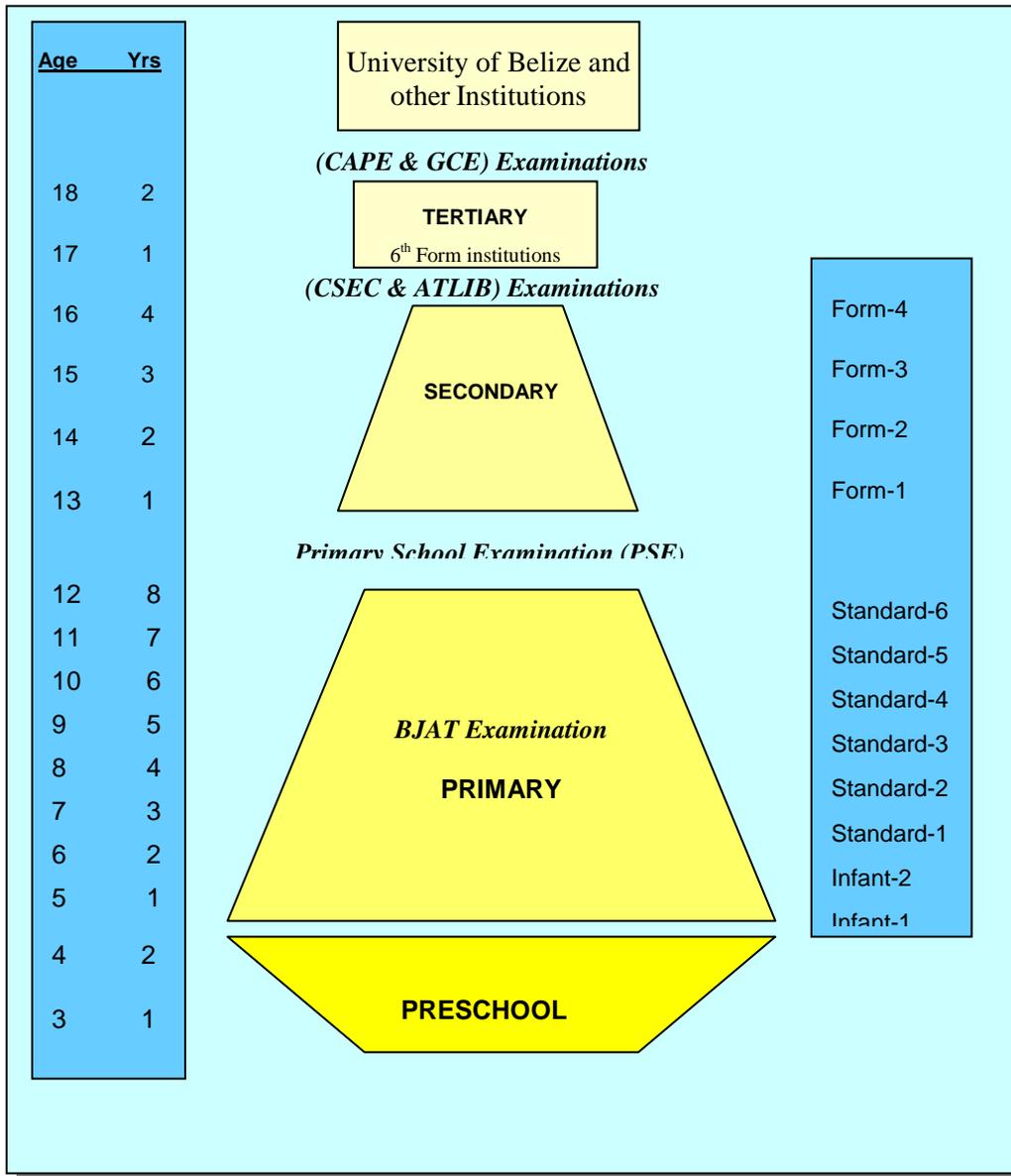
## **2. The Education System**

Belize's education system offers eight years of primary and four years of secondary schooling. Preschool education is not compulsory but the number of preschools has gradually increased over the last two decades. There are nine post secondary institutions including Belize's only National University that evolved from the merger of four former government funded tertiary institutions, and the University College of Belize. While government provides support to tertiary institutions, the cost of a tertiary education is borne primarily by students and/or their parents.

### **2.1 Preschool Education**

The establishment of the first preschools in the 1980s reflects an awareness of the importance of early intervention and the need for developing a readiness for formal schooling. Government's intervention in preschool education began in the 1980's with the appointment of an education officer to supervise that area of the education system. While government currently provides financial support to some pre-schools, the majority are privately owned or managed by denominations and community based organizations. Government assists through the provision of small subsidies to cover the payment of some staff to ensure and improve the quality of pre-school education. The Educational Digest 2003-2004 reported fluctuations in the number of preschools between 1997 and 2004. This can be attributed to the cost parents have to absorb. Recognizing the importance of a pre-school education, the recently elected government in their "Keep Belize Free" manifesto has promised to invest \$10 million in early-childhood education and daycare centers during this term. Over the next five years we should see the strengthening of the pre-school system and the training of more teachers to teach at that level.

**Figure 2.1 Belize Education System**



## 2.2 Primary Education

Primary education is compulsory for pupils age 5-14 years. In 2003-04, there were 276 government and government-aided primary schools with a total enrollment of 62,109 students. Of that number 51.1% were males and 48.9% females. 194 of the primary schools are located in rural areas (See Appendix) with the majority of them classified as partial or fully multi-grade. Over the last decade primary school enrollment has increased by 2.4% annually. The pupil teacher ratio has been relatively low especially in small rural schools. In the 2003-04 academic

year the ratio was 23.5:1. (See Table)

### **2.3 Secondary Education**

At the secondary level, there were 44 schools with total enrollment of 15,359 and a teaching force of 1,060. 293 or 27.6% are classified as graduates with professional training. This number is a dramatic decline in professionally qualified teachers at this level. Although there was a decline in that group, there was a significant rise in uncertified graduates (G). This number grew from 215 in 2002-03 to 284 in 2003-04. The major shift took place in the Belize and Corozal districts but it is not clear what factor/s can be attributed to this dramatic change over such a short period. (See Table)

### **2.4 Church-State Partnership**

A key feature of the educational system is the partnership that exists between the churches and the state. Of the 234 government and grant-aided schools 42 were fully financed by government and 207 were denominational grant-aided schools. The Roman Catholics managed 131 schools with 58% of the primary school population. Under the church/state partnership, government pays 100% of all teachers' salaries, develops curricula and standards, and trains teachers. Government also contributes to the cost of capital expenditure and assists with school maintenance for grant-aided schools. The churches are responsible for the management and maintenance of their respective schools and for all related personnel matters. Despite the role of the various denominations, government is the major contributor to the financing of education.

The church state partnership has come up for debate on numerous occasions. Some have questioned the merits of the government taking over the financing and management of all primary schools given the substantial level of financing it provides to schools. However, government's ability to fully fund and manage all primary schools is often debated. One of the most frequent concerns raised about the management of government run schools is the seeming ineffective and inefficient management- specifically as it relates to supervision of teaching, maintenance of buildings and the provision of materials and supplies among others. Recognizing that the life of most Belizeans is influenced by religion, the decision to have all state run schools may meet with some resistance.

## 2.5 Education Financing

*It is only through Education that we will provide our people with the knowledge, information, skills, values and attitudes required for personal and National development.*

[Francis Fonseca: In search of reform May 2005]

During the nineties, developments in the Belize education sector were primarily characterized by the objectives of improving the quality of instruction at the Primary level, increasing students' achievement levels through a new system of Primary school teachers' training, improving the quality, availability and efficient use of primary educational facilities, and strengthening the planning and management of the education system. These objectives resulted in progress being made in universal access to and completion of primary education and increased acquisition of the knowledge, skills and values required for better living.

Upon assuming office in 1998, the present administration clearly signaled that education would be one of its major priorities for sustainable national development. Given the far-reaching importance of education, Government's policies and plans for the Sector over the medium and long terms were incorporated into a ten-year Education Sector Strategy (ESS) approved by Cabinet in September 1999 that identified nineteen strategic policy objectives. Formulation of the ESS was achieved through consultation with major stakeholders from the public, private and civil society sectors.

Whilst crystallizing strategic plans for the future, the Ministry nevertheless continued to respond to pressing immediate needs of the Belize education sector, particularly with respect to improving access. To this end, the period 1999-2002 saw the establishment and/or strengthening of Pre-School service provision; an amalgamated tertiary system; a student support system to reduce truancy, repetition and dropout at the primary and secondary levels; Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) initiatives; management of education through the launching of the Education Rules; an institutional management structure for the Ministry; and student learning through an Internet for Schools Project. To fine tune the Government's plan for education reform a comprehensive national consultation was conducted that cumulated to an education summit in May 2004. The recommendations derived from the consultation have now evolved into a strategic five year plan for the Ministry of Education (Action Plan 2005-2009).

Expenditure on education for fiscal 2003-04 was 22.6% of government's recurrent budget and 14.1% of the total government expenditure. For fiscal 2003-04, 59.6% of the education budget was for primary education, 26.0% on secondary education, and 5.0% tertiary education. In the primary sector this figure has remained almost constant for the past five years. Expenditure on

secondary education has also remained constant. However recurrent expenditure on tertiary and preschool education has seen a decline over the years, but preschool has seen a significant increase since 2004. Both the Preschool and Special Education Units received less than 1% of the Ministry's total recurrent budget (See Table).. Government pays 100 % of primary teachers' salaries and 70% of secondary teachers' salaries. The largest percentage of the allocation to education is therefore spent on salaries.

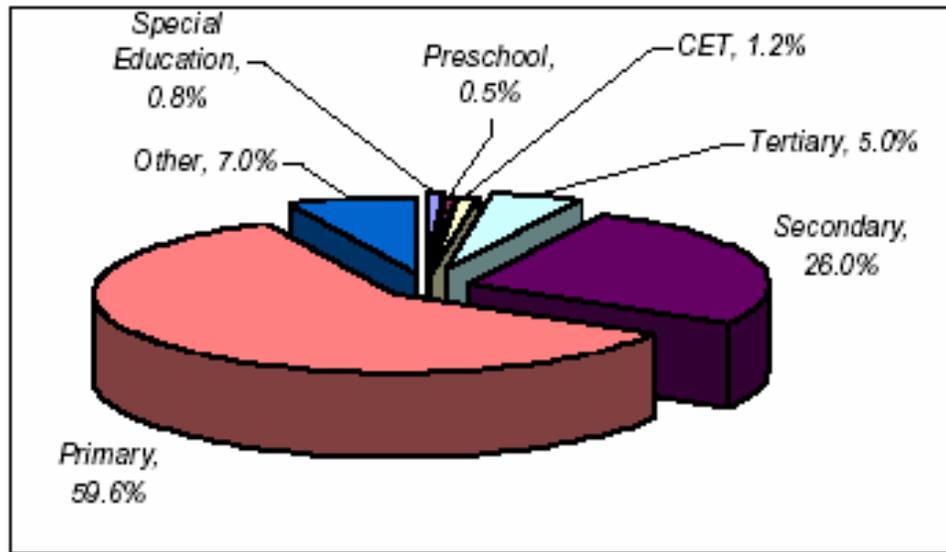
Central to the goals of the Ministry of Education is a demand for improving access and participation in education, and in improving the quality and efficiency of the system. Government's policy of 'free tuition', which was introduced in 1993, puts emphasis on "quality enhancing inputs in education such as the development of sound administration and accountability, the supply of curricular materials, in-service training of teachers and the introduction of appropriate educational technology." (Education Statistics Digest 1996-97). While the 'free tuition' policy sought to address the issue of access and equity, its implementation has contributed to some of the inequities in the system. Government pays the cost of tuition for students enrolled based on tuition rates of each school. At the time of the implementation of the policy, schools varied in the amount of tuition they charged, with the more 'affluent schools' charging the highest tuition. This has placed some schools at a distinct disadvantage and has resulted in many schools increasing incidental fees to help to cover cost. This additional expense has prohibited many parents from sending their children to secondary schools. The Ministry of Education recently completed a study of the financing of secondary education as a measure to address this issue.

**Table 2.1 Economic and Educational Indicators 1999 to 2003**

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Gross Domestic Product (\$mn BZ)	1,464.7	1,663.5	1,734.8	1,851.9	1,976.8
Total Govt. Expenditure (\$mn BZ)	487.8	534.4	568.1	619.3	669.1
Recurrent	291.2	295.8	338.3	372.0	417.1
Capital	196.6	238.6	229.8	247.3	252.0
Total Govt. Expenditure on Education (\$mn BZ)	82.5	93.1	99.9	100.1	110.8
Recurrent	73.4	74.7	80.6	82.2	94.1
Capital	9.1	18.4	19.3	17.9	16.7
Total Govt. Expenditure on Education as a Percentage of GDP	5.6%	5.6%	5.8%	5.4%	5.6%
Total Recurrent Expenditure on Education as a Percentage of Total Govt. Recurrent	25.2%	25.3%	23.8%	22.1%	22.6%
Total Expenditure on Education as a Percentage of Total Govt. Expenditure	16.9%	17.4%	17.6%	16.2%	14.1%

Source: Central Bank of Belize; *Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure, Govt. of Belize, 1999/00—2003/04*

Figure 2.2 Ministry of Education Recurrent Expenditure by Subsector 2003-04



### 3.0 Education Coverage and Performance Indicators.

#### 3.1 Net Enrollment rates per level.

**Table 3.1: Preschool Net Enrolment Rate 2003/2004**

Sex	Enrolment	Population	% enrolled
Total	3,562	15,369	23.2%
Males	1,852	7,793	23.8%
Females	1,710	7,576	22.6%

#### 3.11 Preschool

Preschool is 3-4 years old. The total population of children in this age group is 15,369. Of that total 23.2% were enrolled in preschools in the year 2003/04. There were significant differences in the net enrolment rates of males and females for this period, a difference of 1.2%.

The gross enrolment data for the same period is 24.5%. Gross enrolment is the number enrolled over the total population 3-4. There are children enrolled in preschool who are older than the prescribed age. One suggested factor for such low enrollment in preschool is the high cost. Most preschools are privately owned and operated and as such fees are required to meet the operational cost. Another is preschool is not mandated by law and some parents are therefore inclined to believe it is not important. Accessibility to preschools is another factor particularly in rural villages.

#### 3.12 Primary School- 5-12 years.

**Table 3.2: Primary School Net Enrolment Rates 2003/2004**

Sex	Enrolment	Population	% Enrolled
Total	53,553	59,318	90.3%
Males	26,996	30,184	89.4%
Females	26,557	29,134	91.2%

The figures indicate that the majority of students within this age group are enrolled at that level

of education. Enrollment at this level may be attributed to the fact that Primary education is stipulated by law in Belize. There are Government managed and operated primary schools as well as numerous schools managed by various churches making primary schools very accessible.

Gross Enrolment rates exceeded 100%. This indicates that there are a significant number of students enrolled in primary school who are not in the age group.

### 3.13 Secondary School –13-16 years.

**Table 3.3: Secondary Schools Net Enrolment Rates 2003/2004**

Sex	Enrolment	Population	% Enrolled
<b>Total</b>	11,430	25,941	44.1%
<b>Males</b>	5,359	13,162	40.7%
<b>Females</b>	6,071	12,779	47.5%

The net enrolment at the secondary level is only 44.1%. There is also a significant difference between net enrolment rates for males and females. Lack of available space in schools at this level is sighted as one factor for the low enrolment rates. In addition, more recent studies suggest that the high private cost of some schools is another factor. In Rural areas where students have to travel several miles to access schools the transportation cost prevents many from attending.

There may also be some underlying cultural factors as well. In some communities it is still the practice for children having completely elementary education have met what is required by law and can now fully commit to working for and within their families to help sustain the family, this is more significant for boys than girls. Boys are often encouraged to work and assist in providing for their families. Socio-economic factors seem to be the most influential in secondary enrolment rates.

In one case in Belize city a government funded secondary school opened approximately three years ago. Enrolment was high on opening and has been maintained. Students pay very little, as such neighboring schools that are not fully funded by the government and require the students to pay tuitions have lost a lot of their students and are at risk of closing. In addition students who were unable to afford these denominational schools are able to participate in secondary education because it is almost free.

Gross enrollment rates are 15.1% higher, that is 59% for the same time period. So there are

additional students engaging in secondary education who fall outside the age parameter. The difference between male and female however are still significant, with 62.6% enrolment for female and 55.9% for males.

### 3.2 Enrolment Trends

**Table 3.4 : Preschool Enrolment trends 1993-94 to 2003-4**

Year	No. of Sch	Official age group( Pop)	Enrolment Total	Annual % increase	Gross enrolment ratio
93-94	83	12,905	3,162	0.0%	24.5%
94-95	90	13,156	3,311	4.7%	25.2%
95-96	88	13,629	3,306	-0.2%	24.3%
96-97	94	13,971	3,355	1.5%	24.0%
97-98	88	13,232	3,313	-1.3%	25.0%
98-99	98	13,665	3,634	9.7%	28.7%
99-00	91	13,292	3,608	-0.7%	29.4%
00-01	98	15,048	3,589	-0.5%	27.5%
01-02	99	13,233	3,542	-1.3%	26.8%
02-03	105	15,092	3,791	7.0%	25.1%
03-04	102	15,369	3,765	-0.7%	24.5%

Preschool enrolment for the 2003/04 school year showed a slight decrease of 0.2% as opposed to the previous year where enrolment rose by 7.0%. For the past four school years participation rate have seen a downward trend. In general , the participation rate of the 3-4 years olds has been very low and for the most part, remained below 30% of the 3-4 population age cohort for the past 20 years.

**Table 3.5: Primary School Enrolment Trends 1993-94 to 2003-04.**

Year	Total	Annual % Increase
1993-94	50,291	3.5 %
1994-95	51,377	2.1 %
1995-96	52,994	3.1 %
1996-97	53,110	0.2 %
1997-98	53,118	0.0 %
1998-99	54,616	2.7 %
1999-00	55,700	1.9 %
2000-01	56,382	1.2 %
2001-02	59,552	0.3 %
2002-03	59,930	5.6 %
2003-04	61,938	3.2 %

During the last ten years from 1993/94 to 2003/04, primary school enrolment grew at an average rate of 2.4%. There was a decline in the rate of growth between 1999/00 to 2001/02, however, the past two years have seen a significant increase in the enrolment at the primary level.

**Table 3.6: Secondary School Enrolment trends 1993-94 to 2003-2004.**

Year	Total Enrolment	Annual Increase
1993-94	9,886	
1994-95	10,147	2.6%
1995-96	10,648	4.9 %
1996-97	10,912	2.5 %
1997-98	11,260	3.2 %
1998-99	11,720	4.1 %
1999-00	12,253	4.5 %
2000-01	13,143	7.3 %
2001-02	13,799	5.0 %
2002-03	14,630	6.0 %
2003-2004	15,359	11.3 %

Secondary school enrolment grew rapidly over the last ten years, with an average growth rate of 4.7 %.

### 3.3 Average Repetition Rates 2002-2003

**Table 3.7: Average Primary school repetition Rates 2002-2003**

Sex	Repeaters	Enrolment	Repetition Rate
<b>Total</b>	5,869	59,930	9.8 %
<b>Males</b>	3,401	30,613	11.1 %
<b>Females</b>	2,468	29,317	8.4 %

The repetition rate measures the number of primary school children repeating the current year. Primary schools had an overall repetition rate of 8.4% for the school year 2002-2003. The data shows that statistically, significantly more boys are repeating than girls.

**Table 3.8: Primary School Repetition by Grade 1996-2003**

Yr	Beginners	Infant1	Infant2	Std.1	Std. 2	Std. 3	Std.4	Std. 5	Std. 6	All Repeaters
<b>96-97</b>	No. 45 % 5	No.1,067 % 15	No. 571 % 9	No 646 % 10	No. 624 % 11	No. 627 % 11	No. 547 % 10	No. 453 % 9	No. 494 % 11	No. 5,074 % 10.6
<b>97-98</b>	No. 103 % 9	No.1,160 % 14	No. 572 % 8	No.712 % 10	No. 614 % 9	No.597 % 9	No. 627 % 10	No. 515 % 10	No. 592 % 12	No. 5,492 % 10.3
<b>98-99</b>	No. 40 % 4.3	No.1,170 % 13.8	No. 630 % 8.6	No.673 % 9.2	No. 633 % 9.0	No. 566 % 8.5	No. 552 % 8.2	No. 403 % 7.3	No. 423 % 8.6	No.5,090 % 9.3
<b>99-00</b>	No. 45 % 4.3	No.1,326 % 15.8	No. 626 % 8.3	No.602 % 8.3	No. 701 %9.8	No. 601 % 8.8	No. 596 % 9.1	No.465 % 8.0	No. 204 %4.0	No.5,166 %9.3
<b>00-01</b>	No. 48 % 5.2	No.1,271 % 15.1	No. 571 % 7.5	No.684 % 9.1	No. 578 % 8.0	No. 535 % 7.9	No. 466 % 7.0	No. 376 % 6.2	No. 180 % 3.5	No.4,709 % 8.3
<b>01-02</b>	No. 11 % 1.5	No.1,274 % 15.2	No. 700 % 9.0	No.682 % 9.0	No. 655 % 9.0	No. 562 % 8.1	No. 527 % 8.0	No. 446 % 7.2	No. 243 % 4.6	No.5,100 % 9.0
<b>02-03</b>	No. 11 % 0.2	No.1,370 % 17.2	No. 885 % 11.5	No.821 % 11.1	No. 785 % 11.1	No. 671 % 10.4	No. 547 % 9.6	No. 497 % 8.3	No. 279 % 4.9	No.5,869 % 9.8

The 1997-98 record shows a repetition rate of 10.3% a reduction from 1996-97 which was

10.6%. The decline in the rate of repetition continues through to 2001 with a rate of 8.3%. However, there is a significant increase through to 2003 where the rate of repetition is 9.8%. Throughout the time period 1996-2003 Infant 1 has maintained the highest repetition rate, the lowest being 13.8% 1998-99 and the highest 17.2% 2002-03.

**Table 3.9: Average Secondary School Repetition Rate 2002-2003**

Sex	Repeaters	Enrolment	Repetition Rate
<b>Total</b>	1,109	14,603	7.6 %
<b>Males</b>	613	7,129	8.6 %
<b>Females</b>	496	7,501	6.6 %

The overall repetition rate among secondary students is 7.6%. The data shows higher incidences of repetition for males than females. There is however a 1.5% decrease in repetition over the previous year.

There is significantly more repetition in the primary years than in secondary. One factor to be considered is primary schools education is mandatory and secondary is not. Rather than repeat in secondary school a student may choose to drop out. The data illustrating school drop out rates in tables 3.11 and 3.12 will show that the drop out rates for secondary education are significantly higher than primary.

**Table 3.10: Secondary Schools Repletion by Grade 1998-2003**

Year	Form 1	Form 2	Form 3	Form 4	All Repeaters
98-99	No. 318 % 8.5	No. 239 % 7.8	No. 265 % 9.8	No. 86 4.2	No. 909 % 7.8
99-00	No. 355 % 8.9	No. 268 % 8.4	No. 258 % 9.1	No. 87 % 4.1	No. 968 % 7.9
00-01	No. 454 % 10	No. 313 % 9.3	No.273 % 9.6	No. 60 % 2.6	No. 1,100 % 8.4
01-02	No.443	No. 407	No. 307	No. 94	No. 1,252

	%9.4%	% 11	%10.1	4.1	% 9.1
02-03	No. 202	No. 123	No. 125	No. 44	No. 494
	% 8.4	% 6.1	% 7.3	% 3.3	% 6.6

There was a very slight increase in the repetition rate between 1998-99 and 1999-00. The rate increase through to 2001 and saw a significant reduction 2003-2003. The lowest repetition rates were generally recorded for form 4. Form 3 averages the highest rate over the time period of available data.

### 3.4 Average School Dropout Rates.

The statistic is a measure of the proportion of the previous year's enrolment that dropped out of school. That is the total number of students who dropped out in year one as a percentage of the total enrolment in year one.

**Table 3.11: Average Primary School Dropout Rate 2002-2003**

Sex	Dropouts	Enrolment	Dropout Rate
Total	620	59,930	1.0 %
Males	336	30,613	1.1 %
Females	284	29,317	1.0 %

**Table 3.12: Average Secondary School Dropout Rate 2002-2003**

Sex	Dropout	Enrolments	Dropout Rate
Total	1,074	14,630	7.3%
Males	626	7,129	8.8%
Females	448	7,501	6.0%

Secondary dropout rates for 2002-2003 were significantly higher than dropout rates at the primary level. There was very little difference between male and female dropout rates at the

primary level but at the secondary level males had a much greater tendency to dropout than females.

The high cost attached to secondary education is one factor impacting dropout rate at the secondary level. If a student has not met the criteria at the primary level to be promoted the data suggest they are more likely to repeat than to drop out where as at the secondary we may see dropping out as a more immediate response to failure.

**Table 3.13: Primary Schools Dropout by Grade 1996-2003**

Year	Begin	Infant 1	Infant 2	Standard 1	Standard 2	Standard 3	Standard 4	Standard 5	Standard 6	All
96-97	No. 2 % 0	No. 4 % 1	No. 30 %0	No. 42 % 1	No. 49 % 1	No. 71 %1	No. 189 % 4	No. 175 % 4	No. 11 % 0	No. 609 % 1.3
97-98	No.2 % 0	No. 32 %0	No. 22 % 0	No. 23 % 0	No. 39 %1	No. 68 % 1	No. 100 % 2	No. 200 % 4	No. 110 % 2	No. 596 %1.1
98-99	No. 2 % .2	No. 15 % .2	No. 10 % .1	No.14 % .2	No. 19 % .3	No. 52 % .8	No. 100 % 1.6	No. 187 % 3.4	No. 75 % 1.5	No. 474 % .9
99-00	No. 0 % 0	No. 16 %.2	No. 11 %11	No. 17 % .2	No. 25 %.3	No. 41 %.6	No. 89 %1.4	No. 160 %2.7	No. 54 %1.1	No. 413 %.7
00-01	No. 2 %.2	No. 11 %.1	No. 8 %.1	No. 12 %.2	No. 25 %.3	No. 46 %.7	No. 93 %1.4	No.139 % 2.3	No. 50 % 1	No. 386 %.7
01-02	-	No. 21 %.2	No. 17 %.2	No. 34 %.5	No. 35 %.5	No. 41 %.6	No. 105 % 1.6	No. 124 % 7.2	No. 82 %1.6	No. 459 %.8
02-03	-	No. 45 %.5	No.17 %.2	No. 45 %.6	No. 38 %.5	No. 52 %.7	No. 129 %1.8	No. 161 %2.5	No. 133 %2.3	No. 620 %1

Dropout rates at the primary level increases generally with the upper grades. Overall there has been a drop out rate of less than one percent at this level. It should be noted however that the figures reported may not present an accurate description as many schools are unable to distinguish actual dropouts from the school system from students who have transferred to other schools.

**Table 3.14: Secondary School Dropout Rates by Grade**

Year	Form 1	Form 2	Form 3	Form 4	All
96-97	No. 500 % 13.69	No. 315 % 10.90	No. 215 % 8.81	No. 103 % 5.82	No. 1,175 % 10.77
97-98	No. 416 % 11.27	No. 262 % 8.76	No. 217 % 8.85	No. 96 % 4.85	No. 1,019 % 9.05
98-99	No. 318 % 8.5	No. 239 % 7.8	No. 265 % 9.8	No. 86 % 4.2	No. 909 % 7.8
99-00	No. 456 % 11.5	No. 230 % 7.2	No. 209 % 7.4	No. 66 % 3.1	No. 985 % 8.0
00-01	No. 601 % 13.2	No. 292 % 8.7	No. 287 % 10.1	No. 80 % 3.5	No. 1,274 % 9.7
01-02	No. 603 % 12.9	No. 422 % 11.4	No. 249 % 8.2	No. 179 % 7.8	No. 1,472 % 10.7
02-03	No. 474 % 9.8	No. 278 % 7.1	No. 212 % 6.5	No. 74 % 2.9	No. 1,074 % 7.3

Generally form 1 has the highest dropout rates for the data provided over the period 1996-97 to 2002-2003. Dropout figures clearly signaled a positive decline from 1996-97 to 1997-98 of approximately 1.7 percentage points. There was an increase in dropouts for the period 1999-2002. There was then a decline in the overall dropout rates from 10.7% to 7.3% in 2002-2003.

### 3.4 Transition Rate

**Table3.15: Transition Rate to Secondary School**

Years	Total transition %
1997-98	79.8 %
1998-99	81.6 %
1999-00	84.7 %
2000-01	87.0 %
2001-2002	87.4 5
2002-03	90.3 %
2003-04	84.2 %

The rate of transition from primary to secondary schools for 2003 to 2004 decreased from 90.3% to 84.2 %. This is believed to be a result of the significant number of form 1 students who repeated. There has been an increase in the number of primary schools and as such more students applying to enter secondary school. The overall rate of transition is consistently above 80 % except for 97-98.

### 3.5 Graduation rates per level

**Table 3.16: Government and Government Aided Primary School Completion Rate 2003-04**

Sex	Completion rate
Overall	40.4 %
Male	34.1 %
Female	43.4 %

The data represented above represents the number of children who entered primary school in the 1995/96 school year and completed the primary school education in the eight period of study for primary schools. Therefore for the data to show a completion rate of 40.4 % overall then 59.6 % of the students of this group repeated at least once during the primary cycle or was unable to complete the cycle. The data in table 3.16 shows drop out rates for primary schools at 1% therefore repetition were more likely to be occurring than incompleteness which could be interpreted as dropping out.

**Table 3.17: Secondary School Completion Rate 2003-4**

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Completion Rate</b>
<b>Overall</b>	51.3 %
<b>Males</b>	48.4 %
<b>Females</b>	56.2 %

51.3% of the students who entered high school in 1998/1999 were able to complete high school in the four years ending 2003/2003. The completion rates for females at 56.2% were significantly higher than males at 48.4%. Dropout and repetition rates at the secondary level according to tables 3.12 and 3.9 respectively are almost equal and can be factors used to account for the data above.

### 3.6 Quality of the Teaching Force

**Table 3.18: Trained Primary School Teachers 1997-98 to 2003-2004.**

Year	Total no. of teachers	% Trained
1997-98	2,015	56.6
1998-99	2,064	60.6
1999-00	2,125	49.8
2000-01	2,187	57.3%
2001-02	2,278	55.6%
2002-03	2,474	53.0
2003-04	2, 643	52.1%

During the 1998-99 school year there was an increase of 49 teachers in the primary school system, 2.4% up from 1997-98 figures. The figures showed a slight increase of 4 percentage points in the number of trained teachers for 1998-1999 over the 1997-98 school year, 60.6% to 56.6 % respectively. There was an increase in the number of teachers for the 1999-2000 school year but a decrease in the number of trained teachers. The number of teachers increased for the following school years, but there has not been a concurrent increase in the number of trained teachers.

**Table 3.19: Level of training of Secondary school Teachers 1999-00 to 2003-04**

Year	Total # of teachers	Total Trained	Graduate Trained	Graduate	Trained Teacher	Other
1999-00	800	65.75	33.9 %	22.8 %	9 %	34.45
2000-01	868	64 %	32.1 %	24.9 %	7 %	36 %
2001-02	896	64.4 %	19.8 %	35.7 %	8.9 %	35 %
2002-03	982	62.9 %	33.7 %	21.9 %	7.3 %	37 %
2003--04	1,060	62 %	27.7 %	26.8 %	7.5 %	38.1 %

Between 1999-00 to 2003-04 there has been an increase in the number of teachers for each school year. This was in keeping with increase in enrollment for the same period and the addition of new schools. Above 60 % of the teacher force at this level has received some formal training in education or at the graduate level. Other represents teachers who have completed sixth form or high school.

### 3.7 Inequalities within the Education system.

The data above is an overall account of the entire country of Belize. However, as we examine the data closely along side other demographic data of the country we see where inequalities exist on the basis of geographic location. This in turn may produce inequalities along the domain of ethnicity. Belize a very diverse country in terms of its ethnic composition and there tend to be concentrations of particular ethnic groups at specific locations across the country.

**Table 3.20: Population Statistic by District 2003 (thousands) and number of preschools by districts.**

<b>Total population</b>	<b>Belize</b>	<b>Cayo</b>	<b>Corozal</b>	<b>Orange Walk</b>	<b>Stann Creek</b>	<b>Toledo</b>
<b>273.7</b>	81.4	61.0	34.6	42.8	27.9	26.0
<b>Total preschools</b>	44	19	15	9	11	4
<b>102</b>						

The disparity is clear from the data above that location is major factor impacting accessibility to pre schools. For approximately every 1600 people in Belize district there is an available pre school while for Toledo for approximately 6000 people a preschool is available. It is however true that on closer examination the underlying factor that dominates remains one of economics. Private operations of pre schools are not willing to establish a school unless it will be economically viable for them. Many families in these rural communities simply cannot afford the cost.

There are great disparities in the level of training of teachers across the districts. The concentration of highest levels of training for both primary and secondary are in Belize District. Toledo and Stann Creek lag behind all others by far.

### 3.8 Teacher student Ratio

**Table 3.21: Primary School teacher student ratio 1999-00 to 2003-04**

Year	Teacher Student Ratio
1999-00	27:1
2000-01	26:1
2001-02	25:1
2002-03	24:1
2003-04	24:1

The student teacher remains at an overall average of about 25:1. However with the number of trained teachers in the primary schools averaging below 60 % consistently the ratio of student to trained teacher almost doubles.

### 3.9 Examination Results

#### 3.91 National Examinations (Primary Schools)

At the primary level two public examinations are administered on an annual basis: the Primary School Examination (PSE) administered to all students completing primary education and Belize Junior Achievement Test (BJAT) administered to all students completing the middle division of primary education. The PSE consists of criterion-referenced measures in English, mathematics and science. Both the English and mathematics papers are comprised of a combination of multiple-choice and free response items. Science is comprised of multiple-choice items only. Performance on the PSE is recorded as a percentage and candidates are provided with a score in the three areas tested. The PSE is administered under standardized conditions and candidates are required to move to examination centers for security purposes. Secondary schools use the results of the PSE to determine selection and placement of their first year intake. The results from the BJAT are provided to schools in a report containing each student's scores as well as an analysis of the school's performance compared to other schools. Results from both the BJAT and PSE are

used for system monitoring purposes.

### 3.92 BJAT Performance 2000-2003

**Table 3.22: Average performance for Language Arts Out of a Total 100%**

Year	National average
2000	46.3 %
2001	46.7 %
2001	42.6 %
2003	44.6 %

**Table 3.23: Average performance for Mathematics out of a total of 100%**

Year	National Average
2000	47.6 %
2001	45.8 %
2002	46.8 %
2003	48.25

The average performance over the past four years on the BJAT has been low. The average score on both subject areas have been below 50%.

### 3.93 PSE Performance 2000-2004

**Table 3.24: National Average Percent by Subject 2000-2004**

Year	English	Math	Science	Soc. Studies
2000	50.2	42.1	49.3	-
2001	50.1	44.9	56.4	-
2002	46.7	39.8	56.2	-
2003	52.2	39.4	50.0	-
2004	55.3	54.9	67.0	69.9

The 2004 results showed marked improvement most areas of the examination. Factors believed to be directly related to this include the administering of the examination over two days rather than one as was in the past, better understanding of the examination and what is required with respect to preparing the children, and the combined efforts of candidates, parents and teachers.

### 3.94 Regional Examinations

Although it is anticipated that national examinations will soon be put in place at two levels of secondary, end of second form and end of fourth form, the only public examinations currently offered are external examinations provided by the Caribbean Examination Council (CXC). These examinations are not compulsory although most students work towards sitting some combination of these examinations at the completion of secondary education. Results from these examinations are used for employment purposes as well as matriculation to higher education institutions locally as well as internationally. CXC provides examinations in a wide range of subjects from which students may choose a combination to sit.

### 3.95 International Examinations

Two examining boards- Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) and Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) offer Advanced (A) level examinations in Belize. The CIE

offerings are under the General Certificate of Education (GCE) International Syllabi "in a wide range of subjects, including over 30 languages, as well as science, mathematics, humanities, arts and work-related subjects such as information technology and business skills." Some employers use the A level certification for job placement and remuneration purposes. The examination results are also used by some candidates to meet matriculation requirements at some universities as well as for qualifying criteria for some scholarships.

### 3.96 CSEC PERFORMANCE:

**Table 3.25: Student Performance in CSEC by District and Urban/Rural Location 2003**

District	Form 4 Enrol. 2003	ENGLISH A				MATHEMATICS			
		No. of Sitters	Number	% of Sitters	% of F4 Enrol	No. of Sitters	Number	% of Sitters	% of F4 Enrol
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,518</b>	<b>2,384</b>	<b>1,196</b>	<b>50.2%</b>	<b>47.5%</b>	<b>2,277</b>	<b>1,011</b>	<b>44.4%</b>	<b>40.2%</b>
Belize	979	892	512	57.4%	52.3%	865	367	42.4%	37.5%
Cayo	576	509	251	49.3%	43.6%	491	150	30.5%	26.0%
Corozal	299	242	125	51.7%	41.8%	239	155	64.9%	51.8%
Orange Walk	273	263	146	55.5%	53.5%	211	121	57.3%	44.3%
Stann Creek	263	263	86	32.7%	32.7%	261	84	32.2%	31.9%
Toledo	128	215	76	35.3%	59.4%	210	134	63.8%	104.7%
<b>Urban</b>	<b>2,125</b>	<b>2,095</b>	<b>1,128</b>	<b>53.8%</b>	<b>53.1%</b>	<b>2,004</b>	<b>935</b>	<b>46.7%</b>	<b>44.0%</b>
Belize	893	820	494	60.2%	55.3%	801	365	45.6%	40.9%
Cayo	576	509	251	49.3%	43.6%	491	150	30.5%	26.0%
Corozal	117	113	91	80.5%	77.8%	114	97	85.1%	82.9%
Orange Walk	242	263	146	55.5%	60.3%	211	121	57.3%	50.0%
Stann Creek	169	175	70	40.0%	41.4%	177	68	38.4%	40.2%
Toledo	128	215	76	35.3%	59.4%	210	134	63.8%	104.7%
<b>Rural</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>23.5%</b>	<b>17.3%</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>27.8%</b>	<b>19.3%</b>
Belize	86	72	18	25.0%	20.9%	64	2	3.1%	2.3%
Cayo	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
Corozal	182	129	34	26.4%	18.7%	125	58	46.4%	31.9%
Orange Walk	31	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
Stann Creek	94	88	16	18.2%	17.0%	84	16	19.0%	17.0%
Toledo	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0	0	0.0%	0.0%

CXC CSEC examinations attract the largest number of entries as these examinations are administered at the end of secondary level. A total of 2,384 candidates sat the CSEC English A and 2,277 candidates sat the CSEC Mathematics examinations in 2003. These totals consisted primarily of urban candidates, with rural candidates amounting to 289 and 273 in the English and Math exams, respectively.

Overall, satisfactory levels of performance were achieved by 50.2% and 44.4% of candidates sitting the English and Mathematics exams, respectively. These corresponded to some 47.5% (English A) and 40.2% (Mathematics) of the total Form 4 enrolment for the 2002-03 school year.

## **4.0 Situational Analysis**

This analysis presents a brief overview of major findings and observations of the education system in relation to school failures as highlighted by the statistical information, indicators and data derived from the ongoing supervision of schools.

### **4.1 Major Findings**

#### **4.1.1 Successes**

Building on the successes of the previous years, the Ministry of Education continues to work towards its goal to achieve universal access to primary education, affordable secondary and tertiary education, and provide appropriate skills training to an increasing number of young people and adult learners. There are sustained increases to access educational opportunities at all levels of the education system.

The 2003-04 Education annual report indicated achievements in many priority areas such as:

- increased access to pre-school education;
- improvement in the delivery of both primary and secondary curricula;
- ongoing implementation of the TVET Project;
- provision of greater support for tertiary education;
- increased opportunity for teacher training; and
- the strengthening of capacity to deliver services at the district level.

The report continued to say that due to the greater demands of our changing society, has led to increased government's investment in supporting education and enables them to improve in critical areas.

The 2004 results of the Primary School Examination (PSE) reflected the highest national mean scores on all subjects tested since the introduction of the PSE in May 2000 - a clear break in the general trend of overall poor performance.

The 2003-2004 school year saw a 3.6% increase in primary enrollment and 11.3% increase in secondary enrollment, a clear indication of the Ministry's continued efforts to realize the national goal of providing universal access to secondary education. Transition rates from primary to

secondary now stands at approximately 84% of primary school leavers. As student enrollment increased additional resources such as teachers and additional classrooms were provided to schools. The numbers of primary teachers saw an increase of 6.8 % and secondary teachers by 10.4%.

At the District level efforts were made particularly to strengthen the capacity of the District Education Centers and encourage greater participation of the National and Regional Education Councils. Curriculum field officers conducted ongoing supervisory visits to monitor the implementation of the primary curriculum in schools countrywide as a part of each District Management team. Feedback from school supervisory visits informs planning for in-service training and Continuous Professional Development workshops.

The National Education Summit which took place in May 2004 was the hallmark of achievements as it resulted in a reaffirmed commitment by government and key stakeholders to improve the system. This added trust is now translated into the MoE Action plan 2005-2010.

#### **4.1.2 Current and ongoing challenges**

Despite progress in certain areas in relation to accommodating the components of the 1999 Education Strategy, there are still current and ongoing challenges; highlighted as school failures. There is a need for:

- a) Greater commitment by Government that can translate into adequate resources and access to funds to address access especially at the preschool level.
- b) Clear targeting of interventions for preventive activities that leads to reduced failures especially for vulnerable groups.
- c) Strengthening of the supervision and monitoring of schools.
- d) Strengthening institutional capacity to improve the teaching of relevant curricula and engage in in-house activities to combat repetition and dropouts.
- e) Increasing teacher training to reduce the large number of unqualified teachers that are in the system.
- f) Greater involvement and strengthening the roles of Parents and communities in education

## **4.2 Other observations:**

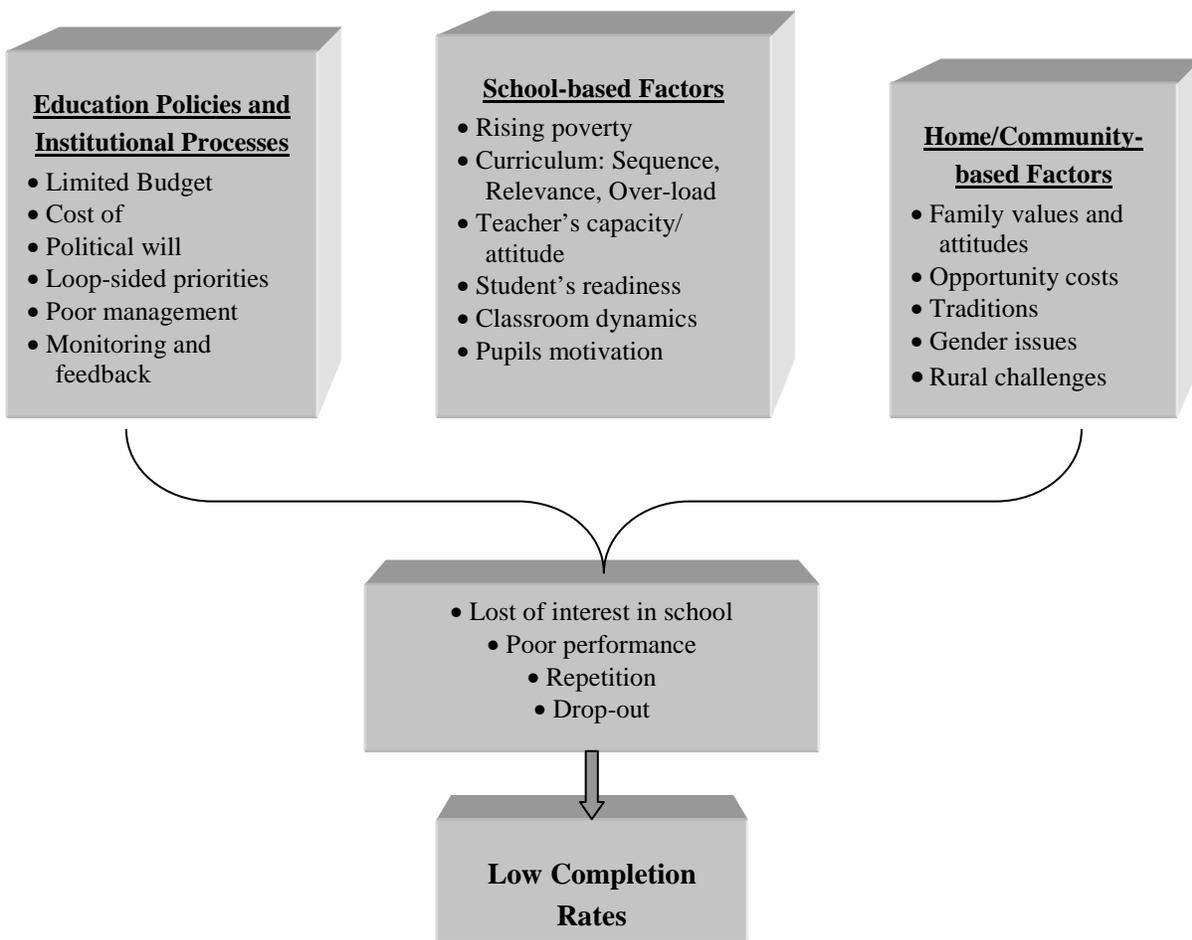
- a) The Ministry of Education has been able to provide the framework and strategic plans for the system; however, there is a lack of resources to translate these strategies into effective implementation.
- b) Whatever program is being implemented nationally, based on the areas identified in the strategy, monitoring and evaluation is lacking or inadequate to provided basis for further improvement and progress of the program. The lack of timely review has contributed to inability of the strategy to capture new or emerging issues in the region.
- d) Stakeholders commitments varies across the country, however, it is difficult to measure, as commitments made by district leaders at national meetings are not often reflected at the district levels.
- e) In schools where, school failure is high, there seems to be the accepted culture of complacency with little or no urgency to address problems.
- h) Given the number and range of educational institutions in the country, there is a need for more partnership and networking.
- i) Summer School readiness programs for entry to primary school must be championed as interim measures and not as a long term strategy.
- j) Funding from national revenues has been a major constraint and budgets that are dedicated specifically to reduce school failure are mostly through other externally funded programs.
- k) The School Performance and Improvement plans have made significant improvements in schools that have implemented it, hence SPIP must be a requirement for all education institutions.

## **4.3 Causative Factors**

Previously indicated is that many children who enter the school system at the primary level, do not complete the cycle and the problem increases as we review the data for the secondary level. Pupils repeat at various stages of the education system, especially in Infant 1 and First form. The situation is grave and worsening, a trend which contradicts the national goal of increasing and improving quality in both levels. This section highlights some of the plausible causative factors

which are behind the low completion rates within the school system, but more importantly it alludes to how a weak early childhood Education system has contributed. As shown in Figure 4.1, the factors are divided into three categories: education policies and institutional processes; school-based factors; and home- and community-based factors. Each category has impacted early childhood education in Belize either directly or indirectly hence adding to the causes.

**Figure 4.1: Factors Affecting Completion Rates within the Education System**



### 4.31 Education Policies and Institutional Processes

Although official expenditure on education has been somewhat constant in the last five years, public recurrent expenditure per primary and secondary school-child has been rising in recent fiscal years. The cost-sharing norm between the Ministry of Education and institution providers has resulted in a greater shift of the financing to parents. This burden has made it difficult for

parents and communities to support education adequately; consequently, education is beyond the reach of many households (most evident at the preschool level). In addition, in schools fully financed by government, poverty stricken parents are unable to feed their children properly and provide adequate health services. In these circumstances, children whose parents cannot afford costs of instructional materials, school uniforms, tuition fees, and activity fees tend to go to school irregularly and, in the long run, drop out of school. Faced with limited resources, and reduced returns from education, parents are not only unable but also unmotivated to educate their children. In the end, these factors have negative effects on children's school participation and their success.

The legacy of an elitist education system has plagued the efforts to provide universal access to education in Belize. Although many classrooms were being created and filled on a yearly basis; the curriculum, methodology, assessment and teaching practices remained traditional and targeting only those students ready and equipped to learn. What is the readiness level of pupils entering primary school or secondary schools? This question continues to be answered by the high repetition rate at these levels. All efforts must be made to address the factors leading to the increased failures at these levels.

Up until the early 90's, early childhood education was deferred mainly to the private sector. Daycare centers and preschools received most of their financing from the parents. This private provision introduced many discrepancies and inequities. Having very limited resources and control over preschools the government remained to a large degree isolated from that level. The need for children to have a jump-start for primary school has seen an increasing shift by government to provide for preschools. But the heavy costs for primary education continue to take the lion's share of government's expenditure, leaving very little to be pumped into early childhood education. Also, teachers trained in early childhood education could only be remunerated at the primary level, hence leaving a gaping absence of qualified teachers in preschools. Private providers of schools have very little accountability systems in place and hence the efficiency and quality of the schools remains a huge challenge.

The management of most schools, as defined by the church-state system, and is carried out by representatives of the respective denominations. The quality of managers and school administrators continues to surface as a fundamental issue. More must be done to hold the managements accountable for the provision of education services, schools supervision has been lacking at many levels and many times a school would be operating for years without being visited by supervisors.

### 4.32 School-Based Factors

Several school-based factors have been cited as being responsible for high drop-outs, and hence low completion rates among primary and secondary school pupils in most Belizean schools. The cost of school-based instruction itself is a major factor. Schools require pupils to have uniforms, textbooks, and stationery, and pay tuition and activity fees. Since the cost of these items is high, children, whose parents cannot afford to provide all or most of these requirements, are always under pressure from the schools' administrators. The frustrations these pupils go through affect their academic performance: they lose interest in education and, eventually, drop out of school.

The curriculum is one of the factors which affect pupils' participation in school negatively. Three significant curriculum issues are cited for their negative impact, namely its content sequence, its relevance and its over-load. To a large extent schools operate in isolation from each other and more significant from those below or above in level. The break in some cases, and in others the repetition in content within the curriculum continuum, have both contributed significantly to student's poor performance. In first case there are gaps in the content that is taught and in the second it creates boredom. The poor articulation of the curriculum across these levels contributes to the unpreparedness of students transiting from one level to another.

What is being taught to students are many time out of sync with the times that they are living in. The rapidly changing world has the effect of racing past what is being taught in schools. The efforts being made to address curriculum relevance has been limited hence further increasing the gap. Curriculum irrelevant for the needs of students hits at the core of motivating students, hence reducing their performance and achievement.

Overcrowded curriculum places enormous pressure on pupils in schools. They are taught 13 subjects or more depending on the level. This task is usually undertaken in as short a day as possible and within a short school year, which is already filled with a lot of holidays. These burdens have negative effects on schooling, affecting students' motivation for learning. The consequences are that their performance deteriorates. In the process, some children give up on education and, in the long run, drop out of school. These demanding curriculums also have a bearing on the costs borne by parents, such as the purchase of textbooks and payment for extra tuition.

Teachers' attitudes towards their work and pupils coupled with their qualification, their classroom management and their interaction with pupils have a great impact on the academic achievement and the retention in school of their pupils. A study of school dropouts indicate that there are cases where teachers' lack of training, negative attitudes "push" pupils, out of school. These pupils are sometimes neglected, abused, mishandled, and sent out of class during teaching-

learning periods. This atmosphere is not conducive to learning and makes some children hate school. An obvious result of all this are absenteeism, poor performance, and non-completion of the education cycle.

Many girls are forced out of Belize's schools yearly due to policies on pregnancy. The environment in regards to pregnancy has two negative effects: (i) it discourages parents from sending their daughters to schools that are willing to allow teen mothers to complete their secondary education. (ii) Pregnant girls that are kicked out of school lose interest in their education and stay out altogether.

### **4.33 Home and Community-Based Factors**

The rise in the level of poverty in Belize (the 2002 Poverty Assessment Report indicates that 33% of Belizeans live below the poverty line) is one of the major factors which discourage parents from investing in their children's education. Parents, and by extension, many communities, are not in a position to meet the ever-increasing cost of schooling adequately. As the level of poverty rises, child labor has become crucial for family survival. Poor households, and in some cases children themselves, have to carefully analyze the opportunity costs of education. As a result, parents have continued to send their children, into the labor market— into the agriculture fields, and a new phenomenon is children being engaged in the arts and craft business to supply the flourishing tourism industry. Meanwhile, boys from agricultural areas are pulled out of school in order to earn money to help with the family income. These practices are rooted in some traditions especially among immigrant farmers from Central America. Pressure is therefore put on them to leave school and meet traditional expectations. In a situation where parents and children have negative attitudes towards education or do not see its immediate benefits, the consequence is a high drop-out rate.

### **4.4 Final Analysis**

Based on the findings of the review and observations of the education system in relation to school failures there is the need to holistically address the challenges identified. The inefficiency caused by low completion rates is a serious waste which must be arrested immediately. The government and its partners in education must continue to promote early childhood education and in addition come up with viable policy initiatives, including affirmative action to salvage the education system from this inefficiency.

## **5.0 General Strategies to Reduce School Failure**

There is no one magical, quick fix solution to reducing school failure. The problem is complex and requires a complex array of solutions. It is a national problem which must be addressed by the whole society. It requires resources that go beyond the school, and solutions require a team approach--the combined efforts of students, parents, teachers, administrators, community-based organizations, and business, as well as the government. The Ministry of Education is in a constant mode of improving the education system. This approach most of the time indirectly addresses school failure. Current reforms are guided by MoE 's Action plan 2005-2010 that cites eight key areas:

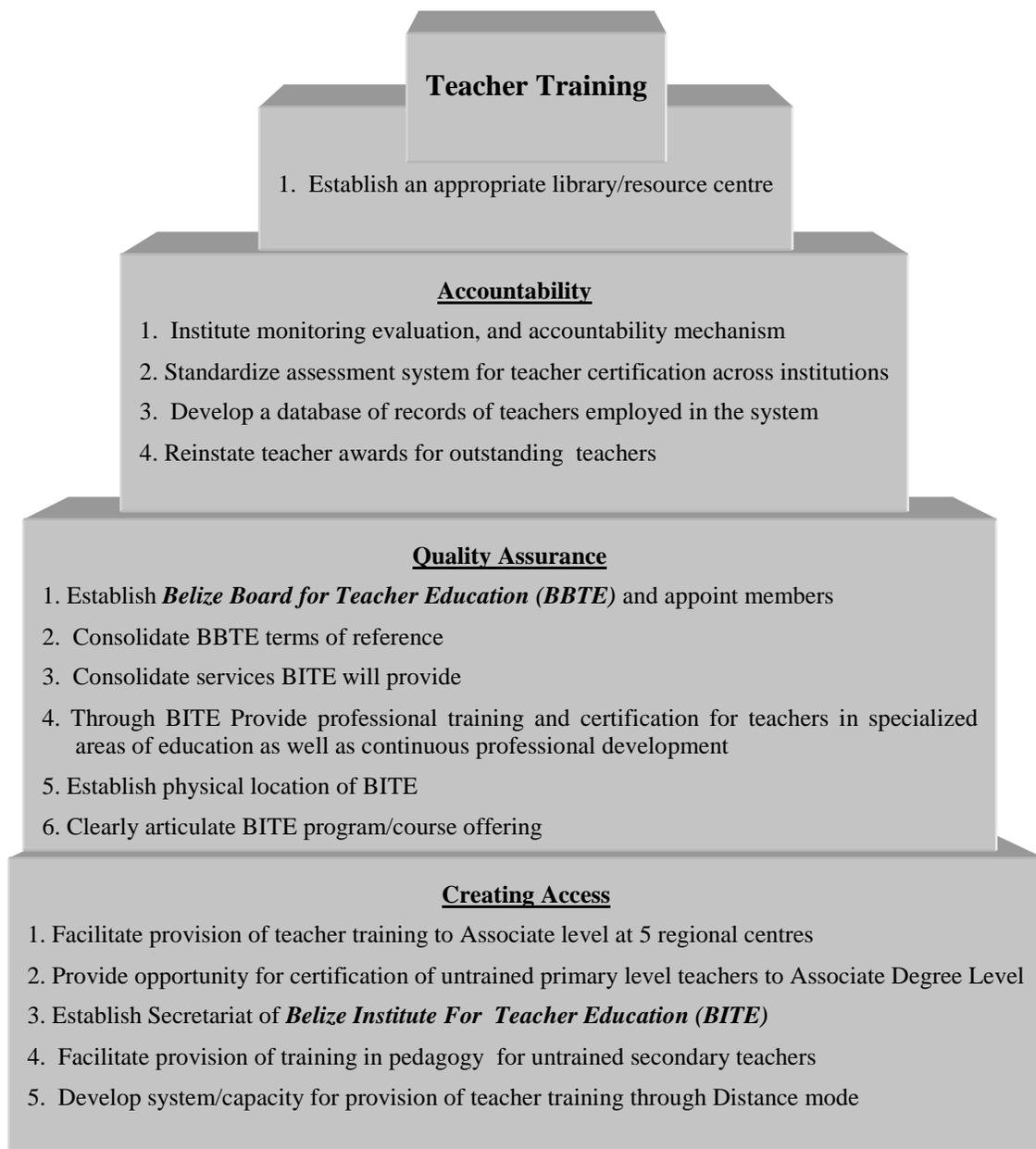
1. Early Childhood Education and Development
2. Teacher Training
3. Adult and Continuing Education
4. Curriculum and Assessment
5. Technical and Vocational Education
6. Special Education
7. Higher Education
8. Policy Development

Reform in each area in a general sense can be connected to reducing inefficiencies within the system. This reduction at the same time addresses current educational deficiencies to include failures, repetition, and drop-out. Pages 40 to 46 illustrate the Ministry of Education's ongoing and planned strategies.

The first and highly prioritized area, Early Childhood Education and Development, includes strongly supported preschools and quality early intervention programs. There is urgent need to increase access opportunities and quality of education at this critical stage of children's development, building the needed foundation for further learning.



Teacher training address issues of access, quality and the need to create opportunity for training of the large numbers of untrained primary school teachers. There is the existing programs offered by the University of Belize and St John's College Junior College but are not able to meet current need for increased access. The development of the Belize Institute for Teacher Education as an arm of the Ministry of Education, will focus on ensuring that while access to training is increased, quality is not lost in the process. The institute will also provide opportunity for in-service training to aid teachers in meeting licensing requirements.



Special education governs the provision of education for children with needs by two major principles – the principle of **Inclusion** and the principle of **Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)**. Inclusive education demands a system which seeks to develop a better quality of life for all without any form of discrimination and that recognizes and accepts diversity as a basis for social coexistence. The Least Restrictive Environment recognizes the wide range of diversity among students at either end of the learning continuum as well as for unique forms of need. The philosophy of LRE is to move children close to the normal setting (regular classroom) as is feasible. The maintenance of special schools and classes, resource classrooms and home schooling is an integral part of MoE’s plan of action.

### **Special Education**

#### **Capacity building**

1. Strengthen capacity of Special Education Unit (rename as National Center for Special Education)
2. Increase number of specialized educational diagnostic assessors at the Centre
3. Ratify and enforce Special Education Policy
4. Foster strong external linkages with Appropriate donor agencies and NGOs
5. Provide training support, local and abroad, for Centre staff and teachers
6. Complete upper flat of Special Education Building on Freetown Road

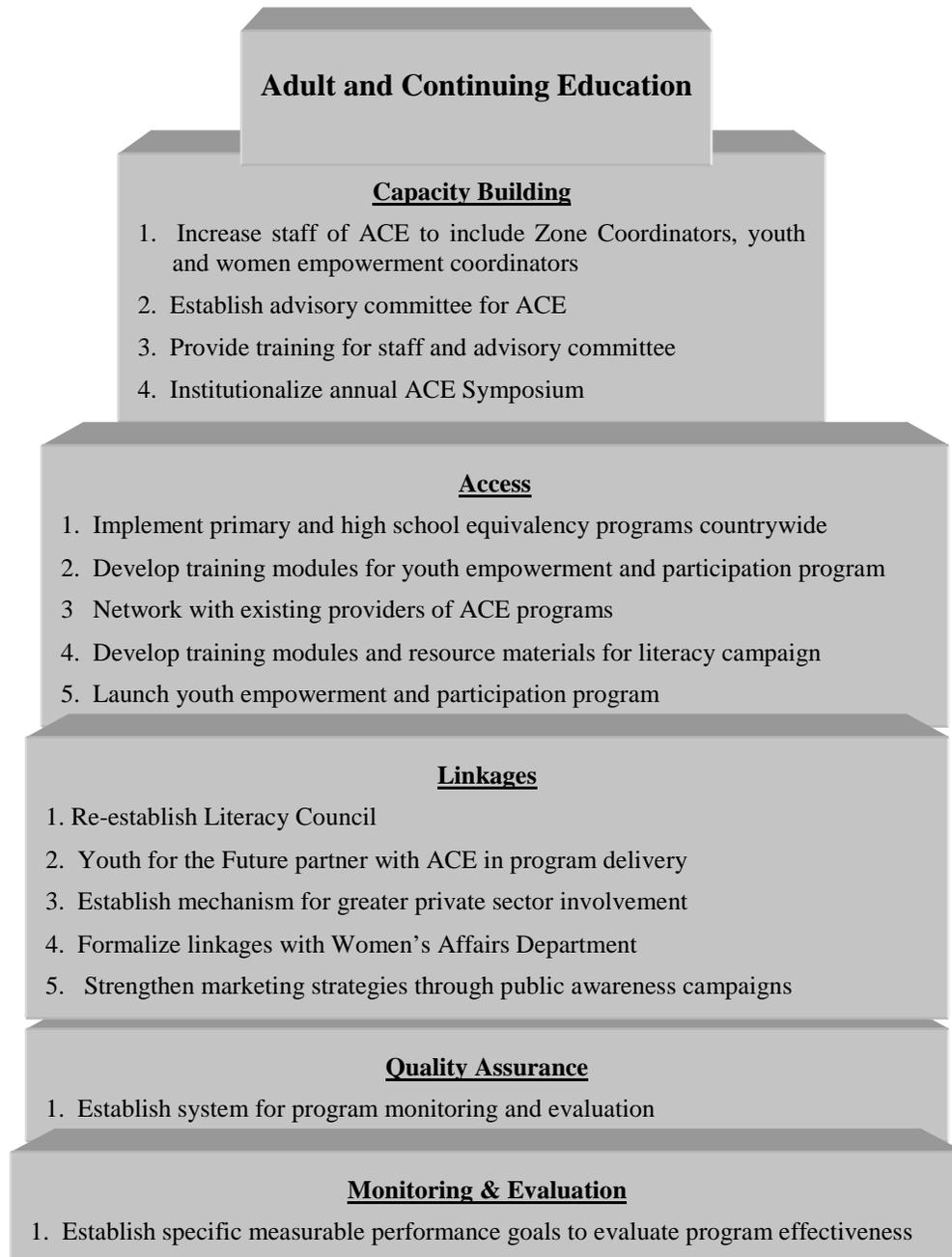
#### **Inclusion**

1. Establish an organized system for client referral, diagnostic assessment and placement
2. Enhance capacity of schools to accommodate diverse learning needs of students
3. Develop an intervention plan for addressing learning disabilities in regular schools
4. Ensure access to appropriate technological aids and teaching materials for students with special needs and disabilities
5. Develop and pilot program for gifted and talented students
6. Establish the use of ‘special arrangements’ for all examinations

#### **Create Enabling Environment**

1. Develop operational manual for Special Education Centres/Schools
2. Establish system for program planning and evaluation in special education schools
3. Establish Special Education Centres in Cayo and Toledo
4. Establish an appropriate post primary institution/ program for students who require intensive support
5. Facilitate access to educational institutions for students with disabilities
6. Develop a holistic approach to the education of the deaf and hearing impaired students
7. Review all teacher training programs to ensure methodologies for the teaching of students with special education needs are included
8. Establish a program to provide educational services to children who require extensive and pervasive support

Adult and Continuing Education addresses the need to review and consolidate existing programs rather than initiate new programs. Access to ACE is ever increasing as a result of the low completion rates of the existing systems; hence there is the need for greater commitment on the part of the Government to provide financial support for those programs that seek to develop skills that will enhance employability among the unskilled labor force in Belize.



The Belize labor market has changed in a number of ways over the last decade. The curriculum must help students to be adaptable so that they can play their full part in national development. The Ministry of Education must ensure that the school curriculum remained relevant at all levels of the education system. The plan addresses both curriculum and assessment needs while seeking to reform the current system thus promoting improved educational standards.

## **Curriculum and Assessment**

### **Relevant Curricula**

1. Standardize core curriculum development and implementation courses in pre and in-service teacher training programs at Associate and Bachelor Degree levels
2. Link licensing to inclusion of standardized curriculum courses in teacher training programs
3. Strengthen in-service programs to meet specific training needs and link with academic credit system
4. Strengthen TVET courses in primary and secondary linking to entry requirement to ITVET
5. Include HFLE as a core program at all levels of the education system
6. Expand the child friendly school program
7. Ensure citizenship or Civic education is embedded in the primary and secondary curriculum
8. Ensure that agriculture is included in the primary and secondary curricula
9. Ensure that physical education is effectively taught at all levels
10. Initiate a campaign to re-train teachers to effectively deliver the Language Arts Curriculum
11. Initiate campaign to promote the teaching of Spanish at primary level countrywide
11. Upgrade current resources used by teachers to improve the teaching of mathematics and IT
12. Review core curriculum areas to ensure currency
13. Complete and pilot core curriculum for upper secondary

### **Linkages**

1. Create program that will encourage volunteerism and greater parental involvement in schooling
2. Establish strong formal links with ETES, ACE program, YFF, and Sports Council for the development of relevant curricula meeting the needs of formal and non-formal education.
3. Initiate programs to attract voluntary participation of specialist in training programs

### **Assessment**

1. Formalize the use of assessment data to inform educational planning at all levels of the system
2. Align curriculum to national assessment by establishing clear standards of expected performance
3. Implement national assessment at secondary level - Form 2

It is clear that a well trained work force is critical for economic improvement and social development. This realization evidently led the Government of Belize to seek to invest millions in the development of Technical and Vocational Education Services. The ETVET project aims at upgrading existing TVET facilities to provide high quality technical and vocational training opportunities which would enable graduates to be more competitive in the face of global competition.

## **Technical and Vocational Education Services**

### **Improve Efficiency**

1. Operationalize NCTVET
2. Establish Program Advisory Committees (PAC)
3. Establish a revolving fund for students to obtain basic equipment to start their own business
4. Develop and maintain a Labor Market Information System (LMIS) and an employment needs and products database

### **Access**

1. Complete the construction/rehabilitation of CETs in each district/region
2. Equip CETs with appropriate equipment and fixtures for respective skills training program
3. Minimize duplication of programs delivered by Technical Secondary schools and CETs
4. Accredite and certify programs offered by service providers
5. Provide non-traditional skills training to Women
6. Promote a national apprenticeship program for out of school populations

### **Quality**

1. Develop/adapt industry-based Occupational Standards (OSs) and organise by Belize National Vocational Qualification (BzNVQ) Levels
2. Develop/Adopt a Standard Format for Curricula Development
3. Provide support to students for the successful completion of their skills training
4. Revitalize the Belize Association for Career and Technical Education (BACTE)
5. in collaboration with NCTVET develop an appropriate certification program
6. Develop/implement a comprehensive training program for TVET managers and instructors

Over the years much work has been done in the Ministry on policy development. Policy documents are available in draft form for most of the key areas addressed in education; however one may be challenged to pull all the policies together for easier access and implementation purposes. The Ministry must develop one document which will capture the key policies under one title – National Policy for Education.

### **Policy Development**

1. Engage local consultant
2. Collect and review existing policy Documents with appropriate persons
3. Provide guidance in development of policy for those key areas lacking policy
4. Complete policy documents and present for ratification
5. Ratify policy
6. Publish policy document

## **6.0 The Program and or Policy to Prevent School Failure.**

Belize, along with other participating Caribbean territories has selected to address the problem of “school failure” by way of developing policies and programs to enhance, empower and create greater accessibility and participation in Early childhood Education.

As we look at the education process we see that there is a clear continuum and it is important that all aspects of that continuum are being effective and meeting their required objectives. Early childhood Education is the first step along that continuum and a most critical. It is also the step that is often skipped. We saw clear evidence of this as in the case of Belize were just under 25% of pre school age children are registered in pre schools. As such, educational foundations have been weak, resulting in “school failure”.

The building is useless without a good foundation. With that in mind the government of Belize has established an Early Childhood Development Unit to take up the challenge of setting up a good foundation and or facilitating access to early childhood education for the children of this nation.

### **6.1 The functions of the Early Childhood Development Unit**

The Early childhood is responsible for early childhood education and development in Belize. Its major functions include

- ❖ Coordinate development policies addressing preschools and early childhood education in Belize
- ❖ Coordinate and supervise the activities of preschool centres countrywide
- ❖ Monitor to ensure the preschools centres comply with the licensing requirements of the 2000 education rules.
- ❖ Research, analyze and make recommendations relating to access to and coverage of early childhood education opportunities countrywide
- ❖ Coordinate activities to enhance the teaching-learning environment for preschoolers
- ❖ Strengthen the local, national, regional, and international partnerships addressing early childhood education, care and development

The Early Childhood Units functions as part of the Quality Assurance and Development Services (QADS). Their role and function is defined in their mission statement:

*Quads will ensure relevant quality education through the development and monitoring of the implementation of national standards for the performance of students, teachers and schools.*

The unit also works in collaboration with international organizations such as UNESCO and UNICEF.

## **6.2 Focus Point**

Early childhood education in Belize begins at age 3-4, pre-kinder and kinder respectively.

With only 25 % of Belize aged qualified children enrolled in pre-school the odds are against us with respect to securing the good educational foundation for the overall growth and development of the country. The majority of students are entering at the primary level and classroom teachers have sighted serious limitations in children's reading, speaking and comprehension of the English language, (the official language of Belize).

These are issues that need to be addressed in the formative years of learning.

Accessibility to preschools is another major focus point. Socio-economic factors have prevented the involvement of many children in preschool. 70% of all pre schools are privately operated and many families are unable to meet the required financial obligations.

## **6.3 Policy and Program**

With our focus in mind an Action Plan was established to prevent school failure in Belize by addressing the numerous needs in Early Childhood Education.

### **Goal:**

To provide quality, affordable Early Childhood Education for all children living in the country of Belize by 2015

**General Objectives:**

- ❖ Emphasize the importance of early childhood years
- ❖ Sensitize and inform teachers, families, communities on the development needs of children
- ❖ Improve and increase Preschool services Nationally

In order to meet these general objectives specific or strategic objectives were established to our Action Plan. The Strategic Objectives are as follows:

- ❖ To strengthen the capacity of the Preschool Unit for improved efficiency
- ❖ To institutionalize the Beginner Summer Preschool Program as an immediate intervention
- ❖ To regularize the management of the preschool Program
- ❖ To provide training opportunities for preschool teachers, parents and others working in early Childhood programs
- ❖ To increase access to preschool services and expand coverage of the preschool program

The key strategies, process and activities, time frame, expected outcome, indications and assumptions to fulfill the strategic objectives are detailed as follows:

**Table 6.1: Early Childhood Detailed Action Plan 2005 – 2010**

<b>Strategic Objective 1: To strengthen the capacity of the Preschool Unit for improved efficiency</b>					
<b>Key Strategies</b>	<b>Process/Activities</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Assumptions</b>
Re-Organize the Preschool Unit as a Specialist Unit of the Ministry of Education  (Recommendation 7 & 9  valuation of Early Childhood Education in Belize 96, pg 90, 92)	Increase staff, equipment and Early Childhood Education & Development resource materials.  Revert to the original name of “Early Childhood Education and Development Unit”.	To begin 2005  2005	Improved and efficient guidance in the delivery of services for Early Childhood Education	Policies are in place and relevant authority is granted, and the policies implemented and generally adhered to	The Ministry is convinced of the importance of ECED and seek to sensitize all officers within its jurisdictions of its seriousness to demonstrate its commitment
<u>Training</u>  Creating environment conducive to productivity	Provide training opportunities and specializes qualifications for staff members  Create a model teaching/training ECE centre  Improve the infrastructure of the Preschool Unit over the	2006 ongoing  2005	Space for Basic training and display of settings appropriate for the best learning	Material resources and equipment to produce appropriate teaching/learning aids	Parents, teachers, child care providers have access to new ideas, current practices and information on ECED

<p>Dissemination of information, help and support</p> <p>Increasing coverage and Sustaining momentum</p>	<p>existing. Include a resource centre</p> <p>Provide qualified persons to work With the ECE&amp;C Programme at the District level</p> <p>Provide adequate financial and other resources to enable the re-organization and effective execution of the Unit's responsibilities and proper supervision of programmes nation wide</p>	<p>Phase in 2006 - 2007</p> <p>2005 - 2015</p>	<p>opportunities and for demonstrations</p> <p>Two Districts per year are provided with the resource person</p> <p>More areas of the country and more children will be served and the success rate within the primary school system will improve steadily</p>	<p>Each District has ready access to human and material resource and to support for their ECE programmes and Communication and data flowing between District Resource person and the PS Unit</p> <p>Projects competently maintained from one year to the next</p>	
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**Strategic Objective 2: To institutionalize the Beginner Summer Preschool Programme as an immediate intervention**

<b>Key Strategies</b>	<b>Process/Activities</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Assumptions</b>
Expand the present Beginner Summer Preschool Experience (BSPE) programme	Country wide survey to discover areas of most need for the programmes	2005 - 20% 2006 - 40% 2007 - 60%	All children entering Primary School for the first time will receive some stimulation and preparation	The programme will operate in communities where there are no preschool centres	Communities will support the programme
Supervision by the *1 'Specialized Unit' within the Ministry	Resource persons in each District will monitor the activity	2008 – 80% 2009 – 100%			
Zone BSPE		Coverage of needy areas	Four urban zone areas	The programmes will continue until replaced with full preschool programmes	Parents and community leaders will be sensitized to the needs of the young child
Community cooperation	Involving community members. Combining communities that are close to each other and compatible	2006			
	Training programme for selected students, teaching	2005 – life of programme	A cadre of young	Some of these	This programme will eventually be replaced by the two year

<sup>1</sup>\* see pg 1

<p>Involvement of Parents, High School graduates and Junior College Students to operate and deliver the programme</p> <p>Implementing BSPSP</p>	<p>and equipping them to operate the programme and to deliver the curriculum.</p> <p>Select Primary School teachers as supervisors</p> <p>Daily Centres operation</p>	<p>May 2005 and annually for the life of the programme</p> <p>July&amp;August 2005 until</p>	<p>persons with basic training in ECED within communities to deliver the service</p> <p>Expose to school atmosphere</p>	<p>youths will eventually be drawn into the teaching profession</p> <p>Emotional prep.</p>	<p>Preschool programme</p> <p>Young persons will learn about child management and recognize the responsibility of being good parents</p> <p>Less first day trauma</p>
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**Strategic Objective 3: To regularize the management of the preschool programme**

<b>Key Strategies</b>	<b>Process/Activities</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Assumptions</b>
Assess and categorize the preschool programme	Place centres in categories according to enrollment, location, curriculum delivery	Formalized by 2007	Government assist financially, bases on a system of equity	All preschool programmes are being managed in a professional manner	Communities will support and enrich their n programmes.
MOE Visit and assess all centres	Evaluate the Ministry of Education overall support to preschool education including monitoring & supervision, assessment & evaluation,  Regularize grant / salary system for teachers, and ensure equitable distribution of financial & other resources	2005 onward	All Private and community managed Centres are visited annually	All registered Centres are visited and assessed by MOE	Private operators will cooperate with the Ministry of Education
	Implement renewal of license for all centres every two years  The Preschool Unit be strengthened and its personnel be trained and empowered to	2005 -	All centres are abiding by Ministry of Education guidelines  All centres are staffed by licensed persons	Preschool policy and rules in effect.	

<p>Expand the primary school management system to include attached preschool centres</p>	<p>act in the best interest of the children</p> <p>Encourage primary schools to attach preschool centres in areas of need, rather than have centres operating in isolation at the community level</p> <p>Ensure all centres use the Ministry of Education's Curriculum for Preschools or one approved by the Ministry containing local and relevant Social studies and civic materials</p> <p>Encourage primary schools to attach preschool centres in areas of need</p> <p>Prepare a comprehensive Plan</p>	<p>2006</p> <p>2006 –2015</p> <p>2005 – 10% and each year until 2015</p> <p>Completed by 2015</p>	<p>Age appropriate environment and activities</p> <p>Programmes made more affordable for target parents</p> <p>Besides basic skills, concepts and ideas children are exposed to relevant national and social geographical facts of Belize and our local cultures</p> <p>Increased successful completion rate in Primary school and improved % in attendance in secondary Education</p>	<p>Preschool environment is conducive to learning through activity</p> <p>Affordable PS programmes available to more children</p>	<p>More parents will make use of the services available to them and their children</p> <p>Rules and regulation of Education in Belize will be followed</p>
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<p>Appropriate Curriculum</p> <p>Move rapidly towards the provision of universal preschool education</p> <p>Target Private Enterprises to contribute to the future of Belize by supporting the development of our young children</p>	<p>Approach managements to establish Work place Child care and Preschool Services</p> <p>Offer incentives for those acquiring or providing materials, supplies or other resources to Early Childhood Programmes</p> <p>Encourage private businesses to adopt centres and programmes to facilitate both employees and the community.</p>	<p>2005</p> <p>2006-2010</p> <p>2006 onwards</p> <p>2006 onwards</p>	<p>Stimulation of young children</p> <p>Establishment of six work bases ECED Centres</p> <p>Community Service</p> <p>Better equipped Centres</p>	<p>More children in attendance in preschools</p> <p>Improved attendance and more productive employees</p> <p>Company Loyalty</p> <p>Quality learning environment for young children</p>	<p>managements will be sensitized to the need of Employees in the area of Early Childhood Education &amp; Development</p> <p>Companies will realize the social and business implications</p>
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**Strategic Objective 4: to provide training opportunities for preschool teachers, parents and others working in Early Childhood programmes**

<b>Key Strategies</b>	<b>Process/Activities</b>	<b>Time frame</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Assumptions</b>
MOE approve curricula in Early Childhood Education and Development for training adults working with young children	Collect and review all available curricula in existence and being used in Belize	2005 - 2006	All persons trained in Early Childhood Education & Development will receive similar instructions and move on a continuum from birth through eight years old	MOE establish vetting body for all ECED training curricula used in the country	Persons working in the lower, middle and older stages of ECED need and want to be sure they are giving their best to the young children they work with
Create a model early childhood education teaching centre	Appoint a centre director attach to the early childhood education unit	June 2005	Environment for practical training in ECED	Teachers in training will do practicum in this centre	Improve learning environment
Establish Linkages	Approve curriculum for teacher training and linked to Teacher Licensing Unit  Link with a teacher training		All persons working with young children will have access to a standard training that	being implemented  Teachers attend and through assessment show initiative and	

Standards for Qualification and formal certification	institution for professional training of Early Childhood Teachers		is recognizes Nationwide	improvement	
	Work with Child Care providers trainers, and other Government agencies providing services for the young child	2007	Ensuring a continuum and set standard in the training services, needs, and quality of training	Training of Care providers, managers, teachers, principals and operators at three stages of the E.C. years (birth – 8 years old)	Stake holders and teachers will embrace the opportunity for training and certification.
	Implement a certificate level of teacher-training programme that includes methodology, philosophy, classroom management, child development and other pertinent subjects	June 2006	Re-instating training and qualification in ECED at the certificate level (discontinued at BTC since 1993)	Only qualified and certified persons working in preschools	Children will receive age and stage appropriate activities and learning experiences
	_Continue to insist new teachers and persons opening new Centres receive the training course in Basic Early Childhood Education and Development before working in a centre.	continues	One requirement for establishing Preschool Centres is that of attending the ECED course offered by the Preschool Unit.	All registered Centres is staffed with at least one person having basic training	

<p>Process persons desirous of working in Early Childhood Programmes</p>	<p>Make it mandatory that all teachers of young children are qualified, and that certification in Early Childhood Ed &amp; Dev. be compulsory for such persons</p> <p>Offer the Basic Training course to parents and other persons who are involved in the life of young children</p>				
<p>Train parents as teachers' aides</p>			<p>Reduction of the adult child ratio within preschools</p>	<p>Parents are more involved in their children's learning</p>	<p>Parents will want to attend</p>

**Strategic Objective 5: To increase access to preschool services and expand coverage of the Preschool**

**Programme**

<b>Key Strategies</b>	<b>Process/Activities</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Assumptions</b>
Attach Preschools Centres to Primary schools	<p>Increase the number of class room in primary schools to include adequate space for Centre</p> <p>Expand primary school management to include the attached Preschool Centre</p> <p>Provide training for preschool and infant school principals</p>	<p>25 % - 2005</p> <p>60% - 2010</p> <p>100%- 2015</p> <p>equal to above rate of increase</p> <p>To begin 2006 and continuous</p>	<p>Children have attended a stimulation programme before entering Primary schools</p> <p>Children have continuity</p> <p>Affordable to parents</p> <p>Preschool teacher's salary is secure and based on qualification</p>	<p>All children in Belize attending preschool before enrolment in Primary School</p> <p>Trained Primary School Principals and managers in ECE&amp;D</p> <p>Centre teacher is</p>	<p>General managers will be sensitized to Early Childhood and cooperate</p> <p>The Centres become feeders for primary School</p>

<p>Linkages</p> <p>Two sessions in centres daily, with different groups children</p> <p>Public awareness campaign</p>	<p>Conduct parenting workshops in various aspects of child health, development, management, expectations and stimulation</p> <p>Liaise with other agencies – Government and NGO’s in when delivering this programme</p> <p>Operating morning and afternoon sessions thus facilitating two groups of children daily providing more space per child and special attention</p> <p>Utilize media to share information on needs of young children, and tips on importance of proper stimulation and socialization in the early years of life</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Phase in 2006 onwards</p>	<p>Improved linkage between parents and the preschools</p> <p>Better understanding of young children’s behaviour</p> <p>Inter – department co-operation</p> <p>Increased number of children receiving stimulation</p> <p>Lower teacher-child ratio</p> <p>Higher child - equipment or toy interaction time</p> <p>Parenting education outside of formal setting</p>	<p>monitored by principal and management</p> <p>Parents are more informed of their children’s development and behaviour</p> <p>Inter – agency and department collaboration and operation</p> <p>More children are participating in preschool programme</p> <p>More Cost effective</p> <p>Simple information and messages delivered in an attractive manner</p>	<p>Members of community will be willing to participate</p> <p>Parents will support the initiative to increase coverage.</p> <p>y repetition consciously and subconsciously learning takes place</p>
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## 6.4 Implementation

Since the development of the action plan implementation of the various objectives have been on going. Firstly the Early Childhood Development Unit has been established along with additional staffing with training and experience in the area of Early Childhood Education and Development. Secondly 2003 /2004 we were actively involved in the training of teacher to be placed in the newly established preschools. Seven teachers in Toledo and eight in Orange Walk were trained in the effective delivery of the preschool program in their districts. Training continues at the district level and this ensures greater participation. 2004/2005 17 number of teachers are now actively engaged in training exercises to be teachers in the preschool scheduled to be opened in September 2005.

**Table 6.2: Number of preschools by districts 2004/2005**

Total	Belize	Cayo	Corozal	Orange Walk	Stann Creek	Toledo
116	42	20	18	10	15	11

All the districts have acquired additional preschools. Toledo which had 4 preschools in 2003/4 year now have 11 an almost 200% increase.

Many of these additional preschool are government pre schools and pr the government has taken on the responsibility of paying the salaries of the teachers. as such the major economic which prevented access for many children is being eliminated.

20 preschools were attached to primary schools 2004/5 and an another 20 are planned to be attached September 2005 this again will provide increased access for children and the government will maximize its limited resources by tagging on the preschool to an administrative system already in place. In addition the government will take on the responsibility of paying the salaries of the teachers for the attached preschools.

## 7.0 The Way Forward

In keeping with the firm belief that “It is only through Education that we will provide our people with the knowledge, information, skills, values and attitudes required for personal and national development,” the government of Belize has developed an action Plan in consultation with Ministry personnel and experienced educators to improve, support, empower and provide a system of education that represents and produce excellence in Belize.

The plan gives us a clear picture of the steps that need to be taken in order to facilitate an education system that is effective, efficient, and relevant to our students in their uniqueness as Belizeans and as citizens of the world.

Details plans have been fully developed outlining effective strategies over eight broad areas to address change, failures, challenges and continued progress in our areas of strength. The areas are, early childhood education and development, Special Education, Adult and continuing education, Curriculum and assessment, higher education and Policy development.

In collaboration with the OAS and the Hemispherical Project to Prevent school failure Early childhood education and development is has been selected as an area of focus in our actions towards preventing school failure. We have had some success and continue to implement strategies to increase access to this level of education. However with disappointing reports of an average repetition rate of 15 % among Infant 1 children (first year of primary education in Belize) we will look at facilitating successful transition from one level of schooling to the next as one of our major steps on the way forward.

This will be carried out via workshops and training of teachers both at the preschool and infant one levels. We will also implement our new early childhood curriculum with continues from preschool through to primary school to alleviate clear breaks our distinctions along the continuum of education in the early childhood years.

The way forward will focus on greater investment in early childhood education. Only a mere .5% of the education budget is allocated to preschools. We catch a glimpse of the path with government committed to assisting in not only government pr schools but private as well by taking on salaries for such teachers. This also creates greater access as fees usually charged to pay salaries significantly reduce.

We need to visit the area of teacher training and train teacher in the Specific area of early childhood education and compensate on par with the colleagues in the other levels of education. As we examine our education indicators we see our best and or most qualified teacher as the

higher levels. A shift in gear is necessary we need to raise the level of training and qualifications of our early childhood teacher so we build our system of education on a secure foundation right from the start.

Based on the findings of the review and observations of the education system in relation to school failures there is the need to holistically address the challenges identified. The inefficiency caused by low completion rates is a serious waste which must be arrested immediately. The government and its partners in education must continue to promote early childhood education and in addition come up with viable policy initiatives, including affirmative action to salvage the education system from this inefficiency.

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