

BAHAMAS MINISTRY OF EDUCATION 10 YEAR EDUCATION PLAN

Ministry of Education, 2009. Available at

http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/planipolis/files/ressources/bahamas_aug_2009_20_year_education_plan.pdf

Rationale of the strategy

If education is to provide the kind of support twenty-first century development in the Bahamas needs, then we must focus our attention on targets and standards relevant to curriculum content and pedagogy, teacher training, resource development, management of our schools and indeed the education system. This focused attention mandates deliberate, rational planning and a sustained investment in our human, material and physical resources. This Ten Year Education Plan provides the blueprint for each transformation. The goals and objectives contained herein reflect the Ministry of Education's course of action over the short and long term. To date, suggestions for change have come from some twenty-two focus groups representing various stakeholders. It is the vision of the document that the Bahamian education system promotes the highest standards and produces students who are intellectually curious, compassionate, responsible and capable of making a meaningful contribution to the country's productivity, prosperity and peace.

Concept of lifelong learning

The concept and benefits of lifelong learning are understood as follows: a commitment by all persons to learning as a lifelong pursuit allows for increased self-knowledge, a deeper understanding of their community and a greater awareness of the world. Engaging in lifelong learning opens the way for the acquisition of new knowledge and skills that can serve the needs of the individual and a changing society.

Main challenges

Consultations were held with a broad cross-section of stakeholders, including Ministry of Education and Department of Education staff, civic organisations, government agencies, trade unions, political parties, media, students and other members of civil society. From these consultations four broad priority areas and certain needs and challenges within these areas were identified:

- **Curriculum and instruction:** need for interdisciplinary learning and extensive character building; need for a higher number of qualified Bahamians to satisfy the demands of the job market; need to improve literacy at the foundation level; need for appropriate resources and necessary conditions that meet the needs of students
- **Human, material and financial resources:** need to improve the quality of persons working in the education sector; need for improved school buildings and other educational facilities increases; need for school psychological services, guidance counselling and special education
- **Administration and management:** need for improvement and effective management of the educational system; need for managers of schools to possess the necessary skills and authority to adequately address specific issues; need for greater efforts to provide healthy and safe environments in schools; need to improve the relationship between education policies, programmes and funding
- **Partnerships:** need for greater involvement of the social partners in the teaching-learning process and need for parents, the business sector, faith-based and civic organisations to continue their assistance in reform processes

Main targets and measures

The strategy refers to all education sectors, but it puts a strong emphasis on educational sectors from early childhood to tertiary education. Technical and vocational education and adult education are not further elaborated in the strategy. Also, the focus is on formal education and there are few references to non-formal learning. The main targets of the education plan are:

- Developing national curricula that are more relevant to the needs of the individual and society
- Developing national pride, civic responsibility and a strong work ethic in students
- Ensuring that children leave primary school with the required literacy and numeracy skills
- Meeting the needs of special students
- Furnishing schools with the necessary teaching
- Resources and tuition supplies
- Offering additional support to enhance the quality of the teaching/learning process
- Encouraging persons to pursue education after leaving school
- Increasing the number of Bahamian residents pursuing post secondary and tertiary education
- Improving the quality of education at the tertiary level
- Producing a more skilled workforce for the Bahamian economy
- Improving student achievement and school performance
- Attracting, supporting and retaining quality teachers and other educational professionals
- Constructing and properly maintaining school buildings and education facilities
- Ensuring the adequate funding of education
- Improving the management of the Bahamian education system
- Improving the on-site management of public schools
- Reducing school violence and creating safe learning environments
- Improving operations at the Ministry of Education's central office
- Encouraging the use of educational research to improve the education system
- Monitoring and evaluating the education system
- Strengthening partnerships to improve the educational system
- Creating additional opportunities to encourage parents to become more involved in their children's education

Particular feature of the strategy

One of the goals in the strategy is to **reduce school violence and create safe learning environments**. In order for teaching and learning to be successful, teachers and students must find themselves in an environment where their health and safety are not compromised. In an effort to create and maintain a "culture of peace", all stakeholders must be committed to ensure the safety of all. The following efforts are planned in order to achieve this goal:

Improve security on school campuses; establish a programme of continuous training for school security personnel; ensure that all teachers receive basic training in non-violent approaches to student discipline and conflict resolution; integrate character development activities at all levels; ensure the dissemination and implementation of the revised Safe Schools Manual; ensure measures are put in place to hold parents accountable for the actions of their children; encourage extra-curricular activities such as martial arts, boxing, gardens and clean environments and creative expression programmes; ensure adequate number of school based counsellors are available; ensure that students are taught conflict resolution strategies at all levels and reduce overcrowding in schools by improving the design of schools.

Relevant documents that the strategy refers to:

- Houghton, H. 1958. *Report on Education in the Bahamas*. London, Colonial Office

- Bahamas. Ministry of Education and Culture. 1972. *Focus on the Future*. (Government's white paper on education)
- Bahamas. Ministry of Education and Culture. 1974. *Educational Development in an Archipelagic Nation*
- Bahamas. Ministry of Education and Culture. 1976. [Education for National Progress](#)
- Bahamas. Early Childhood Commission. 2004. [Early Childhood Commission Act](#)
- 2004. *Draft Strategic Plan 2004: Bahamian Education in the 21st Century*
- 2005. *Report of the National Commission for Special Education*
- Bahamas Ministry of Education. 2010. [Draft 10 Year Education Plan](#)

Stakeholders involved in the development of the strategy:

- [Ministry of Education, Science and Technology](#)
- [Ministry of Agriculture](#)
- [Ministry of Finance](#)
- [Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#)
- [The Bahamas Christian Council](#)
- [Jones Communications](#)
- [ZNS](#)
- [Bahamas Democratic Movement](#)
- [Free National Movement](#)
- Bahamas Association of Independent Secondary Schools
- Bahamas Union of Teachers
- Ministry of Labour & Social Development
- Ministry of Tourism
- Workers Party

Further readings and web links:

- [National Training Agency](#)