

Improving access, quality and governance of education in Belize

EDUCATION SECTOR STRATEGY
2011 – 2016

March 2012

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BBTE	Belize Board of Teacher Education
BJAT	Belize Junior Achievement Test
CCSLC	Caribbean Certificate of Secondary Level Competencies
CDB	Caribbean Development Bank
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CEdO	Chief Education Officer
CPA	Country Poverty Assessment
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CSB	Community School Board
CSEC	Caribbean Secondary Examination Certificate
DEC	District Education Centre
DM	District Manager
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECED	Early Childhood Education and Development
EDUSAT	Sistema de Televisión Educativa (Education Television System)
ESS	Education Sector Strategy
ETA	Education and Training Act
ETES	Employment and Technical Education Services
FTI	Fast Track Initiative
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
GOB	Government of Belize
HGIOS	How Good Is Our School?
HRDS	Human Resource Development Strategy
IADB	Inter American Development Bank
ITVET	Institute for Technical and Vocational Education and Training
JC	Junior College
LSMS	Living Standards Monitoring Survey
MA	Managing Agency
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MOEY	Ministry of Education and Youth
MTBF	Medium Term Budget Framework
NCTVET	National Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training
NER	Net Enrolment Ratio
NPEAP	National Poverty Eradication Action Plan
NQSF	National Quality School Framework
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PEFA	Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability
PPU	Policy and Planning Unit
PSE	Primary School Examination
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
PTR	Pupil Teacher Ratio
QADS	Quality Assurance and Development Services
QCFSI	Quality Child Friendly School Initiative
SaT	Science and Technology
SC	School Council
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SIB	Statistical Institute of Belize

SP	School Principal
SRS	School Resourcing Services
TE	Teacher Education
TEDS	Teacher Education and Development Services
TPSACES	Tertiary, Post-Secondary and Adult and Continuing Education Services
TSC	Teaching Service Commission
TRE	Total Recurrent Expenditure
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UB	University of Belize
UDP	United Democratic Party
UWI	University of West Indies

PREFACE

I think most people will agree with me that when it comes to the potential for improving our individual and collective lives, for forming better persons and better communities, for contributing to social and economic development there are no greater expectations of any other sector than of the education sector. Indeed it is for this reason that governments across the world invest heavily in education. In Belize, where we invest in excess of 25% of our national budget in the education sector, we are certainly no exception to this rule. Compared to Costa Rica, Cuba and Barbados, Belize is the biggest spender on education well above the international FTI benchmark of 20% of recurrent budget and remaining constant at around 6.5% of GDP over the last few years. Therefore, we are certainly at the high end of the education investment scale when we consider our education budget as a proportion of our economy. This signals the priority that the Government of Belize continues to give to the education sector.

Yet, even as we congratulate ourselves on our high standing in terms of how much we spend on education there is the simultaneous expectation, even the demand, that we should be spending more. But any honest discussion on how much we spend and how much more we may think we ought to be spending demands a sober reflection on what we are getting in return. Therefore, even as we champion education's transformative potential, honesty demands that we question whether education is or has been truly transformative? ...And if so, for whom?

On several occasions in the past, I have made the point that many of the issues and challenges that faced us in the education sector twenty years ago remain with us today. Today we have almost 100 thousand students enrolled in our schools at all levels—almost twice what we had in 1990, we have almost 5,000 teachers—more than twice what we had in 1990, we have 541 schools—more than twice what we had in 1990 and yes, we are spending far more on education at 190million—almost five times what we were spending in 1990.

Yet the increased spending has not been proportionately matched by increased outputs and outcomes. Many of those enrolled in our schools will repeat or dropout before graduating. Many of our children are still not achieving satisfactory levels of performance. There remains chronic shortages of trained and qualified teachers at all levels of the system. Rising costs and inadequate planning and management remain significant challenges. These very same issues were lamented more than twenty years ago in 1990 by a former Minister of Education.

Furthermore, we have been faced for some time now with the long-standing challenges of crime, violence and poverty that have continued to plague us for many years now. With media images and reports, not to mention personal experiences giving us a regular dose of crime and violence for many, many years now, can we say that education is truly transformative? With the 2009 Country Poverty Assessment showing that poverty increased by nearly 10% over about a ten year period, can we say that education is truly transformative?

On the face of it, I think we would be hard-pressed to conclude that education is or has been truly transformative for many, many years now.

In response to this apparent disconnect between education and transformative results it is easy to conclude that we are not investing enough. Yet, the record will show—as I pointed out earlier—that education expenditure has not only increased significantly over the years but has also enjoyed the lion's share of the national budget without consequential results. And thus, it begs the question: *How do we justify the continued heavy investment in education if such investment is not leading to the transformative results we desire?*

The answer to this question is that education **can** be truly transformative and so the challenge is not so much about investing more as it is ***about doing things differently!*** Therefore, education in Belize will be truly transformative ***only if we transform education.*** That means not investing in a more expensive status quo but changing the status quo! ***Any additional investment in education must be aimed at changing the status quo!***

Over the last three to four years, we in the Ministry of Education and Youth, along with education stakeholders have embarked on a process of transforming the education system so that it can yield the transformative results we so desire. These initiatives have focused on ensuring every child starts school ready to learn, getting and keeping young people in schools for more years of learning, improving achievement and quality assurance and investing in teacher education and professionalization. We have made significant strides but as Fenton Whelan reminds us in his book *Lesson's Learned How Good Policies Produce Better Schools*, 'education reform is a long game—both because the process of change takes time, and because it is often decades before the benefits of improved schooling are felt in the economy or society as a whole...' and therefore the major reforms we have initiated require sustained effort or as Michael Barber, quoted in the same book puts it, require 'Stubborn persistence, relentless monotony, attention to detail, and glorifying in routine...'

We have come a long way! But we have a long way to go! And like any good school it is worthwhile to periodically assess how we are doing, to ask 'how do we know?' and then to ask 'what we are going to do about it?'

It is in this regard that with support from the Caribbean Development Bank, we embarked on a sector diagnosis and the preparation of this Education Sector Strategy 2011-2016. The financial support from Caribbean Development Bank allowed us to secure technical assistance from Cambridge Education to assist us with this work. This strategy is a response to the education sector diagnosis which included an examination of education statistics, feedback from stakeholders (both users and providers) and an analysis of education finances.

I am sure you will agree with me when I reiterate that we do not wish to have a more expensive status quo and therefore this strategy must be about **transforming the education system so that we may achieve transformative results**. It must therefore be about increasing equitable access to education at all levels, about improving the quality, relevance and efficiency of education and about improving governance and accountability; in short, it must be about excellence and fairness. Let us make this sector strategy about **making better schools, better citizens, and a better Belize—it's everybody's business!**

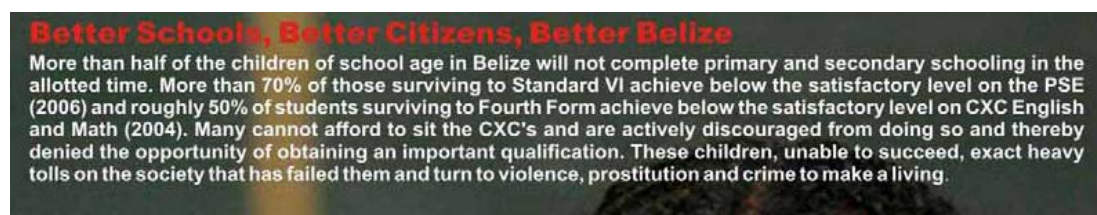
Hon. Patrick Faber
Minister of Education, Youth and Sports

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Belize has made modest progress in both expanding access and improving the quality of its education system over the past ten years. The early promise of achieving the Millennium Development Goal of Universal Primary Education, though close, is no nearer now than it was in 2000, the Primary NER in 2010 is 94% compared to 95% in 2001. The much needed increase in enrolment in secondary education has not taken place, the NER in 2010 is 49% compared to 44% in 2004. Participation in tertiary education remains low compared to regional averages, and despite significant investment in technical and vocational education, participation rates there remain very low. Although there is little hard evidence regarding educational quality, there is a commonly held view that it is low: performance in national examinations at the end of the primary and secondary cycles have reached a plateau over the past decade, with small annual variations. The teaching force is largely untrained and there is much room for improvement in its management; the church -state system of management and delivery of education fails to reach its full potential and makes a common approach to establishing standards and raising quality is difficult to achieve. Despite a healthy level of investment in the sector that compares favourably with countries in the region, the overall outcomes are disappointing. The education system of Belize ought to do a lot better.

Belize enjoys a unique position in the Central America and Caribbean region: it has a small population with the lowest density on the Central American isthmus; it is the only English speaking nation in Central America, being both a member of CARICOM and the Commonwealth. It is ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse, though it remains peaceful and has sustained a functional parliamentary democracy since gaining full independence in 1981. Despite these potential advantages, inequality and poverty persist and Belize currently faces economic challenges, having one of the highest debt to GDP ratios. Though economic growth has been satisfactory at around 4% per annum, high unemployment constrains both economic and social development; there is a worrying increase in crime, particularly in pockets of the old capital.

It is against this backdrop of under-performance in the education sector and the need to improve human capital to increase economic growth, reduce poverty and inequality and promote greater social development and stability, that the need for a new Education Sector Strategy emerged. The present United Democratic Party government has set out in its Manifesto (2008-2013) an agenda for change committed to “improving the quality and accessibility of education”¹.



Source: United Democratic Party Manifesto 2008

The process of developing this Education Sector Strategy (ESS) was supported by the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) and facilitated by a team of external consultants during the period April to November 2011. The strategy is based on the findings of a diagnosis of the education sector, undertaken by the team at the start of the process. This included review of recent reports and documents, analysis of latest data, consultations with key stakeholders, and school observations in each of Belize's six districts.

¹ *Imagine the Possibilities*, UDP Manifesto 2008

The strategy itself has been produced by key stakeholders representing the wide constituency of providers and beneficiaries in education in Belize. Its formulation has centred around a series of workshops involving these stakeholders in which the key findings of the diagnosis and latest policy pronouncements led to the identification of the key policy objectives. The approach of bringing the diverse range of providers and stakeholders together through a series of workshops was adopted in response to the recognition in the diagnosis of the overly “siloed” *modus operandi* of MOEY, whereby the key Service Areas – already physically separated across eight different sites in the locations of Belize City and Belmopan – work relatively independently of each other. The approach adopted required close collaboration amongst the service areas as they developed common targets, strategies, and action plans to achieve the broad policy objectives. This was followed by identifying the key outputs and targets that contribute to the achievement of those policy objectives. These were then developed into specific strategies that defined the necessary approaches and actions required. Work was commenced, but is not yet finalised, by each of the central MOEY Service Areas and Districts in preparing outline Action Plans indicating how they will adopt the strategies and contribute to achieving the ESS targets.

In the following Chapter 2, a brief overview of the sector is presented, drawn from the diagnosis undertaken at the start of the process. The ESS is structured around the three policy objectives that were identified through the participatory process described above. These, together with the outputs, targets, and strategies through which they will be achieved are described in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 presents the Costs and Financing of the ESS, and the arrangements for implementation are presented in Chapter 5. The summary Policy Framework (in tabular form) is given at Annex A, and the Performance Monitoring Tables at Annex B. Select statistics are presented at Annex C and a short bibliography of key reference documents is at Annex D.

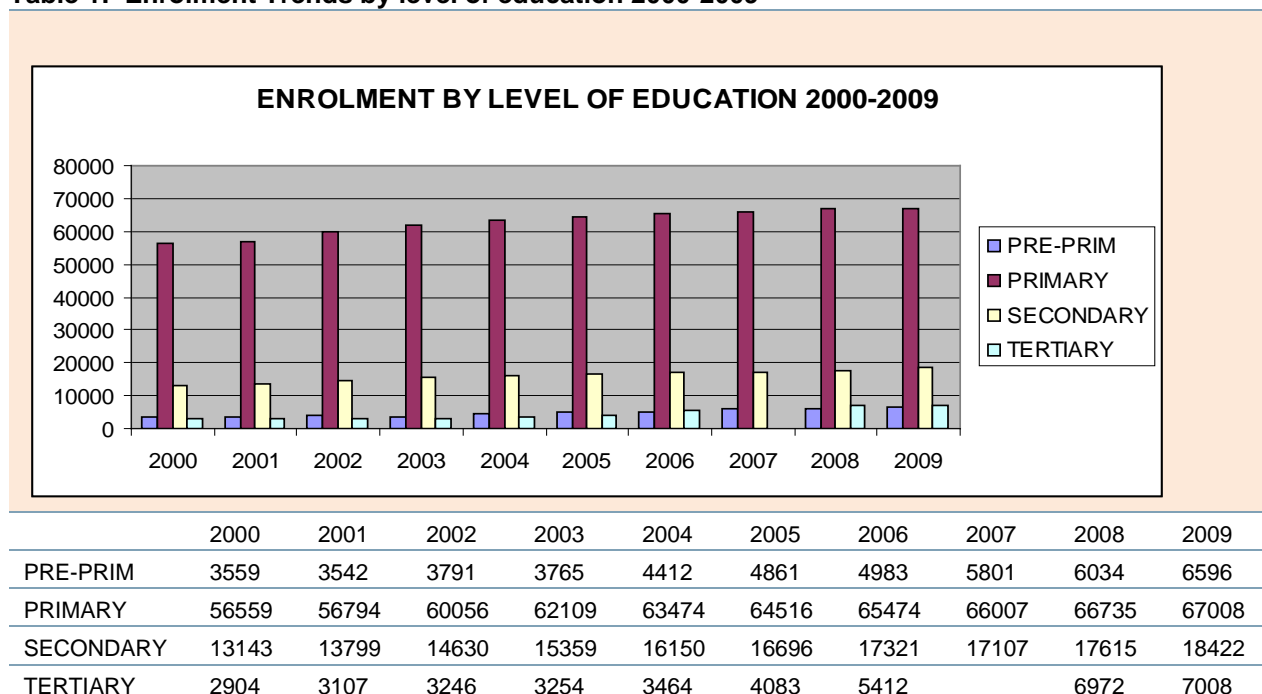
CHAPTER 2 SECTOR OVERVIEW

The following section presents a broad overview of the education sector, summarising the key findings of the sector diagnosis and other recent commentary. It is structured around four thematic areas: access, quality, governance and financing. Equity is treated as a cross cutting theme, and gender and geographical disaggregation of data and information is used throughout.

Access

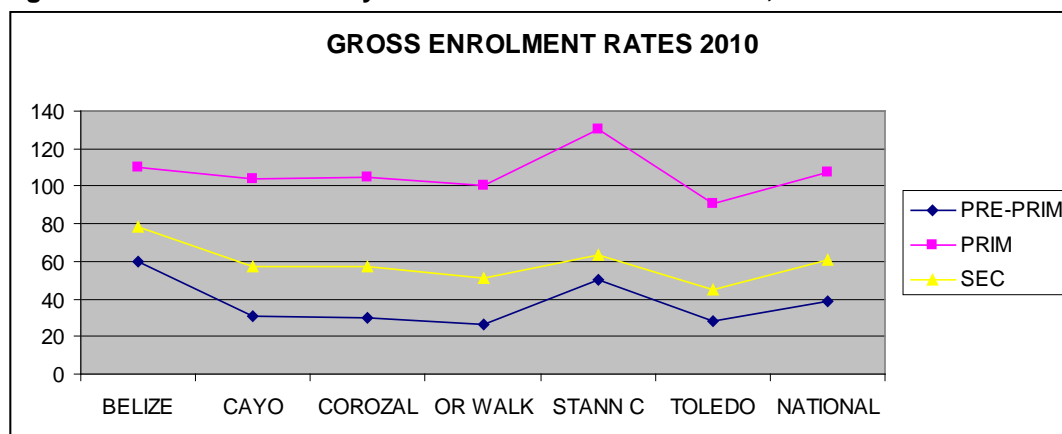
There have been significant gains in total enrolment at each level of education over the past decade (see Table 1 below), expansion keeping in line with the growth in population, though the NERs at primary and secondary level have seen little change. Tertiary level enrolment has increased by over 140%, pre-primary by 85% and secondary by 40%. Opportunities to access education are not uniform across Belize: where you live and to some extent your gender, ethnicity and, more strongly, your economic status will strongly influence those opportunities, particularly at pre-primary and post primary levels. The overwhelming majority of children in Belize go to primary school, though according to the 2010 census there remain an estimated 2235 children between the ages of 5 and 12 who are not enrolled in school, three quarters of whom live in rural areas, and half of whom are aged five. Crude counts of gender parity across basic (primary and secondary) education shows a reasonable balance; the small difference in favour of boys at the primary level is largely explained by their higher repetition rates. At the secondary level, girls start to outnumber boys (53:47) and this phenomenon widens at the tertiary level (62:38). The gradual departure of boys from formal education poses a major challenge in Belize, as it does in many countries of the region, the consequences of which are felt in terms of high levels of unemployment and rising rates of crime.

Table 1: Enrolment Trends by level of education 2000-2009



Enrolment rates show quite wide variation between Belize's six districts, with Belize and Stann Creek showing the highest GERs at all three levels of schooling. Stann Creek's high ranking is perhaps in part attributable to rates of repetition, but also may be influenced by the subsidy which has increased opportunity for many poorer students. The predominantly rural district of Toledo shows the greatest challenges with regard to access, currently being the only district with a primary GER below 100%.

Figure 1: Gross Enrolment by level of Education and District, 2010



Pre-primary education

At the pre-primary level, only one in three children of three and four years old are enrolled in pre-school, a rate that has remained static in recent years. Pre-school enrolment is well below the regional average of 65%. In addition there are significant inequalities in access, with 40% of total enrolment in Belize District, 80% of which are in the urban areas. Children in rural areas generally have far less opportunity to attend pre-school than their urban counterparts: addressing this may go a long way to closing the gap in performance between children in rural and urban areas at the primary and secondary levels. Lack of pre-school opportunities is also a likely explanation for the relatively high number of five year olds who are not enrolled in primary school, as discussed in the next section. Data shows higher enrolment of five year olds in urban areas where access to pre-schooling is greater. Getting children off to an early and good start holds the key to later success: investment in expanding pre-primary schooling can be expected to have a positive influence on problems experienced at later levels, particularly those of repetition and the substantial numbers of over-aged children at the upper levels of primary and throughout secondary schooling.

Primary education

The recently released Census 2010 data from the Statistical Institute of Belize (SIB) estimates that the total number of children in the 5 to 12 age range (the official age range for primary school) who are not enrolled in school is 2,235. This would suggest a NER of 96%, which is broadly consistent with the NER of 94.2% obtained by using EMIS data. Further analysis shows (see Annex 1, Table 1) that 75% of these children not enrolled in schools are in the rural areas and, significantly, over half of this total are children aged 5 years. The proportion of five year olds who are not enrolled is high, particularly in rural areas, suggesting a parental preference for delayed entry. Intuitively, this is likely to be linked to distance from home to school, with parents reluctant to allow such young children to travel to school beyond the immediate village. However, this is made more complex by the school transportation system which allows parents to choose a school of their denominational (or other) preference over the nearest school, a phenomenon which is more prominent in the rural areas. This points to a need for more closely defined catchment areas. An analysis by district revealed that Cayo (both urban and rural) and Orange Walk (mainly rural) account for half of these out of school children. The overall picture of primary education in Belize is that the majority of children do enrol and remain in school. The very small minority of children who appear never to enrol (around 3% to 4%) are very likely to be children with special education needs (SEN) who fail to find a place in either the limited number of special schools or within a conventional primary school, possibly because

they require special transport arrangements. Cayo District and the rural areas of Orange Walk, require further analysis to better understand why a higher proportion of children remain unenrolled.

The very recent release of the results of the 2010 Census, and in particular the availability of new age specific data, has enabled a recalibration of both the Gross (GER) and Net Enrolment Rates (NER) from those that informed the sector diagnosis. Based on the latest available Statistical Institute of Belize (SIB) data, the Primary GER is 107.0% (previously reported as 93%) and a Primary NER of 94.2% (previously reported as 84%). The trend therefore over the past decade is static in terms of the NER (95% in 2001), though the GER shows an increase (from 101% in 2001), reflecting the continuing problem with repetition in the system, though again the overall repetition rates have declined steadily from 9.7% to 7.2% over the past decade. There is no major variation between boys and girls in terms of access to primary education; boys marginally outnumber girls (51% to 49%) with a gender parity index of 0.96. The difference is uniform across all districts. The difference is explained by the higher repetition rates experienced by boys than girls; boys having an overall repetition rate of 8.4% compared to 6.0% for girls. In terms of district variation, only Toledo shows a GER of less than 100%.

Issues of access to the various levels of education in Belize are not so much to do with a lack of places, though there are clearly some remaining inequalities of opportunity between districts at the secondary level, but more an issue of progression and retention. What characterises enrolment at both the primary and secondary level is high levels of repetition and, at the secondary level, high levels of drop out.

Table 2 Primary school repetition rate by district and grades 2008-2009

	Inf. I	Inf. II	Std. 1	Std.2	Std. 3	Std. 4	Std. 5	Std. 6	Total
Belize	11.9	5.9	5.4	5.0	4.0	4.5	0.7	2.2	5.0
Cayo	10.2	6.6	7.1	4.8	6.1	2.9	3.5	1.0	5.5
Corozal	13.7	8.2	6.9	7.5	8.3	7.2	7.0	0.1	7.5
Orange Walk	14.8	10.1	9.1	6.5	8.8	8.5	5.2	1.7	8.4
Stann Creek	12.0	6.6	7.0	5.8	6.4	4.9	4.1	0.4	6.2
Toledo	17.1	13.2	10.5	9.5	11.3	3.4	8.5	2.1	10.0
Average	13.28	8.34	7.67	6.52	7.48	5.23	4.83	1.25	7.10

Source: Policy and Planning Unit, MoEY, 2011

Currently, only two in every five children complete primary school in the stipulated eight years. There is significant variation in repetition between districts, as well as between grades, and boys repeat more than girls. Higher repetition rates are experienced in the early grades (14% in Infant 1) and decline gradually to their lowest in Standard 6 (average 1.3%), suggesting the need for increased Early Childhood Education programmes. The net result of this is that by the end of the primary cycle over half the children are overage, and 20% are at least two years older than the official age. More information is needed on early year's repetition, including investigating reported practices of a nine year primary cycle offered in some schools, and reporting kindergarten and Infant 1 as a single year.

Secondary education

As with the primary sub-sector, the recently released 2010 Census data has enabled a revision of the GER and NER for the secondary level. Based on the latest SIB data the secondary GER is 63.5% (previously reported using 2008/09 EMIS as 53%) and the NER is 48.9% (previously reported using 2008/09 EMIS as 40.7%). Using these revised rates, the overall trend over the past decade has been one of marginal increase, the GER and NER improving from 59.2% and 45.1% respectively since 2003/4. Even with revised statistics,, the desired policy to increase secondary enrolment espoused in the National Poverty

Eradication and Action Plan (NPEAP) 2008-2011 has not yet been fully realised, though transition rates from primary to secondary have improved, reaching 89.2% in 2009/10.

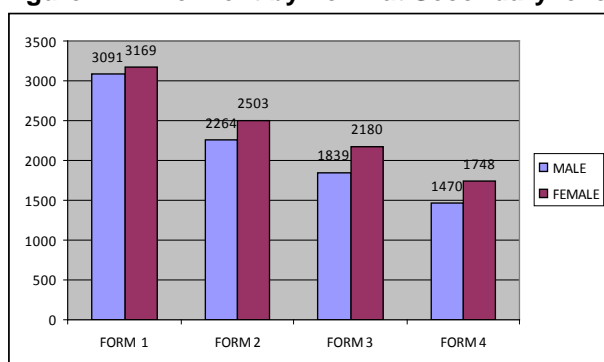
There is marked variation between districts in terms of the GER: Belize has the highest GER at 82%, with Orange Walk now showing the lowest at 50% and Toledo at 51% (2009/10 EMIS data). There is an equally significant difference between rural and urban areas in terms of access, though the data is not an accurate predictor as the school transportation programme provides free bus routes for rural students to attend schools in the main towns. Despite Belize's predominantly rural population, the location of schools is skewed towards the urban centres. The table below summarises the coverage showing the number of secondary aged students in the population (note: not enrolment) per school. This shows that the young people in the rural areas of Toledo, Stann Creek and Orange Walk are the least well served, whilst all urban areas other than Corozal are better served than any rural area.

Table 3. Average number of secondary aged students per school

	BEL	CAY	COR	ORW	STC	TOL	NAT
RURAL	555	755	543	919	1176	1347	786
URBAN	355	540	871	270	501	463	417

Despite good transition rates from the primary to secondary levels, averaging 89.2% nationally (2009/10), there is both high drop out and high repetition at the secondary level. Figure 2 shows the difference in enrolment across the four forms of secondary schooling and highlights the problem of drop out - total enrolment in Form 4 is only 57% of that of Form 1. While there are clearly equity issues regarding opportunities of access to secondary education, the bigger problem is what happens to students during the secondary cycle, so that by Form 3, almost 60% of students are over age, half of whom are two years older than the prescribed age. This is likely to have a significant impact on student attitude to school and explain the resistance shown by older students to what school has to offer - to school rules and authority. Further research is clearly needed here to understand practices and policies around repetition, and how it is monitored and managed in schools. The new Secondary School Financing Policy can be expected to change attitudes to drop out and repetition in schools.

Figure 2: Enrolment by Form at Secondary level



Source: MOEY Statistical Digest 2009/10

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

The provision of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Belize remains problematic, and despite substantial investment, increases in enrolment have been disappointing. The four centres that were already established in 2001 have seen no increase in enrolment - the national increase is attributable to the opening of new centres in Orange Walk and Stann Creek. The facilities at the six ITVETs are good,

but are under-utilised. In two cases, Toledo and Stann Creek, this may be explained by the location of the ITVET centres, which are outside the main towns – in the case of Toledo, significantly so (26 miles), making the centre difficult to access, though there is a free bus service from Punta Gorda. Each of the six centres has a national capacity for 200 full –time students, which, with some more creative planning and timetabling could be increased.

Access to ITVET is either following completion of Form 4, for full time National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) programmes, or from various stages of education for entry to the pre-vocational programmes, designed to provide the necessary levels of prior learning and knowledge needed to access NVQ programmes.

The broader issue regarding TVET is the sub-sector’s articulation with secondary education, and the prevalent and persistent view that TVET options are for the less academically inclined student, who must opt for this as a last resort having failed to secure a place in a junior college, or in regular secondary school.

Table 4: TVET Enrolment 2000/1 – 2008/09

	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Belize	287	277	229	240	248	196	253	256	296
Male	243	247	200	218	222	175	199	150	187
Female	44	30	29	22	26	21	54	106	109
Cayo	191	158	103	109	91	101	217	230	184
Male	110	91	72	77	63	73	146	147	114
Female	81	67	31	32	28	28	71	83	70
Corozal	57	43	42	153	122	32	24	35	60
Male	32	28	29	77	69	17	5	13	28
Female	25	15	13	76	53	15	19	22	32
Orange Walk	0	0	0	0	0	0	93	119	117
Male	0	0	0	0	0	0	79	104	98
Female	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	15	19
Stann Creek	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	87	102
Male	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	43	59
Female	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	44	43
Toledo	57	30	55	31	28	40	78	33	38
Male	46	19	33	21	18	30	59	22	37
Female	11	11	22	10	10	10	19	11	1
Total	592	508	429	533	489	369	665	760	797
Male	431	385	334	393	372	295	488	479	523
Female	161	123	95	140	117	74	177	281	274

Source: Policy & Planning Unit, MOEY

Higher Education (Junior Colleges and University)

There has been a steady increase in enrolments at the tertiary level, showing a 66% increase between 2004, when total enrolment was 4,200, and 2009/10 when it passed 7,000. Females outnumber males in the ratio of 62:38 at the tertiary level. Enrolment in Junior Colleges, which offer the Associate Degree programmes, has doubled over the past decade, largely as a result of an increase from six to ten in the number of Junior Colleges. Enrolment favours the urban areas where the majority of colleges are situated.

Rural students are disadvantaged in having to find both transport and accommodation costs if they attend urban colleges away from their home.

Similarly, university enrolment has continued to expand annually, with enrolment passing 4,000 in the 2009-2010 academic year. The University of Belize accounts for by far the largest share of enrolment (3,714) with the private Galen University having an enrolment of 288. These two universities make up 90% of Belize's total university enrolment, the rest either pursuing open and distance courses, largely with the University of the West Indies (UWI), or at universities outside Belize. Females dominate enrolment, accounting for two-thirds of the total. Even in programmes that traditionally tend to be male dominated, such as business and natural sciences, girls outnumber boys.

Despite this progress, gross enrolment rates estimated at between 10% and 13% are at best still less than half that of the regional average (27%) and on par with Central American neighbours Honduras and El Salvador. There are several reasons for such low participation rates. Relatively low completion rates at the secondary level, coupled with poor levels of learning achievement fail to generate enough qualified demand for higher education. Cost is also a significant factor, as despite support from MOEY, the cost of attending university full-time is beyond the reach of the majority. Access favours those who live closest, so rural populations are further disadvantaged by additional costs associated with travel and accommodation. It is striking that open and distance approaches to higher education qualifications are not being developed in Belize; this is clearly a potential role for the University of Belize.

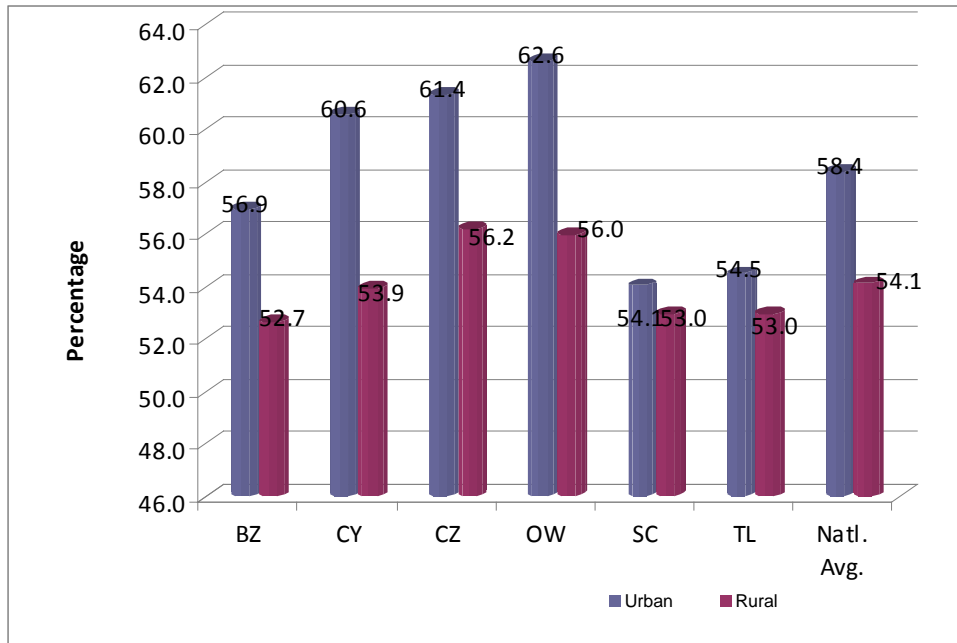
The Quality of Education

The quality of an education system is generally judged nationally through student performance in national examinations and internationally through participation in global studies and surveys, such as PISA and TIMMS². Belize does not participate in any of the global surveys although it is a member of the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC). There are no recent comparisons of performance across the region and CXC itself does not publish summary reports.

At the Primary level, there is no evidence of significant change in performance over the past decade. Average scores are higher in urban areas, though a third of children who sit the PSE score less than 50%. This rises to 40% in rural areas. Orange Walk urban has the highest achievement, with only 13% failing to score 50%, whereas rural Cayo, Stann Creek and Toledo all have in excess of 40% failing to achieve the 50% mark. Although, overall, the performance of the southern districts of Stann Creek and Toledo lag behind the rest of Belize, rural students there perform equally well, or equally badly, as rural pupils elsewhere.

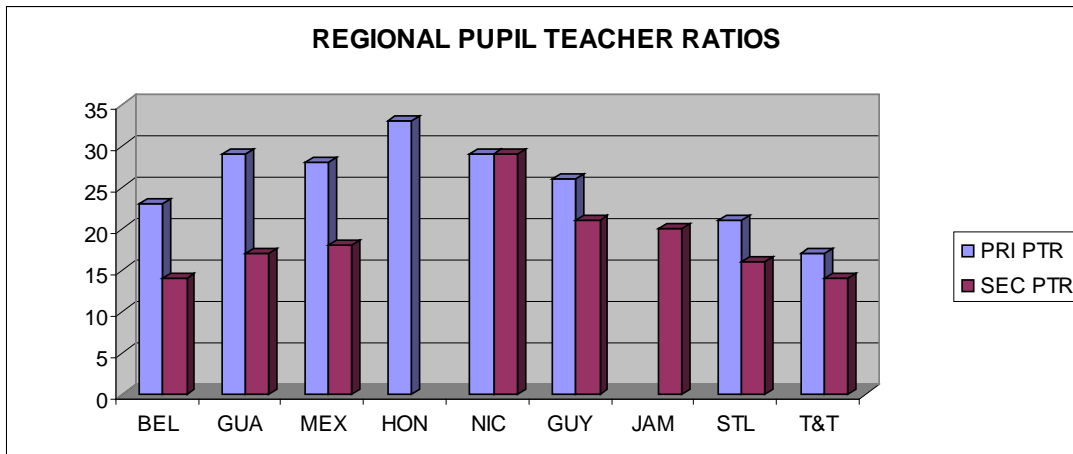
² PISA TIMMS

Figure 3: PSE Results by District (Urban and Rural) 2009/10



Belize ranks well in regional comparisons with regard to pupil teacher ratios (PTR), with a national primary PTR of 22:1, with marginal variation in range between 21:1 in Belize District and 24:1 in Cayo. The district average PTRs mask the variation found between specific schools. At the secondary level, the PTR nationally is 14:1, with a variation of 12:1 in Belize District to 16:1 in Stann Creek.

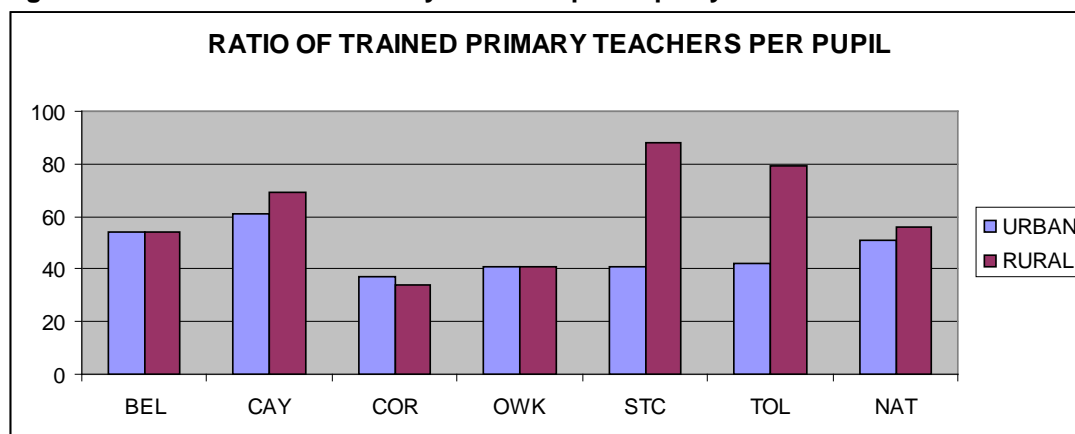
Figure 4: Comparison of Regional Pupil Teacher Ratios



Key: BELIZE, GUATEMALA, MEXICO, HONDURAS, NICARAGUA, GUYANA, JAMAICA, ST LUCIA, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Belize's teaching force, at both primary and secondary level, is largely unqualified. Nationally, only around 40% of primary teachers are trained with marginally more (45%) in urban areas than in rural areas (40%). At the secondary level, only one third (33%) are qualified. There are marked differences between districts: whereas two-thirds of teachers are trained in Corozal (with little variation between rural and urban), only a third are trained in Stann Creek and Toledo. Deficits of trained teachers are felt most strongly in the rural south (see Figure 5 below). In the case of Toledo, the high proportion of untrained teachers is further compounded by the reliance on multi-grade schools, where effective teaching skills are at an added premium given the challenges that the multi-grade classroom presents.

Figure 5: Ratio of Trained Primary Teachers per Pupil by District 2009/10



At the primary level, a quarter of all schools are multi-grade, with Toledo having over half of its primary schools designated multi-grade. Multi-grade teaching poses significant challenges which are compounded by high numbers of untrained teachers, most of whom will have received no special training in the skills required for these schools. Whereas multi-grade schools are frequently inevitable in small, remote rural communities, the way primary schools are established and managed by the various church denominations exacerbates problems and challenges. This is because a number of small, differently managed schools are allowed to co-exist in close proximity to each other.

Added to these complexities, is a school transportation policy that supports a relatively high degree of choice for parents as to where they school their children. Parental choice is largely expressed on denominational grounds, though perceptions of school quality and cost are also likely to be factors. Poorer parents are most likely to select schools with lower fees. Any changes to the transportation policy leading to restriction of the free bus service to the nearest school needs to be accompanied by action on fees so that poorer parents are not disadvantaged.

There is a strong interrelationship between access and the quality and relevance of education. The characteristics noted regarding access, particularly those of repetition and drop out, are directly related to the quality of education. Children repeat years because they have failed to achieve a requisite standard to progress to the next level and are held back by schools in the hope that another year will resolve the under-achievement. The efficacy of this policy is generally contested and there is some global evidence from developing education systems to suggest that such an approach has little impact in improving achievement. There is no valid research from within Belize on the impact of frequent repetition.

The National Curriculum has been in place in primary schools since 2002 although there is uncertainty regarding the degree of compliance expected by MOEY. Equally, schools are uncertain about the degree to which the curriculum can be adapted to meet the specific needs of their students. A number of key issues emerged in the sector diagnosis which were more to do with the delivery of the curriculum rather than curriculum itself. The aims of the Belizean National Curriculum are aligned with current international thinking around a 21st century curriculum in promoting learners who have skills, knowledge, competencies, and attitudes that enable them to adapt to the changes around them and to process and manage information in a myriad of forms. Such is the aspiration, but not the practice. Teachers, principals and managers place heavy focus on coverage of the content and information rather than the development of

skills and competencies. There is too great an emphasis placed on planning and reporting on curriculum coverage, with insufficient attention being paid to what pupils are actually learning and making the curriculum stimulating, relevant and accessible to the full range of pupils. Testing casts a heavy shadow over the later years of primary schooling. With the PSE looming, teaching narrows to examination preparation, limiting time spent on other aspects of the curriculum. In addition, there is a lack of capacity in many schools to approach the curriculum in such a way to create opportunities for learners to experience vocational and practical curricular opportunities. Vocational and practical subjects are under valued and this has a negative impact on attitudes and perceptions that affect engagement with and transfer into vocational education. Realism in terms of what teachers are able to handle, with a focus on the basic core responsibilities – particularly on literacy and numeracy at the primary level – is the building block for subsequent success and diversification.

Curriculum articulation within and between school phases – primary to secondary - is generally weak. Curriculum implementation is highly dependent upon the skills and interests of individual teachers, especially in schools where there is infrequent or ineffective monitoring by school leaders or district personnel. This results in discontinuity in curriculum coverage and lack of engagement for some students because the curriculum is not differentiated to meet their needs.

There is generally a lack of appropriate assessment skills and techniques and the use of assessment information to improve learning, whether of the individual student or of the school as a whole. At present, the national curriculum framework does not make explicit the link between curriculum and assessment. This, more than revision of the curricular content, needs urgent attention and action. The system is very reliant on summative testing as opposed to formative assessment, and as yet places no emphasis upon, and provides little incentive for, the use of the latter. As a result teachers lack the necessary skills in ongoing and systematic assessment of what their pupils are actually learning and what skills they are developing. There is little effective use of learning assessment information and data, either at the school level or on a national scale, to inform programmes and teaching.

At the secondary level, the curriculum is modelled around the CSEC examinations. It is thus formed around a group of subjects with a heavy academic bias. There is no common national examination or graduation certificate in Belize; anecdotal evidence from consultations during the diagnostic study suggests a degree of frustration amongst poorer secondary students who miss the CSEC examinations because of the high fees. There is very weak articulation between the academic courses of secondary schools and the more practical, work-oriented programmes associated with the TVET programmes. A few senior technical schools, such as Julian Cho in Toledo, are attempting to offer a balanced curriculum but appear to struggle with a lack of resources, though the new financing formula should start to address this problem. As previously noted, access to ITVET following Form 4 completion, where it competes with the academic Associate Degree programmes of the Junior Colleges and Universities, is generally perceived as an inferior option. This may partly explain their low enrolment and high drop out rates. ITVETs also offer a range of pre-vocational programmes, largely targeting young people who have prematurely left formal schooling. Although these programmes on completion offer preparation to full TVET courses, they remain associated with a sense of academic failure and the notion of a 'last resort' option.

The Quality Child Friendly School Initiative (QCFSI) aims to strengthen school leadership through increased autonomy, responsibility, and accountability and improve the quality of student experience. The underlying concepts, principles, and processes have been derived from the Scottish framework of school accountability: How Good is our School? (HGIOS) Effective school self evaluation and accountability is seen as central to school improvement and effectiveness policy in Scotland, England, Australia and some districts in the USA.

Although it is too soon to know whether outcomes from the QCFSI pilot show a benefit to the quality of the students' educational experience and achievements, feedback from principals who engaged in the pilot phase was very positive. They valued the opportunity to have some autonomy to modify the curriculum, make choices about resources and to work collaboratively with other schools and district personnel. The initiative has much to recommend it, starting as it does with the well researched premise that the most successful schools know what they do well and can identify areas for improvement. Managed through clear objectives and well defined success criteria, the initiative has the potential for building capacity in school leadership and improving the quality of education in Belize. Successful schools, where leadership is established and outcome-focused, can be used to assist others. Support, such as coaching and mentoring, from credible, successful peers is a proven and cost-effective strategy for building capacity and establishing consistency across Belizean schools. Successful schools may become centres of good practice and could be used to support the training and development of teachers. However, all of this is predicated on success criteria for the initiative so that stakeholders are clear about the aims of the project, how they will be achieved and, importantly, what success will look like. Transparency is important so that all schools know why schools have been included in the initiative and what they are expected to achieve.

MoEY is aware that a process of change management in schools and districts is a pre-requisite to implementation. As the initiative rolls out to its next phase, very detailed planning is needed so that the principles are underpinned by a sound operational and budgetary structure. The pace of growth for this initiative should be in proportion to the level of resource available to support it. Operational support as well as robust monitoring and evaluation strategies are essential if it is to achieve its aim.

Little work has been done to understand the impact that Belize's diverse language background has on educational processes and achievements. Less than one in every twenty-five Belizeans has English as their mother tongue, yet English is the official language (and Creole is the lingua franca) and, most significantly, the language of instruction throughout education. Anecdotal evidence suggests that English medium education is attractive to Hispanic speakers and a pull factor from neighbouring countries, and that Spanish speakers generally acquire English quickly in school and develop strong second language proficiency. Conversely, Creole speakers appear to struggle more with English, in all probability because of Creole's close proximity to English which allows for easy establishment of oral communication. Unusually, Belizean Creole has a written form, though it is unwise to speculate on the extent to which this may or may not impede the later development of written accuracy in English needed in school programmes. International evidence points strongly towards the advantage of establishing early literacy in a child's mother tongue which becomes the basis for developing skills in second and further languages. This does not happen in Belize, at least not formally, though during field visits undertaken in preparation of this strategy there was some evidence of bilingual (English and Spanish) approaches being used by teachers in early grades. It should be noted, however, that teachers have no formal training in such methods. In conclusion, language needs further research from which a better understanding can be gained regarding the impact of Belize's diversity upon an English language education system. School level data can be used to assess the extent to which language impacts learning, from this policy and strategy can be built to maximise the benefits and minimise the consequences of multilingualism and its impact on learning achievement.

There is little current evidence of ICT being used effectively and productively across the education system. Currently, very few primary schools and not all secondary schools have internet connectivity and the availability of ICT facilities in schools is neither systematic nor standardised, frequently being the result of donation of dated equipment. Whilst there is a general acknowledgement in Belize of the potential benefits of ICT in education, policy remains unclear and understandably ambivalent given the likely scale of both initial investment and on-going costs. International evidence is variable, though the OECD reported in 2005 on the benefits of more dynamic interactions between schools and teachers, increased teamwork, improved self monitoring of learning by students and improved problem solving. Evidence in Scotland has

pointed to improved achievement, particularly of boys. What is clear is that young people need ICT skills and familiarity with a range of applications to be able to function fully in modern society. For the better off, much of this is gained outside of school, adding a digital divide to an existing social divide. Schools therefore have a potentially important role to play in promoting greater equity in terms of ICT skills. ICT has great potential to reach into remote locations and reach under-served communities (e.g. support to multi-grade schools or access to secondary courses). ICT is also a great untapped resource in terms of work force training through continuous professional development programmes delivered at home or in the work place through on line, radio, televised or electronically recorded media. Video conferencing facilities at each DEC would save considerable time and cost in travel by officers to centrally convened meetings.

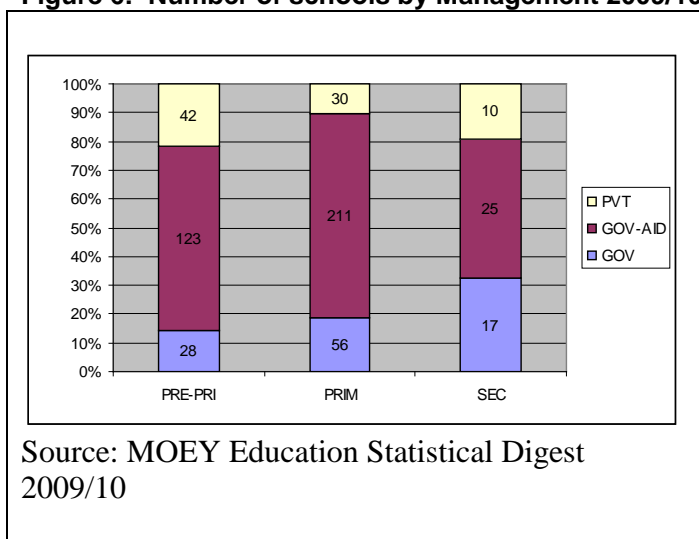
Governance

The legislative and policy context for education in Belize is governed by the Education and Training Act of 2010. However, the education act, while covering roles and responsibilities, does not set out any sets of values, principles or priorities for delivery of education. As yet the provisions of the new act have not yet been fully interpreted in regulations, resulting in continuing poor coordination and lack of clarity around standards, which makes it difficult to effectively manage and monitor performance.

A number of potentially important bodies are beginning to play a more influential role in helping deliver a better education service. The Teaching Services Commission and the recently constituted Belize Board of Teacher Education (BBTE) are beginning to play a more effective role in Belize's effort to improve its education system. The BBTE has, for example, already drafted all important standards for school leadership in response to the acknowledged weakness in this area.

The delivery of education in Belize is dominated by a church and state system, with only 15% of pre-primary, 19% of primary and 33% of secondary schools being solely managed by government. Whilst such partnership is potentially a highly effective way of sharing responsibility and cost, current arrangements are insufficiently robust, resulting in very poor levels of accountability, no application of common standards, and poor monitoring of school performance. In particular, it is the lack of accountability that hinders efforts to improve the quality of education. This is manifest at several levels, in particular between MOEY, who provide the majority of the financing for basic education, and school managers. There is little control over the decisions on where to open schools, no consistent merit-based criteria applied to the appointment of principals, or indeed to the selection of managers, no coherent way of monitoring school performance against common standards and no way in which individual schools are held accountable for performance by either their management or MOEY. Equally there is weak accountability between schools and parents, despite the cost sharing arrangements whereby parents contribute substantially to running costs.

Figure 6: Number of schools by Management 2009/10



Monitoring and supervision of schools is undertaken by the DECs. This largely focuses on primary schools, DECs having less authority and influence over secondary schools. Belize is moving toward the establishment of an inspectorate and a Chief and Deputy Chief Inspector have been identified who will develop inspection framework and processes and train teams of school inspectors to be contracted for conducting school inspections. Currently, the function of school supervision is performed by DECs, who undertake a full supervision of schools once every three years and “spot checks” once a term. Whilst this process

seems to have shifted from a “judgemental” form of inspection to more supportive supervision – and a good relationship between DECs and schools is much in evidence in Belize – there is no coherent or publicly available record of school performance and no capacity to formally monitor progress against standards or targets over time. Other than examination results, which in themselves only tell part of the story, there is no coherent way of knowing, year on year, how the system is doing. In recent years the QCFSI has attempted to define common standards, and this initiative is being gradually extended to all primary schools in Belize. Evaluation results of the initial pilot are expected soon, but it is clear that this initiative needs to be more widely owned across key parts of the system, most significantly by those involved in teacher training and professional development. The underlying concept of a single set of minimum standards needs to be more rapidly applied across all schools, and form the basis on which greater accountability can be achieved in the system.

Leadership emerges at all levels of the system as a weakness, and nowhere is this more important or more acutely felt than at the school level. Teachers are in any system the key agents that can drive change: teacher salaries take up the dominant share of the budget, and day in day out it is the interface between pupils and teachers that is central to learning achievement. Yet management of the teaching force is weak, with no effective monitoring and only the basic level of controls of conduct applied at school level. Observation and anecdotal evidence suggests there are some very good principals in Belize, but equally there are less effective ones. Very few have received any special training, there are no widely held or applied standards applied to the cadre, though as indicated above BBTE has defined these, and there are no systematic checks applied by school managers who tend to focus on administrative tasks rather than managing the quality of education in their schools and taking an active role in supporting improvement. There is currently no training in school leadership.

Cost and Financing

The GOB’s commitment to education has been strong over the last decade. Actual education expenditure as a proportion of total recurrent expenditure has exceeded 22% for the last nine years (CPA, 2009). More recently, education’s share has risen and remained constant at 26% with an annual real growth rate of six per cent - in 2010 actual expenditure was BZ\$ 180 million up by BZ\$5 million on the year before. In the region, Belize is the biggest spender on education³, higher than Costa Rica, Cuba, and Barbados and well

³ Based on the data available in the UIS 2011 for the country grouping North America for the year 2009

above the FTI benchmark of 20%. As a proportion of GDP, education expenditure has remained constant at around six and a half per cent over the last few years, marginally lower than Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Barbados (in 2009).

Capital expenditure accounts for a small and reducing share of total education expenditure: falling from 10 to one per cent between 2007 and 2010. This is due to i) the small and shrinking allocation of the capital budget to the education sector, ii) in nominal terms, the overall reduction in the GOB's capital investment programme and iii) the reduction in the number of externally financed projects. However, the funds which were allocated to the education sector were fully disbursed and went largely to the secondary (33%) and TVET sectors (23%) in 2009.

The ability of the education sector to implement the budgeted expenditure is an important factor in supporting the ability to deliver effective public services. Budget credibility requires actual budgetary releases to be similar to voted budgets and requires appropriate fiscal discipline to be in place (PEFA 2009). For the education sector, budget credibility is extremely high; having a variance of less than one per cent for the last two years. Looking at individual economic classifications shows personal emoluments have averaged 98% over the period. In 2008 and 2009, operating costs and training have exceeded budget by an average of 10 and 8% respectively.

TABLE 5: EXECUTION RATES BY ECONOMIC CLASSIFICATION 2008-2010

	2008	2009	2010
Total	98.5%	99.5%	99.2%
Personal Emoluments	97.3%	99.1%	97.1%
Travel and Subsistence	82.1%	86.4%	90.1%
Materials and Supplies	81.5%	78.5%	105.9%
Operating cost	109.1%	106.9%	112.3%
Maintenance Costs	87.5%	99.4%	101.1%
Training	119.9%	117.0%	89.5%
Public Utilities	97.6%	99.8%	83.5%
Grants	95.2%	97.8%	104.4%

Source: MOF 2011

GOB spends on average 55% of the recurrent budget on primary education – this is five percentage points higher than the FTI benchmark for the primary level. Secondary (28%), tertiary (7%), junior college (5%) and TVET (2%) are the next largest recipients. Over the period, primary's share has fallen by four percentage points and tertiary's share has doubled to 10%. This in part can be explained by the recent decision of the GOB to increase the annual block grant to the university from BZ\$8.5 to BZ\$10 million. Secondary education's share dipped by three percentage points to 26% in 2010; this figure is expected to rise in subsequent years given the new funding formula for secondary schools where schools funding has either been frozen or increased for the next three years⁴.

⁴ Refer to the Design of a Resource Allocation System for Secondary Education (Sangiest 2008) and the Business Rules for the Implementation of the New Secondary School Financing Model (MOEY) which gives a detailed commentary on the new funding formula and the likely impacts.

Analysing execution rates by education levels further helps to understand some of the observed patterns. Execution rates for primary education have been constant at 98% over the last three years. The fall in the nominal primary expenditure value in 2010 can be explained by the 2% variance. However, when we look at the primary approved commitments we see that this is the main driver for the reduction in primary expenditure, BZ\$0.8 million being removed from the 2010 allocation compared to the 2009. Secondary education commitments are high – due to the secondary education financing reform but actual expenditure was low in comparison to 2009 due to the low disbursement rates. A further explanation may be tighter monitoring of inflated budgets that are not based on actual need.

A minimum of two-thirds of sub-sector expenditure is spent on personal emoluments. Personal emolument rates for both primary and SEN have been consistently above 80%. In 2010, personal emoluments rates for primary and secondary rose by three and four percent, respectively.

As it is the case throughout the region, public spending on education tends to be more skewed toward the upper levels. The region spends, on average, three times more per student at the post secondary level than at the primary. By contrast, in some OECD countries, spending at lower levels of education exceeds that spent at the tertiary level - equity concerns follow; countries with expenditures concentrated at lower levels of education tend to have lower education Gini coefficients, thus indicating that support to education throughout their respective societies is more equitably distributed (IDB, 2006: 23).

In Belize, spending per student has been increasing over the period. The costs of tertiary increased by 64%⁵, the highest change compared to other levels; it now costs the GOB BZ\$4,206 per annum to educate a higher education student. The cost of educating a primary and junior college student rose by same percentage (13%), in absolute terms it now costs BZ\$ 1,427 and BZ\$2,620, respectively. The cost of a pre school student is less than the 2007 level.

Belize’s level of high personal emolument as a proportion of recurrent expenditure reduces the flexibility and availability of funds to implement new and existing non-wage activities. From the 26% remaining for non-wage activities, the government spends on average 41% on:

- i. free school transportation;
- ii. free primary textbook policy;
- iii. PSE and CXC examination fees;
- iv. tuition grants to grant aided secondary schools; and
- v. tuition fees and scholarships for junior college

TABLE 6: NON-WAGE EXPENDITURE 2007-2010

	2007 (BZ\$)	2008 (BZ\$)	2009 (BZ\$)	2010 (BZ\$)
Textbooks	-	1,828,856.00	1,193,974.00	2,800,000.00*
Transport	4,158,616.00	5,380,240.00	6,012,226.00	6,086,848.00*
Examination fees	878,372.00	1,098,900.00	1,250,416.00	1,410,685.00
Tuition grants	5,392,638.00	7,180,386.00	8,298,200.00	8,671,941.00
Junior college	1,879,334.00	2,437,160.00	2,573,728.00	2,194,016.00
Total	12,308,960.00	17,925,542.00	19,328,544.00	21,163,490.00

⁵ Tertiary here does not include Junior Colleges which were handled separately in the diagnostic study and analysis.

	2007 (BZ\$)	2008 (BZ\$)	2009 (BZ\$)	2010 (BZ\$)
Total as % of TRE	8%	11%	11%	12%
Total as % non-wage	37%	39%	42%	46%

Source: MOF 2011

* 2010 Approved budget figures

With just less than one-third of non-wage expenditure going on the free school transportation scheme, BZ\$6 million, it is pertinent to ask whether the scheme is delivering the intended results given the high commitment from the GOB. Students from Stann Creek, Toledo and Belize Districts are the biggest users of the scheme, taking 33%, 25% and 23% of the total usage respectively. In these districts, pupils at secondary level use the service marginally more than primary pupils. In the other districts, it is generally targeted to ascertain identified level: Orange Walk, 100% of users are primary pupils; conversely, secondary pupils are the sole users in Toledo District.

Education is not entirely free in Belize. Government funding covers 100% of teacher salaries except in government aided secondary schools and junior colleges. Schools are, however, responsible for the non-funded proportion as well as all operation and maintenance costs. User fees are thus essential for the operation of the school system and schools are able to charge the fees that they consider to be justified. There are no regulations or requirements of managing authorities to make direct contributions to the running of schools, neither is there any common fee structure that determines levels of fees charged, though work is on-going, with IADB support, to examine this.

While these fees are largely nominal, especially for primary schooling, they nevertheless cause financial difficulties for many households, particularly in rural areas where cash incomes tend to be much lower – types of fees include book rental, PE uniform, computer, and registration. Some schools make allowance for this by waiving fees in exceptional circumstances – field visits confirmed that approximately 40% of pupils do not pay school fees, and a significant proportion pay only a small part of the chargeable fee. In the majority of cases, parents have to pay for their children's uniforms, textbooks and school lunches (CPA, 2009).

The Design of Resource Allocation for Secondary Education Proposal (Sangiest, 2008) undertook an analysis of the burden of out-of-pocket school costs on households by comparing the prevailing spending with the household budget and quintile using the LSMS 2002. They concluded that the poorest households spend annually BZ\$1,691 on education, which represented over 30% of their total household expenditure, while richest families spend 40% more than the poor, BZ\$2,268 but that accounts for only 8% of their total household expenditure. By disaggregating education expenditure by category against quintile, they showed expenditure on textbooks is the most expensive item, ranging from 30 to 40% – consistent with extraordinary revenue from the sale of textbooks. In per capita terms, the poorest and the richest spent almost the same, BZ\$272, but it represented 16% of the total poorest household expenditure compared to 3% for the richest households.

Similarly, poorer households spent twice as much of their household expenditure on transportation costs compared to the richest families, 4% and 2% respectively. The richest households spent 2% of household expenditure on education fees, compared to 9% for the poor. However, fees as a percentage of household education expenditure for the two groups are comparable at 30%.

CHAPTER 3 POLICY OBJECTIVES 2011-2016

In response to the diagnosis three overarching policy objectives guide the ESS:

1. Increase equitable access to all levels of education
2. Improve the quality and relevance of education at all levels
3. Strengthen governance throughout the sector with emphasis on increased accountability for student achievement.

Each of these policy objectives is discussed below. A summary of each with outputs, targets and strategies is presented as a Summary Framework in Annex A.

POLICY OBJECTIVE 1: INCREASE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO ALL LEVELS OF EDUCATION

We have seen that there are significant disparities in enrolment across the six districts of Belize, and in particular, between urban and rural areas. In addition to raising overall enrolment in each of the sub-sectors, the ESS aims to reduce the inequalities among districts. Rather than use national targets, which continue to mask the district and rural/urban variations, the strategy expresses targets in terms of minimum levels of enrolment in each of the districts. During the plan period, MOEY is committed to achieving the following major enrolment targets:

- Ensure a pre-primary GER of at least 50% in both urban and rural areas of all districts
- Ensure that the MDG of Universal Primary Education is achieved by 2015, evidenced by a NER of 100%.
- Raise GER at secondary level to at least 70% in each district
- Ensure that each of the six Institutes of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (ITVET) operate at a minimum of 90% capacity, thus raising overall enrolment to close to 1,100 full time students
- Improve completion rates at the tertiary level and reduce the gender enrolment gap.

1. Expand access to Pre-School Education

TARGETS

- GER of at least 50% in both rural and urban areas of each district.

The Government is committed to a “*Start Strong*” policy of improving access to pre-primary education. BY 2016 the number of children aged three and four (the pre-primary school age group) will have grown to almost 17,500 (from the 2010 Census figure of 15,376). Reaching the

overall target will require the addition of in excess of 2,600 new pre-primary places and the hiring of an additional 145 teachers if the existing pupil teacher ratio of 16:1 is to be maintained.

There is already a marked difference in access to pre-schooling between urban and rural areas, with the latter lagging far behind. Thus, in order to establish greater equity, priority will be given to rural areas, with the creation of over 2,000 new places. Currently Cayo, (31%), Toledo (30%) and Orange Walk (26%) Districts experience the lowest enrolments, so these will take priority. Based on a target enrolment rate of 50% in each district, and the baseline enrolment of 2009/10, the anticipated number of new places per district is shown in the table below. Further disaggregation of data is necessary at the planning stage to further target expansion to redress the imbalance between rural and urban areas. Priority also needs to be

afforded on other grounds, including provision in areas of high crime, such as Belize City as a strategy for building more stable communities.

Table 7: Enrolment Targets for Pre-Primary Schooling by 2015/16

ENROLMENT PROJECTIONS	BELIZE	CAYO	COROZAL	O WALK	STANN C	TOLEDO	TOTAL
2010 AGE SPECIFIC POP'N	4001	3488	2015	2353	1647	1872	15376
2016 AGE SPECIFIC POP	4681	4081	2357	2753	1927	2190	17989
DESIRED ENROLMENT RATE	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	0.5
TARGET ENROLMENT	2340	2040	1179	1376	963	1095	8995
EXISTING ENROLMENT	2577	1080	850	623	896	570	6596
ADDITIONAL ENROLMENT		960	329	753	67	525	2635
EXISTING ENROLMENT RATE	0.64	0.31	0.42	0.26	0.54	0.30	0.43

Districts will take responsibility for developing plans to achieve these targets. A key strategy will be the opening of pre-primary classes in selected primary schools. The Districts of Cayo, Orange Walk and Toledo face the biggest challenge in terms of new enrolments and will receive priority. As noted in the diagnosis, urban children are currently greatly advantaged in terms of access to pre-school; in order to redress this, districts will prioritise rural areas to ensure greater equity. Government will maintain and extend partnerships with the churches and with the private sector to share the costs of this expansion. The active participation of communities in the establishment and running of pre-schools is vitally important and is to be promoted. Alternative strategies will also be identified for establishing pre-primary experiences for children; for example, supporting village mothers to be at the centre of ECED development in remote rural communities, further supported as a cooperative venture with cross cutting ECD support structures for health and nutrition – the World Bank Health and Nutrition project for Toledo can provide an initial structural model for such an approach. Also to be considered is establishing a cadre of peripatetic pre-school teachers who can work with such groups within a geographical area. School feeding programmes will be established in poorer areas to promote enrolment, participation, and the health of children.

2. Increased enrolment and completion at primary level

TARGETS

- **100% Net Enrolment Rate**
- **75% of Primary Schools in each district have reduced repetition rate by at least 50%, with no increase in drop out.**

The previous chapter has shown that the target of universal primary enrolment is within reach, though global experience shows that enrolling the last 5% is often very difficult and requires different strategies for the hardest to reach. The policy to increase access at the pre-primary level is expected to have a positive impact on ensuring that children start school at the right age and are adequately prepared to progress and

succeed in primary school. There also needs to be focussed action that brings five year olds into school. This will require close collaboration between schools and their communities, through the agency of the Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) and other bodies, to identify the out of school children, to better understand the reasons behind non-enrolment and to the value and benefits of schooling. Special arrangements need to be made to reach out to older primary aged children who have either dropped out or who have never enrolled in school. This can be done through special school based programmes, run out of normal school hours, that aim to re-integrate such children back into formal schooling. Incentives should be offered to teachers to run such programmes. The University of Belize community service programme may provide another option to reach these children. School principals will be provided with training and support to be able to more effectively mobilise communities.

In addition to bringing the remaining out of school children into school, there is a need to improve progression through primary school. The previous chapter highlighted the extent and characteristics of repetition. The impact of achieving the targeted 50% reduction in repetition will have a beneficial impact on the system: it will help free up space and resources, reduce overcrowding and ease the pupil teacher ratio. Schools will be encouraged through their respective Managing Authorities (MA) and the District Education Centres (DEC) to more effectively monitor and manage repetition. Whilst a policy of automatic promotion is not being forcefully introduced, it is desirable and can only be achieved when the underlying causes of repetition are addressed. There is little sense in promoting children towards certain failure: the important issue to ensure they are ready to progress. The key strategy in this regard is to improve the quality of teaching so that all teachers are better able to support children who start to fail through better capacity for formative assessment and skills in remedial teaching. These are dealt with in the later section on education quality.

Access to primary schooling (as well as to secondary) has been enhanced by the Governments' policy of providing free transport that offsets private costs associated with distance, particularly in Belize's rural areas. There is however a substantial cost to this; the school bus service costs in excess of BZ\$140,000 per week. Furthermore, the service is used by parents to send their children to their school of choice rather than the nearest school. The school bus service will continue, but with closer scrutiny of routes and users who use the service to travel beyond their nearest school. Costs have to be kept in mind, and choices made in terms of where priorities lie.

MOEY will continue to provide a number of demand side services that support enrolment and attendance at both primary and secondary levels, including the textbook scheme, school transportation and, in the case of secondary students, examination subsidy. The provision of textbooks is one service that offsets the cost of schooling and improves equity by ensuring that no child is denied access to essential texts on account of family income. But there are significant costs associated with this, as well as other demand side measures, and MOEY will assess the impact of the current textbook scheme and look for ways to revise the scheme to reduce cost whilst safeguarding quality and coverage, including the efficacy of the practice of providing workbooks. The review will include assessing the feasibility of electronic alternatives to textbooks. If considered viable, some pilot applications will be initiated. In addition, school feeding programmes will continue and be encouraged along with other support services (including fee waivers) to help poorer families offset the demand side costs of schooling and to provide incentives for enrolment and attendance.

3. Expanded access and completion at secondary level

TARGETS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the GER to a minimum of 74% in each district • Reduce both the repetition rate and drop out rate by 50% in each district • Increase by 10% the number of Form 4 graduates in all districts

The secondary aged population (13 to 16 year olds) in Belize can be expected to grow by almost 4,000 from the current 29,000 to almost 33,000 by 2016. In order to keep pace with population growth and expand access to achieve the 70% GER target in each district, an additional 4,670 students will need to be enrolled. Much of this enrolment can be achieved through reducing the high drop-out rates that persist at the secondary level, and additional space can be found by reducing repetition rates. Transfer rates from primary to secondary have

improved steadily and reached 89.2% in 2009/10, up from 84.7% the previous year. Subsequent retention is the key problem.

As shown in the previous chapter, there is a marked variation in access across districts, with Belize District already having a GER of 78% compared to 45% in Toledo. In order to improve geographical equity at the

secondary level, priority will be given to the districts and areas that are furthest from the target. In addition, there is a need to focus attention on boys in Belize Urban: keeping boys in school is an important strategy in reducing the escalating crime problem in the city. Table 12 below shows the indicative enrolment targets for each district, based on the target 70% GER and the projected 13-16 year old populations in 2016⁶.

Table 8: Enrolment Targets for Secondary Schooling by 2015/16

ENROLMENT PROJECTIONS	BELIZE	CAYO	COROZAL	OR WALK	STANN C	TOLEDO	TOTAL
AGE SPECIFIC POPULATION	7539	7554	3584	3837	3354	3156	29024
2016 AGE SPECIFIC POP	8815	8833	4191	4487	3922	3690	33937
DESIRED ENROLMENT RATE	0.74	0.74	0.74	0.74	0.74	0.74	0.74
TARGET ENROLMENT	6523	6536	3101	3320	2902	2731	25113
EXISTING ENROLMENT	6155	4337	2009	1931	2390	1600	18422
ADDITIONAL ENROLMENT	368	2199	1092	1389	512	1131	6691
EXISTING ENROLMENT RATE	0.82	0.57	0.56	0.50	0.71	0.51	0.63

The solution to improving access is does not stem simply from building new classrooms and schools, though the data and projections point to this being likely in a number of locations. Much can be achieved by improving the internal efficiency of the system; the importance of progress towards the drop out and repetition targets cannot be underestimated. Halving the drop out rate from the existing 10.3% to 5.1% would ensure that over 900 students who leave secondary school before completing are retained (based on current enrolment) - with the predicted increase in enrolment, that number would be in excess of 1,000 students. Reducing repetition has the effect of freeing up space in existing schools, creating places for new enrolment. The secondary repetition rate, currently averaging 7.7% nationally equates to over 1,400 school places, which is equal to over a quarter of the total additional places needed to achieve the 70% enrolment target for 2016.

To achieve the targets at secondary, a number of strategies will be adopted. Firstly, there is an immediate need to undertake more detailed mapping and planning at district and sub district level. The newly adopted school location plan and mapping model will enable MOEY and DECs to plan for expansion, and a start has been made on using these tools. Their effective use will depend upon their being populated by the PPU with the newly available census data in order to establish baseline catchment populations, and then the training of district level personnel in their use. This will enable a district driven approach to more effectively manage enrolment, resulting in evidence-based decisions around the identification of schools that can be expanded as well as the location for new schools where appropriate. It is clear from Table 12 above that the need to create additional places at secondary level affects all districts except Belize, with shortfalls most acute in Cayo and Orange Walk, followed by Corozal and Toledo. Further analysis is needed to assess the capacity of existing schools to increase enrolment as a first option, with additional infrastructure provided where required. Increasing capacity of existing schools alone will be insufficient to meet growing needs and new schools are likely to be required in the above four districts.

Improvements in drop out and repetition rates largely lie in the hands of the schools themselves. Schools need to better understand the causes and put in place actions to address them. Support and guidance will be provided to schools on how to effectively monitor and develop school level actions to reduce repetition and drop out. (See also strategies under quality that target student under-achievement). The ability to reduce repetition and drop out will be very largely determined by improvements to the quality and relevance of education, as noted in the above section on primary access. These strategies are dealt with in the next section - Policy Objective 2. In addition to support for improved school level leadership (see Policy

⁶ Population calculations used are given in Annex 1.

Objective 3) specific training will be given to school principals in better monitoring and managing of drop out and repetition.

MOEY has already adopted and is rolling out the secondary school financing reform, which is expected not only to influence the way secondary schools are financed on a more cost effective and sustainable basis, but also provide incentives for schools to increase enrolment. In particular attention will be focussed on the incentives to reduce repetition and drop out and to reduce the financial burden of fees paid by needy students through introduction of standardised fee structure.

4. Increased enrolment in Technical and Vocational Programmes

TARGETS

- **All ITVETs operate at minimum 90% capacity for full-time programmes**
- **All ITVET offer customised part-time courses**

Currently, the ITVETs are generally underutilised, unit costs of educating a TVET student are high and vary considerably between ITVETs, largely as a result of the under utilisation. As stated in the overview section, TVET remains in the public image as the poorer relative of an academic schooling and its position and perceived status needs to be changed.

The overarching policy being pursued is one of alignment following UNESCO's Secondary Education Reform model of *Convergence of Knowledge Acquisition and Skill Development*.⁷ There is a need to re-brand TVET in terms of a successful pathway to employment through skills and experience building that leads to certification that holds a value in the employment market. A key task will therefore be to develop a strong communication strategy that builds the credibility of TVET.

Access to TVET programmes will be improved by three other key strategies. Firstly to improve the coordination and collaboration between High Schools and ITVETs, so that ITVETs are used wherever practicable to deliver relevant courses to HS students, including pre vocational programmes. Equally, MOEY will examine options for ITVET students to access courses offered at secondary schools. The programme offerings at ITVETs will be better adapted to suit particular local economic and employment opportunities. Their offerings will also include a wider range of programmes, more flexibly delivered through evening and summer programmes, which target the employed or semi-employed worker as well as those seeking to build or diversify their skills.

Secondly, TVET programmes will be set within a clear and coherent National Qualifications Framework through which they will be more closely articulated with the secondary school system. This, as well as the issue of curriculum – critical to attraction of TVET - is dealt with in the subsequent section on education quality.

Finally, TVET will be more closely linked to local industry and commerce (see also strategy in next section on HRD Strategy and Labour Market Survey). This will enable a much more tangible connection between training and the workplace, an easier transition between training and the world of work , as well as opportunities for ITVET staff themselves to become more knowledgeable and skilled in particular areas. Options to deliver programmes or parts of programmes, in the workplace will also be explored.

⁷ UNESCO 2005

5. Improve completion rates at tertiary level

TARGETS

- Annual increase of 10% of Form 4 graduates gaining access to tertiary institutions
- Reduce drop out rates at Associate Degree level by 50% in each centre
- Reduce current gender disparity in tertiary education from 2:1 (female to male) to 3:2
- Increase level of costs sharing

The key challenge faced at the tertiary level in Belize is to continue to increase access to bring Belize more into line with regional and other comparable countries. Higher numbers of graduates, particularly in key economic sectors, provide an important basis to further enhance the human capital required for national development and economic diversification. As described in the following section, MOEY will lead the process of developing a comprehensive Human Resource Development Strategy, which will inform the future development and design of tertiary level programmes, as well as those at TVET and secondary levels. As the number and quality of secondary school leavers increases, there will

be increased demand for places in tertiary institutions.

A further challenge is to better target enrolment into priority subject areas, in particular the applied sciences, technology, and agriculture. There is also a need to stem the relatively high drop out rates from associate degree programmes. MOEY will explore options to develop incentives to be applied to attract applicants into priority areas. This will include examining the way tertiary courses are financed, looking at ways to prioritise priority subjects over over-subscribed options. Equally, incentives need to be applied to secure a better gender balance at the tertiary level, though much will depend upon changes at the secondary level where the roots of this imbalance largely lie.

Resources are finite and expansion cannot place an increased burden on public funds, so MOEY will continue to develop cost sharing options. The existing loan arrangements run through the Development Finance Corporation may be better replaced with a fully-fledged student loan scheme, models of which are found in many developed countries. More significantly, the use of ICT in developing open and distance programmes will be explored to expand access to those who, for various reasons, are unable to access intra-mural, full-time programmes.

6. Improve enrolment of children with Special Education Needs

TARGETS

- All referred SEN children enrolled in school

International evidence suggests that when NERs reach into the 90% and above, a substantial proportion of the children who remain out of school are those with Special Educational Needs (SEN). Achieving the education MDGs is not possible without the inclusion of these children. Developing strategies to ensure that a greater number of SEN children are enrolled involves the collaboration of a number of Ministries and Departments. The initial requirement will be to more accurately ascertain demand for education amongst this group of children and to improve the referral services and maintain an up to date register of SEN children. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many children with SEN remain “invisible”, hidden within their homes and communities and are not enrolled in schools. Programmes to sensitise communities to be more open with regard to children with SEN and to enrol them in school will be put in place. Support also needs to be given to schools to better accommodate children with SEN, and training and support given to teachers to integrate them into their classrooms. Teachers’ skills in identifying children with SEN will also be enhanced, in co-operation with the Ministry of Human Development and the Ministry of Health, both of which have access to children, through immunisation programmes for example, which provides screening opportunities. Information will be better shared. The target is to ensure that all children referred as SEN are found places in schools. Special attention needs to be provided to multi-grade schools, where the additional challenge of the inclusion of children with SEN needs will require additional support.

7. Expand access to pre-service and in-service professional development for teachers

TARGETS

Pre-primary, primary and secondary programmes available in all three regions

The expansion of access envisaged over the coming five years, will require more than 700 additional teachers. In addition, Belize has a high number of untrained teachers, and therefore a key strategy is to increase opportunities for serving as well as aspiring teachers to

become fully trained. Further details are given under Policy Objective 2, Output 2.4 which speaks to the targets and strategies for this.

Existing capacity at Colleges of Education needs to be expanded to accommodate the increased numbers of trainees. Options for new and alternative delivery points will be examined, and the application of suitable technologies will be considered to both reduce the costs associated with conventional intra-mural programmes and to increase the throughput of trainees. Details of the changes and reforms to Teacher Education programmes are given under Policy Objective 2 below.

In addition, greater access of teachers to Continuous Professional Development programmes (CPD) will be developed by increasing the capacity of Colleges of Education to meet this need. Again, the application of new technologies will be examined and developed where appropriate to enable serving teachers to upgrade their skills and knowledge.

8. Applying new technologies to increase access and achievement

TARGETS

Increased number of educational programmes delivered through on-line or multi-media alternatives

MOEY recognises that ICT has a potentially important role to play in providing a wider and better education service. ICTs can be applied to augment, and in certain contexts even replace, existing modalities; on-line teacher training programmes, language learning programmes, as

well as a range of subjects at school and college level. This can include core and optional secondary subjects, as well as Adult and Continuing Education Programmes delivered through learning centres with facilitators. ICT offers potentially cost effective options for reaching greater numbers at reduced cost, whilst still providing a quality service. ICTs can also be used to develop wholly new approaches, and may be the only viable option for reaching certain individuals and groups, including people with special needs, those who cannot take time away from employment or family responsibilities, those living in remote areas without the time or wherewithal to commit to travel or lodging away from home, and those who live in highly populated areas where there is simply insufficient capacity within existing institutions to accommodate their needs.

There are few opportunities for continuing education in Belize for the many young people who have missed out on secondary education. Equally, full time attendance at secondary school may not be either a cost effective or practical option for a number of young people. Thus a substantial segment of the population remains underqualified and lacking in the basic skills and competencies for employment, particularly in the reality of a changing environment that requires a high degree of flexibility and a constant need to acquire new skills, knowledge, and abilities.

During this period MOEY will examine the feasibility and initiate pilot programmes that, if successful can be taken to scale. It is essential that policy decisions with regard to the application of ICT in education are approached with caution; that they are adequately appraised, tested and monitored to ensure effectiveness. There are substantial costs associated with infrastructure, hardware and software, providing training and orientation etc. MOEY will examine relevant regional experiences of ICT application which will

include Barbados's Edutech project, Trinidad and Tobago's laptop programme as well as the Central American Telesecundaria/EDUSAT model.

POLICY OBJECTIVE 2: IMPROVE THE QUALITY AND RELEVANCE OF EDUCATION AT ALL LEVELS

Defining what both quality and relevance mean in an education system is not straightforward. The quality of an education system may ultimately be judged by what it produces in terms of those graduating at various stages. The simplest and standard measures for this are formal assessment scores or examination results that reflect learning achievement. Relevance is arguably more complex, and reflects the capacity of the system to produce the level and type of human capital required for broader social and economic advancement.

The world's highest performing education systems rarely stand still; there is constant adjustment in the quest for continued improvement. Such systems are characterised by having in place a very strong system of standards that identify what poor, fair, good and excellent performance looks like, and have strong capacity to both assess and manage performance against those standards. The coordination of the key components that directly drive the quality of education is critical; thus the articulation of the curriculum, the presence and use of resources to enable effective teaching and learning, the skills of the teaching profession, as well as a school environment that actively promotes success are all necessary to ensure a quality education. Above all, good education systems invest in strong leadership at all levels.

Belize's Quality Schools Initiative

Belize has made a promising start on the journey to improving the quality of its schools. The Quality Schools Task Force based in QADS is piloting an approach that integrates the development of good governance, effective leadership, competent and committed teachers, effective delivery of the curriculum, and quality assurance. This has underpinned much of what appears in this Education Sector Strategy.

The actions proposed in the ESS to drive up the quality of education will strengthen each of these key components. By the end of the strategy period, the following key targets will have been achieved:

- All school principals and vice principals will be certified in school leadership
- Three quarters of all schools will be deemed effective, as measured annually against key criteria on school report cards
- Three quarters of all teachers will demonstrate effective classroom competencies measured on a new competency framework
- Three quarters of all schools will show an annual improvement in public examination performance
- All Teacher Education programmes will meet new national standards
- At least a quarter of pre-primary, half of secondary teachers, and three-quarters of primary teachers in all districts will be appropriately licensed
- The national curriculum will be effectively delivered in all schools as measured by the new National Quality Schools Framework.
- The secondary curriculum will be revised, standardized and adopted in all secondary schools, with a sharing of appropriate programmes with ITVETs wherever possible
- Opportunities at ITVETS will be expanded
- More children with Special Education Needs will be enrolled.

1. Improved school leadership and management for school effectiveness

TARGETS

- **All school administrators (principals and vice principals) certified in school leadership**
- **75% of schools demonstrate satisfactory level of effectiveness as measured on school report card.**

Effective leaders are key to a school's success and continual improvement. Training and high quality professional development are essential elements in ensuring that school leaders have an understanding of what they need to do to drive improvement and have the skills to support teachers, students, and other members of the school community, including parents, in their endeavours. MOEY will establish a programme of certification of school leaders, based on a dual approach of ensuring school leaders are both versed in current theory of

effective leadership and, more importantly, are able to demonstrate leadership in their schools: greater emphasis will be placed on actual practice. The starting point will be to use the National Standards for School Leadership endorsed by BBTE (2010) as the basis for certification. Using these, a rapid baseline assessment will be undertaken to inform the detail of the programme. Training will be offered to all serving and aspiring principals, and will be delivered largely through an open and distance modality, augmented with intra-mural and practical training session. By the end of the ESS period, all school principals and vice principals will be certified in school leadership.

An essential part of this programme will be increasing school leaders' capacity to use data to track changes and monitor for improvement is essential to school improvement. Leaders will need training in the use and management of data so that the data collected will provide a detailed picture of which groups are doing well and why, and where improvement is needed. To this end, training in the use of data is an integral part of leadership training and such training will be extended to district personnel so they are able to better support their schools in using data to improve performance. District personnel would then be well placed to have an overview of which schools are doing well and to develop the CPD framework around this needs analysis. This will be undertaken in association with Colleges of Education, who will take responsibility for developing appropriate need-based CPD programmes.

Success criteria for measuring the impact of this initiative are important. The MOEY will draw upon international best practice in providing the requisite challenge and support for school leaders. Experience shows that separating these two functions – monitoring and support- is important in maintaining the integrity of the accountability measures.

School effectiveness will be monitored through the adoption of a simple school report card covering selected key performance indicators including access and retention, curriculum delivery, learning achievement as well as the physical and social environment. Summarising the outcomes annually for each school on a report card is a means of showing and sharing the data from each school. Emphasis will be placed on self assessment, independently validated by DECs. The emphasis will be on continual improvement. This can be used to track progress across districts and to build a national picture. A report card is also useful for engaging parents and demonstrating transparency. It is expected that by 2015/16, three quarters of all schools will be rated as effective and showing year on year improvement through this system.

2. Improved effectiveness of teachers in supporting student achievement at all levels

TARGETS

- **75% of teachers demonstrate appropriate classroom competencies, including skills in formative assessment**
- **Yearly improvement in examination performance in 75% of schools, measured by :**
- **Increased examination entry (percentage of enrolled who sit examination)**
- **Improved examination performance (no. of pupils who achieve satisfactory⁸status)**
- **Improved BJAT scores in 75% of primary schools**

The MOEY will define, using national and international research and best practice, the features of effective pedagogy and practice. This will take the form of a competency framework that captures levels of proficiency across a number of key areas. Once established, those involved in the training, support, management and monitoring of teachers - most significantly principals, vice principals, managers and district staff will be trained in first hand observational strategies, such as classroom observation, so that they are equipped to manage actual teacher performance within the competency framework. Members of PTAs will also be targeted for training in what makes a good school, as part of the drive to improve school-parent accountability (see later under Objective 3). Providing informed professional feedback in discussion with teachers, supporting them to set goals for improvement and linking these to individual, whole school and possibly district wide professional development are key components of continuous improvement. The target is to ensure that by 2015/16 three quarters of

all Belize's teachers are able to demonstrate a desired level of competency in their teaching.

In order to improve their effectiveness teachers will also need to be trained in assessment for learning, using both formative and summative assessment techniques. This will be approached through a district-led initiative, so that there is consistency of practice and standards, as so that monitoring strategies are built into training. Strengthening practice in formative assessment, setting goals and measuring for impact against goals is an essential element in achieving the goals for external examinations and BJAT.

Special emphasis will be placed on improving the teaching and learning of the sciences at both primary and secondary levels. Success in improving primary science can be expected to increase the subsequent take up of science options at secondary level and beyond. Strategies will involve both teacher training and orientation towards a more practical approach to basic science and through the development and use of everyday materials in classrooms that stimulates enquiry and experimentation and provides the essential base for further understanding scientific knowledge and process. Similarly, intensive in-service programmes will be made available for secondary teachers to improve performance in science subjects with the expected result that more secondary graduates will opt to pursue science subjects at higher levels of education.

⁸ Satisfactory remains to be defined for BJAT, for PSE and for CSEC

3. Approved Teacher Education (TE) programmes effectively delivered by all institutions training teachers

TARGETS

- **All TE programmes comply with established minimum professional standards.**
- **All TE staff have appropriate qualifications and experience required to deliver courses**

The TEDS have achieved much in establishing the expectation of a fully qualified profession. Compliance to this expectation has been a significant step and now the focus is on the quality of the training provided. The newly established Belize Board of Teacher Education (BBTE) has a pivotal role in setting and maintaining standards of teacher training. Belize is currently preparing a TE strategy (with support from the IADB) that aims to continue to raise the quality of Belize's teaching

profession. An initial action will be to review all TE programmes in order to benchmark these against regional and international standards. This will be the precursor to establishing national standards for TE programmes to ensure consistency across all delivery institutions. These standards will be aligned to the teacher competency framework described above.

To ensure that standards are maintained and constantly improved, MOEY will, through the BBTE and TEDS develop a robust system of quality assurance for all TE institutions. Once established this will form the basis of regular monitoring and reporting. Information from this monitoring will be used to identify areas of both strength and weakness, the latter in turn forming the basis of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programmes targeting teacher educators as well as an important driver of continuous improvement. Such programmes will be aligned with and informed by data from other sources, including from the school report cards and from teacher competency monitoring.

The inclusion of children with Special Educational Needs is to be given priority under the ESS. All TE programmes will include some basic training on meeting the needs of such children within the mainstream classroom, thus all teachers graduating from TE programmes will have a basis that can subsequently be built upon through specific CPD programmes. This will also be reflected in the teacher competency framework.

4. Increased number of appropriately certified teachers at all levels

TARGETS

- **25% of pre-primary teachers with full ECE teaching licence in all districts**
- **75% of primary teachers with full teaching licence in all districts**
- **50% of secondary teachers with full secondary level teaching licence in all districts**
- **All newly qualified teachers engaged in appropriate induction**

Belize's teaching cadre currently consists of too many unqualified teachers. The aspiration remains to move to a fully qualified – and competent – teaching force whereby the qualified teacher is the norm, not the exception. The new TE strategy will put forward a structured career pathway for teachers that will recognise and reward good performance with progression and promotion to positions of greater responsibility. This will include providing teachers with the incentives and opportunity to specialise in priority areas. A recognised career structure can act as a strong incentive for teachers to not only gain appropriate qualification but also to demonstrate proficiency, when advancement is linked to these. A system where advancement is clearly based on merit rather than length of service is expected to be seen as a more attractive career option for younger people and will help

to further professionalise the teaching service. The starting point for raising teacher quality lies with recruitment, using clear criteria to attract into the profession those with appropriate academic qualifications and aptitudes for teaching. Options to provide incentives to attract high performers into teaching, particularly in priority subjects or disadvantaged areas will be considered.

For practicing, unqualified teachers, MOEY will continue to apply incentives for them to undergo appropriate training. Efforts will be made to identify schools where there is demonstrably good practice and where quality coaching and mentoring can be provided. Designated schools close to TE institutions will act as “demonstration schools”, geared up to support teacher training and in which trainees will become exposed to good practice, research and development. The existing licensing framework will be used to award full licences to teachers who display the requisite competencies at all levels.

Newly qualified teachers need adequate induction; it is acknowledged that no matter how good teacher training programmes are, the post qualification year is crucial in turning a newly qualified teacher into a good teaching practitioner. Responsibility for support for the development and management of performance of newly qualified teachers, as well as those on placement during training, rests with schools and is an important aspect of training. Ensuring that school leaders and managers take this responsibility seriously and have the appropriate skills and knowledge to supervise induction effectively will be part of leadership certification, as well as part of the school monitoring and supervision process. Capacity to coach and mentor will be seen as an important part of the career pathway, attracting additional responsibility, for trainee practicums and teacher induction for example, as well as increments on the pay scale.

5. Improved relevance and delivery of the primary and secondary curriculum

TARGETS

- **All schools assessed as performing at satisfactory level or above on the National Quality Schools Framework (see 3.4.2) in area of curriculum delivery, pedagogy and student achievement**
- **Appropriate language support programmes in place in all schools.**
- **Revised secondary curriculum based around core and options adopted in all secondary schools and ITVETs**

Emphasis will be placed on improving the delivery of the curriculum in all of Belize’s primary and secondary schools, as well as better aligning the curriculum that is offered in secondary schools and ITVETs. Whilst there is a need to undertake a review of the primary and secondary curriculum to assess its currency and relevance, a major revision is not intended, though gaps and aspects identified as weak will be changed. The review will critically examine how the curriculum is delivered in schools: its management, the support materials used, and how teachers handle it.

To ensure a greater degree of curriculum compliance in schools, the learning outcomes will be reviewed for each year (grade) of the school system in all subject areas, starting with the essential “core” subjects: English, Maths, Basic Science, Social Science and subsequently including all other subjects. Following on from this a series of improved

curriculum resource materials will be produced to support teachers in their teaching of the curriculum; these will contain a range of “how to” ideas to support teachers in developing a meaningful school curriculum and teaching plans at the classroom level that make learning come alive rather than focus on coverage. Guides will strike a balance between promoting compliance with the curriculum and supporting teachers to “localise” the curriculum, helping them to diversify and adapt its delivery to the specific social and cultural context. It is this latter aspect that is identified as a current weakness and where teachers need the greatest support. Thus, curriculum resource materials will move away from being overly prescriptive and will help teachers and schools develop capacity to interpret curriculum learning outcomes and plan relevant curriculum and activities at school and classroom level. They will contain imaginative examples that will be stimulating and encouraging to schools to break away from the prescriptive approaches that currently exist.

At the primary level, pupils will experience more hands-on, active learning (e.g. in basic science, art and craft) in order to acquire more practical skills that can form a good foundation for developing interest and skills for technical and vocational fields. The emphasis will be on creativity and construction: doing and making things. This will build greater awareness of the relevance of technical and vocational options so that pupils can make more informed choices at secondary transfer.

A communication strategy will make explicit the curriculum outcomes so that parents know what students are expected to know, understand and do at each age and stage of schooling. A programme of training for teachers, as well as principals and teacher trainers, will be developed to support these changes. These new approaches and materials will be used to inform TE programmes described in the previous sections.

Critical to the successful delivery of the curriculum in schools is the capacity of school leaders to better manage learning in their schools. Training and support will include developing their skills in observational assessment as a key component of the leadership training programmes described under output 2.1 above. An essential part of this will be to provide training and support for teachers in developing their capacity for formative assessment, improving their ability to systematically and constantly check **learning**, breaking away from the current practice of simply recording what has been taught to what has been learned, measured against the desired curriculum outcomes. This will involve building the skills of teachers to be better able to plan the delivery of the curriculum at the school and classroom level; skills that will include the ability to constantly assess pupils' attainment. This is expected to result in a much improved monitoring of curriculum delivery and learning at the school level.

Though emphasis is to be placed on supporting teachers in the on-going, formative assessment of pupils' learning, which will be a key strategy in reducing failure and avoiding repetition, there is also a need to develop better summative instruments, such as the PSE, so that these provide consistent and reliable assessments of learning achievement and can thus be used to gauge overall, year on year progress more reliably than at present.

Educators need to better understand the impact that language diversity has on the learning experiences of children in Belize's schools. A national survey will examine the status of learners' English language proficiency at all levels, the status of instructional programmes and how teachers manage language issues in school. This early work will identify possible policy options and recommendations for actions to ensure more effective approaches to language development in schools, especially in a multilingual context where the teacher may only have competence in at best two languages. Using this as a basis, programmes of professional development in teaching English language to learners whose first language is not English will be developed and introduced; these will be incorporated into initial teacher training and CPD, school based programmes for teachers. These programmes will be supported by the development and dissemination of appropriate materials.

At the secondary level, the curriculum will be rationalised into "core" and "option" categories. Core will be defined as essential subjects to include English, Maths, Spirituality, Personal Development, Basic Science and Social Science. All schools will offer these subjects to all students. In addition, schools may offer a number of options, depending on demand and their ability to resource them in terms of facilities and staffing. The concept of "Centres of Excellence" will be explored whereby certain schools will be identified and resourced to offer specialisation in agreed options.

Greater alignment between the curriculum offered at secondary schools and ITVETs will be achieved through the development of shared responsibility for courses. Flexible arrangements will be developed whereby students registered at secondary schools will be able to pursue certain options courses at ITVETs, and vice versa. The establishment of this flexible working will require collaborative planning and scheduling between ITVETs and participating secondary schools, with timetables developed on a block model. Changes to the ITVET curriculum will also be undertaken (see next section). The closer alignment of curriculum between secondary schools and ITVET will be articulated through the development of a National Qualifications Framework. Levels of attainment and competencies will be defined for each stage (or level) and the proposed National Secondary School Certification System (see next paragraph) and the Certificate of Vocational Qualification (CVQ) will be aligned through the NQF.

The diagnosis undertaken in preparation of this sector strategy found that the inability of some students to pay the CSEC fees was deterring them from entry. Thus they leave school with only the school's own graduation certificate and no officially recognised testament to their abilities. All students will be supported to ensure they can sit the CSEC examinations for which they have been prepared. In addition, MOEY will develop and introduce a standardised National Secondary School Certificate that will provide a single universally understood and acceptable statement of secondary level achievement. This will incorporate existing CSEC/CVQ examinations and the CCSLC programme (it is not intended to develop a parallel examination) alongside other records of student achievement, including school service, sports and arts for example.

6. Improve the quality and relevance of Technical and Vocational Education and Training

TARGETS

- **Drop out from ITVETs reduced to maximum 10% in each ITVET**
- **75% of ITVET graduates either find employment in work related to qualification or progress to further education and training**

Under ESS, efforts will be made to improve the quality and relevance of TVET, with the aim of ensuring a greater number of graduates gain appropriate employment upon completion of courses. Much needs to be done to reduce the high levels of drop out from ITVETs and to improve their utilisation. The alignment of the respective curricula referred to above and the establishment of the NQF coupled with the joint programming of courses across secondary schools and ITVETs is expected to go some way to reducing the public perception of TVET as

the poorer cousin of the more academic secondary schools. Whilst an effective communication strategy may have value in shifting public perception regarding TVET, nothing will be more convincing than results; when ITVETs are seen to be offering effective pathways to appropriate and valued qualifications leading to higher education or skilled employment, the public will be persuaded.

The starting point for the desired changes with TVET will be rooted in the production of a broad Human Resource Development Strategy (HRDS). Within this, a Labour Market Survey will be undertaken that looks at current and future labour markets trends and needs. The HRDS will thus inform the curricular changes at TVET, as well as being used to develop appropriate programmes at the tertiary level. MOEY will also undertake a tracer study to find out what happens to graduates of ITVETs in terms of their progress in further education or entry into the world of work.

Curricular reforms within TVET will look at emerging economic areas, will forge closer links with industry in both course design as well as delivery, and align with levels 1 and 2 of the secondary curriculum. Furthermore, ITVETs will link with existing Adult and Continuing Education programmes to enable such courses to provide a stepping stone to access to TVET programmes. Continuous Professional Development programmes will be designed and implemented to raise teachers' skills and competencies. In order to optimise staff resources (ITVET have generous staff to student ratios) encouragement will be given to trainers to offer two or more technical areas.

7. Improve education services to children with Special Education Needs

TARGETS

- **50% of identified SEN children formally referred and placed in schools.**
- **10% increase in places at existing SEN centres**

As Belize moves closer to achieving the MDG of universal access to primary education, the remaining out of school children will inevitably contain a high proportion of children with Special Education Needs (SEN). Put another way, Belize will not achieve universal primary education without reaching these children. Evidence is patchy and largely anecdotal regarding these children and providing them with

appropriate services, including education, relies on the collaboration of a number of government departments (as noted earlier) as well as other key players including NGOs and churches. The commitment under the ESS is to identify all SEN children and to ensure that at least half of these are placed in schools. Access to services generally favours the better off and urban over rural dwellers, so programmes need to redress these inevitable inequities by targeting the rural poor: children with SEN in these communities will be amongst the most deprived and disadvantaged in Belize.

The first step in addressing this problem will be to undertake a national study of SEN status and provision. This will be accompanied by the development of clear policy and procedures for the identification and support for students who have SEN, in collaboration with health services; including students with sensory impairment, physical disability, speech and language delay, and severe and profound learning disabilities. A critical decision is to determine within the policy appropriate levels of inclusion within mainstream schools. The option of using peripatetic teachers who work with parents to support home-based schooling will be considered. This will be clearly communicated to school managers, principals, teachers and parents.

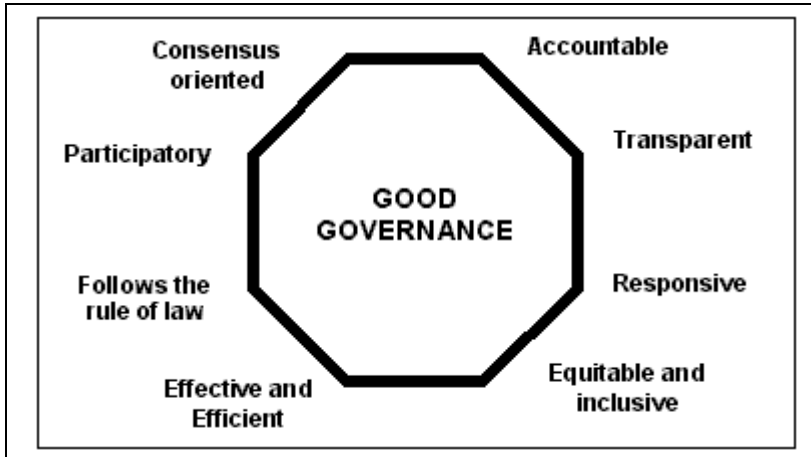
Procedures for identification of students with special educational needs will be improved by training education officials, including DEC staff, school managers, NGOs and community workers to be able to assess level of need and to work with teachers, students and parents. The support of the wider community will be solicited in making better provision for children with SEN by establishing volunteer networks and appealing to business for corporate philanthropy. Basic SEN training will be part of all TE programmes (see above). In-service programmes will provide training and support for teachers both in the identification of students with SEN and for managing students in mainstream classes. Specialisation in SEN will be encouraged through CPD programmes and form part of the career pathway discussed earlier.

Those students whose needs fall outside the agreed limits for inclusion in mainstream schools, will continue to be accommodated in existing SEN centres, and it is expected to increase enrolment in these centres by 10% over the ESS period.

POLICY OBJECTIVE 3: STRENGTHEN GOVERNANCE THROUGHOUT THE SECTOR WITH EMPHASIS ON INCREASED STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

The sector overview points to a need to build greater capacity to effectively manage the education system, and in particular to improve accountability for results. Responsibility for effective delivery of education ultimately resides with what happens in schools, though there are a diverse range of other stakeholders all of whom exert influence on what happens in schools. Where those responsibilities are not clearly defined or understood, and where they are poorly monitored and managed, accountability for performance is lost. Frequently accountability is simply for actions and not for results.

The new ESS therefore sees improved accountability for learning achievement as the basis that must underpin how the system is managed. At the heart of this are the formal rules and regulations that spell out roles, responsibilities, standards and expectations on which all parts of the system operate. This framework allows all agents to be able to define their respective roles and actions in terms of how they contribute to the achievement of the overall policy objectives. It also provides the underpinnings for systems of ensuring compliance, without which regulations can be avoided and ignored.



Much has been written on the theme of governance and the importance of good governance for effective delivery of services is now widely recognised. Conversely, poor governance impedes effective service delivery, the consequences of which are felt most by the poor, who are least able to influence the process and who do not have the resources to buy into alternatives. Countries that have invested in improving governance tend to have more efficient and effective public

services.

In developing the ESS, MOEY have been guided by the United Nations framework that defines governance in terms of eight characteristics each of which contributes to a notion of “good” when present. The development of each of these finds a place in the strategies put forward in the ESS to improve overall sector governance. Improvement will be achieved through a series of strategies around five key outputs:

- Schools are governed and managed in accordance with requirements in the education rules (Follows the rule of law)
- Increased accountability of schools to parents and local communities for school performance (Accountable, Responsive, Consensus oriented)
- Improve management effectiveness of MOEY and District Education Centres (Efficient and Effective, Responsive)
- Quality assurance system based on common minimum standards of service delivery applied across all educational institutions (Accountable, Equitable and Inclusive)
- MOEY publishes through website annual report of performance against targets of Education Sector Strategy (Transparent)

International evidence points very clearly to the importance of defining clear and unequivocal standards of what each part of the system will do, alongside targets of what can be expected in terms of performance. Those education systems in the world that continue to improve, do so because they set standards and they repeatedly and systematically monitor performance against those standards, making public reports and results. Most importantly they respond to what that information tells them with actions that bring about improvement. They use evidence to determine policy and action.

There are many different routes to improved educational achievement. Hong Kong and Singapore consistently feature near the top of any international league tables on education performance. They produce similar, seemingly ever improving, levels of achievement and though their outcomes are almost identical, the way in which their respective systems are organised are widely and fundamentally different. Singapore’s education system is highly centralised, with all facets and resources controlled by central government. In contrast, Hong Kong is highly decentralised with 95% of students being educated in privately operated schools which have complete autonomy over what they do, including the hiring and firing of teachers and the curriculum. There are few central regulations and policies; however central government

provides almost all the funding which is tied to performance⁹. Belize's education system falls somewhere between the two, there is considerable devolution of responsibility to the denominational managers, funding is predominantly from central government with schools free to levy fees, yet there remains quite strong central authority, with the bulk of finance, including teacher salaries, coming from central government. However, enforcement of standards by central authority on devolved managers is weak with few, if any, incentives or sanctions to challenge under performance or reward success.

Through the ESS MOEY is committed to improving the overall governance of the education sector so that it becomes more accountable for the principle outcome: learning achievement. A series of outputs and targets are proposed, each with a number of strategies that will bring about a system transformation.

1. Schools are governed and managed in accordance with requirements in the education rules

TARGETS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New regulations established to support Education and Training Act 2010 • 90% compliance by General and Local managers, Schools administrators with requirements of education rules. • All school principals appointed have at least minimum agreed qualifications and experience • 75% of schools rated as satisfactory or above against national school performance standards

The Education Act 2010 has yet to be interpreted through new regulations, and without these the provisions of the Act cannot be operationalised. Delivery of policy and the legal requirements of the education system can only be effectively monitored and managed against clear descriptions of responsibilities and standards. There is therefore an urgent need to revise the existing Handbook of Policies and Procedures for School Services in light of the 2010 Education Act. This process has already commenced and once complete will underpin the drive for improved accountability and performance. Once complete, these will be disseminated to all offices and school managers, with appropriate sensitisation and orientation programmes.

In order to better inform the design and execution of programmes, especially those associated with school leadership (see output 2.1 above), a comprehensive national survey of school management will be undertaken. Based on the new regulations, and on-going work under the QCFS programme, common standards for school management will be agreed and will be used as the basis for annually assessing the performance of every school. The responsibility for assessing school performance will rest firstly with Managing Authorities. Reports will be validated through independent inspection. Schools will also undertake an annual audit of their accounts. All reports, both on management performance and audit, will be made public.

The contract between Managing Authorities and the Ministry of Education will be reviewed, and the conditions for grant-in-aid brought into line with the ESS to ensure that schools are managed in a way that will meet the overall policy objectives and maintain the basic standards established under the Quality Schools Framework. The purpose is to improve the performance of all schools, and in order to better achieve this MOEY will develop and put in place procedures that give special support to schools that fail to meet the grant-in-aid conditions. The grant-in-aid conditions will more clearly define the roles and responsibilities of Managing Authorities and the District Education Centres and will require improved reporting by managing Authorities to District Education Centres.

⁹ For a fascinating and highly readable survey of recent international education reform, read Fenton Whelan's "Lessons Learned: How good policies produce better schools" MPG Books 2009. [Doubt this belongs in a Strategy document, however interesting!]

2. Increased accountability of schools to parents and local communities for school performance

TARGETS

- **All schools have active PTAs (or School Councils) that meet once per term and fulfil functions other than fund raising.**
- **All schools hold parent-class teacher consultations twice per year**
- **All parents receive personalised qualitative termly written report of their child's progress**
- **All schools publish annual report of performance against key indicators.**

The first line of accountability is between the provider and the user – between the school and its community of parents and children. Over the next five years, Belize is committed to improving the accountability of schools to parents. Parents and their children are the prime stakeholders and beneficiaries of the education system. They rightly have expectations and whether through indirect taxation or through the payment of fees may feel a certain entitlement to an expected level of service. Currently there are low levels of public expectation regarding performance and weak links between schools and their communities.

Improvement will be achieved by firstly clarifying the regulations around school and community roles and the formation and functioning of school parent bodies. This will cover the preferred membership of such bodies, their Terms of Reference and requirements in terms of meeting and reporting. To facilitate this, training and guidance will be provided to

school principals and district as well as National Associations of school and community and parent bodies will be established. It is expected that the formation of such bodies will help promote better practice through shared experiences.

In order to improve specific accountability of schools to parents, all parents can expect at least two individual parent-teacher consultations per year at which the progress of each pupil will be discussed. This will be supported by an improved and standardised termly reporting system, in which a narrative assessment of a child's progress and attainment will be given. MOEY will develop a standardised report form. Currently, such reporting is formulaic, often simply giving only a grade without comment. These changes will require the support of the Managing Authorities, who will take responsibility to see that all schools are able to meet these expectations.

Emphasis will be placed on each school making considered judgements about their own performance. Support will be given to school managers, principals and, most importantly, to parent representatives in the form of training and guidelines, in collecting and using information and data on school performance. Managing Authorities will take responsibility to see that all schools produce an annual report according to a standard format produced by MOEY; these will be made available at the school and, through the DEC's, on the MOEY website.

3. Improve management effectiveness of MOEY and District Education Centres

TARGETS

- **All officers at all levels have annually agreed objectives, linked to policy objectives, which are used as basis for annual performance assessment.**
- **90% of all MA, DEC and Central MOEY personnel perform at satisfactory standard or above on new annual performance appraisal system by 2013.**
- **Annual education statistics uploaded onto MOEY website by start of Term 3 of school year.**
- **Quarterly performance reviews held by SMT using ESS performance framework.**

The starting point for improving management effectiveness will be the undertaking of a full institutional appraisal of MOEY and DEC that assesses mandates, staffing and skills and examines how performance is currently managed. Out of this appraisal will be developed a comprehensive HRD plan and capacity development programme, aimed at raising performance in terms of delivering on the ESS objectives. Once developed this plan will be rolled out across MOEY and DEC.

Performance of all staff can only be effectively managed and improved if expectations are clearly stated. In order to improve effectiveness, job descriptions and terms of reference will be developed for all posts. These will form the basis of a process of annual objective setting and staff appraisal through mid year and end of year performance reviews. Individual as well as Departmental work plans will be developed and aligned to achievement of the policy objectives, outputs and targets of the ESS. The focus will shift from description of actions to achievement

of results, and a performance management system that persistently demands greater accountability for these. This theme is picked up in more detail in Chapter 5 that deals with implementation and monitoring of the ESS.

MOEY will improve its internal reporting procedures, and institute a system of regular and focussed reporting using simple pro-formas that track performance towards ESS targets. A regular quarterly performance progress meeting of all District Managers and Service Area Heads will be chaired by the CEO, prior to a quarterly report to the Minister.

Effective monitoring of performance against clearly stated outcomes is essential to improvement, and effective monitoring relies on the timely collection and use of data and information. In this regard the Policy and Planning Unit (PPU) of MOEY has the critical role to play and attention will be focussed on reshaping its role and building its capacity to better fulfil its functions to provide the national leadership in planning, monitoring and information management.

4. Quality assurance system based on common minimum standards of service delivery applied across all educational institutions

TARGETS

- **All schools, junior colleges, and ITVETS receive at least one full supervision every three years**
- **All schools, junior colleges, and ITVETS receive at least one support visit (spot check) per annum.**

A robust quality assurance system is at the centre of the drive to improve the effectiveness of the education system. Work is already underway on developing a single National Quality Schools Framework that encompasses the five dimensions that contribute to an effective school or college: basic infrastructure and facilities, staffing, the teaching and learning processes, management and relationships with the community. This will be further developed and rolled out to all schools.

Under the ESS school supervision procedures will be reviewed and revised, and a common standardised system introduced nationally using a common reporting format. Day to day supervision and support will remain the responsibilities of the DEC, with a strengthened role of School Managers. Thus training and

support will be provided to all supervisors, including DEC staff as well as School Managers. MOEY is in the process of establishing an autonomous schools inspectorate, following a widely used practice in much of the world. The inspectorate will take on the critical role of training, supporting and managing inspection teams. School inspection reports will be made public through the MOEY website.

The formal school supervision process will be carefully aligned to the other quality assurance and reporting processes, principally the school report card system that will be developed around the QSF. The formal supervision process will be used to validate the school-based self assessment described earlier.

5. MOEY publishes through website annual report of performance against targets of Education Sector Strategy

TARGETS

- **All reports uploaded onto MOEY website within one month of submission**

A major step in improving governance is increasing transparency – putting into the public domain information about the education system. Public disclosure of key information, particularly where this refers to performance, sends a strong signal by providers to users that there is a degree of seriousness about the desire to improve. Such information can have a beneficial impact on the system as a whole, inducing a sense of competition as well as recognition of achievement. It can also act as a deterrent to complacency by drawing attention to poor performance. It helps raise public awareness and expectation which in turn exerts pressure on providers to deliver better services. However, care needs to be taken in not using increased information to depress performance and apportion blame for apparent failures.

MOEY will invest in updating the official website through which all key information on the education system will be published. This will include:

- Annual departmental progress reports, which will report specifically on progress against the objectives and targets of the ESS
- School supervision reports and annual school report cards
- Managing Authority reports

MOEY will produce an annual report of overall progress on implementation of the ESS using the performance framework in Chapter 6 below.

CHAPTER 4: COSTS AND FINANCING

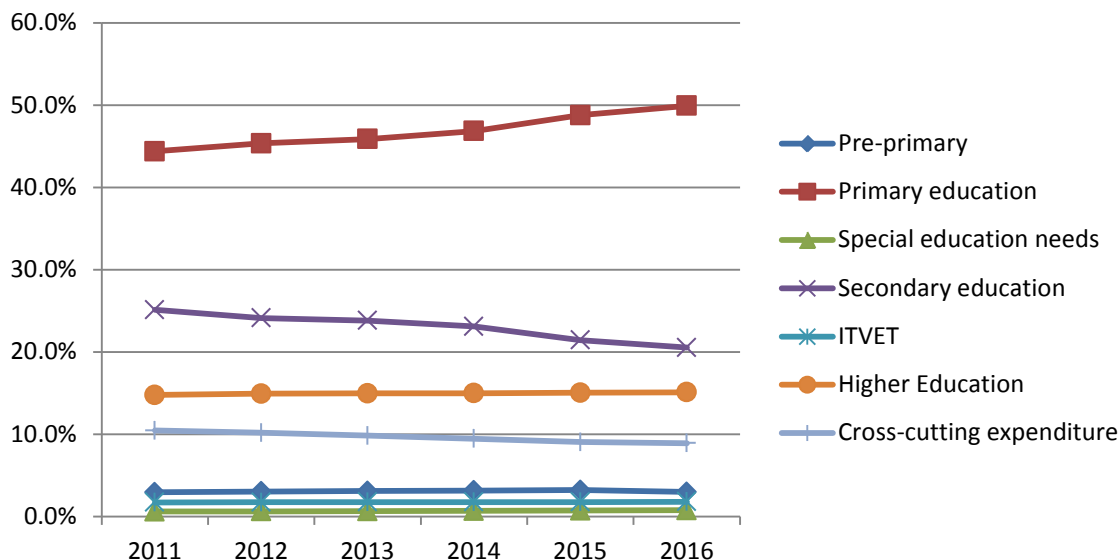
This chapter sets out the expenditure and financing requirements, disaggregated by subsector, to meet the policy objectives set out in the 2011-2016 Education Sector Strategy (ESS). The projections were made using a demographic simulation model which was developed for Belize¹⁰. The full list of projections and the base year data are available as a separate annex to the ESS. This chapter projects a significant but manageable financing gap and sets out the implications for resource allocation over the ESS period.

Costing

The objectives and strategies outlined in the ESS are projected to cost a total of BZ\$ 1.5 billion over the six years, an average of BZ\$ 243 million per year. These expenditure requirements are driven by increased enrolment at pre-primary, primary, and secondary levels, an aggressive education quality campaign and a governance reform programme. Efficiency initiatives have been modelled to ensure domestic resources are firstly more effectively and efficiently utilised before the GOB draws requests additional external resources to bridge the funding gap. Efficiency initiatives incorporated in the model include:

- Increase in the teacher contact time;¹¹
- Increase in pupil-to- classroom ratio;
- Reduction in repetition and dropout rates;
- Reduction in teaching and non-teaching staff attrition rates;
- Increase in textbook renewal practice.

Figure 7: Allocation by subsector, 2011-16



Projected funding allocations to primary education will increase, in nominal terms, from BZ\$87 million in 2010 to BZ\$120 million in 2016. This responds to higher volumes of pupils enrolled in primary education, 10,374 additional pupils over the ESS period, as well as quality improvements. Pre-school education share of the total education budget, has increased by two percentage points, and will be consistently at 3%

¹⁰ UNESCO's Epssim model was used. The accuracy of the projected outcomes and costs are determined by the accuracy and reliability of the base year information, 2009/10.

¹¹ from average 15 to 20 hrs per week at secondary

throughout the ESP period - the policy objective of increasing the GER by seven percentage points (from 43 to 50%) will result in 2,473 additional pupils entering the system (public and private) education system.

The allocation projections to secondary education will remain above the 20 per cent level, BZ\$ 55million per annum. These constant projections, despite increased enrolment (7029 additional pupils), are primarily due to the internal efficiency and increases to the teacher contact time and utilisation rates – contact time projected to rise by 5 hours per week during the period.

Funding allocations to TVET will remain near the 2% mark over the period; this reflects the drive to significantly increase the utilisation of existing resources by increasing enrolments through a range of quality and relevance interventions.

Allocations to higher education are projected to increase as a proportion of total funds from 10% in 2010 to 15% in 2016. Increases in pre-primary, primary and secondary enrolments are projected to require additional resources to be deployed to teacher training colleges. Teacher Training, Junior College and other Higher Education Institution costs are projected to rise from BZ\$ 32 to BZ\$ 40 million over the period.

Table 9 present a projected summary of the education budget until 2015/16. The financial implications of the expansion in post-basic education can be seen by the growth in these budget lines. The breakdown of the capital costs by type and subsector are in the annex.

Table 9: Projected Education Budget 2011 to 2016

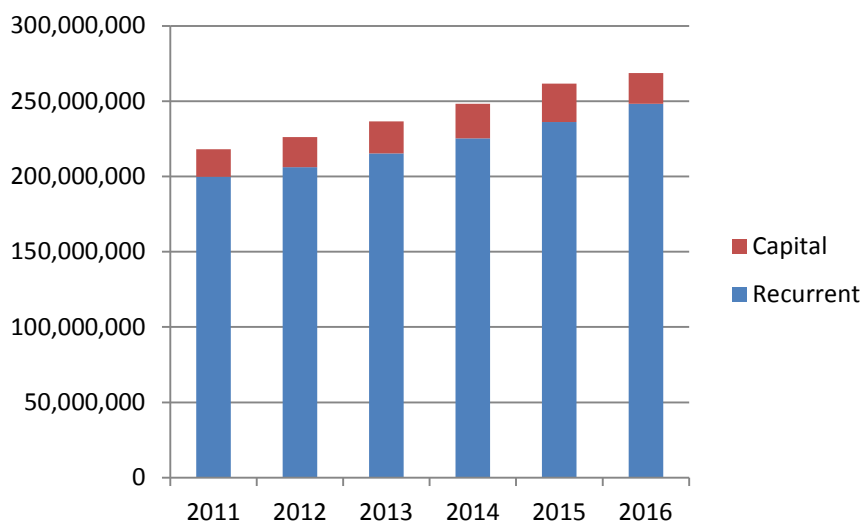
	2011 Projected (BZ\$)	2012 Projected (BZ\$)	2013 Projected (BZ\$)	2014 Projected (BZ\$)	2015 Projected (BZ\$)	2016 Projected (BZ\$)
Recurrent						
Pre-primary	3,904,318	4,231,622	4,584,588	4,965,145	5,375,363	5,817,464
Primary education	89,578,257	93,778,925	98,855,611	104,560,061	111,590,208	120,790,086
Special education needs	1,231,575	1,316,827	1,414,714	1,524,398	1,654,959	1,820,498
Secondary education	48,120,850	48,100,250	49,865,973	51,465,195	52,685,581	52,725,295
ITVET	3,710,480	3,913,840	4,107,260	4,310,320	4,523,481	4,747,253
Higher Education	30,882,847	32,278,653	33,765,163	35,347,604	37,031,599	38,823,189
Cross-cutting expenditure	22,330,238	22,553,541	22,779,076	23,006,867	23,236,936	23,469,305
Total Expenditure	199,758,566	206,173,659	215,372,385	225,179,590	236,098,127	248,193,090
Capital						
Pre-primary	2,513,910	2,635,901	2,763,415	2,896,714	3,036,074	2,225,579
Primary education	7,154,083	8,749,186	9,638,313	11,723,998	16,030,097	13,336,509
Special education needs	109,491	130,988	145,531	182,676	251,693	239,169
Secondary education	6,656,371	6,431,628	6,433,905	5,869,030	3,449,664	2,429,541
ITVET	32,833	38,986	48,172	60,053	74,500	82,206
Higher Education	1,338,262	1,456,450	1,621,771	1,874,457	2,317,874	1,748,877
Cross-cutting expenditure	446,605	451,071	455,582	460,137	464,739	469,386
Total Expenditure	18,251,555	19,894,210	21,106,688	23,067,065	25,624,642	20,531,268
Recurrent and Capital						
Pre-primary	6,418,228	6,867,523	7,348,003	7,861,858	8,411,437	8,043,043
Primary education	96,732,340	102,528,112	108,493,924	116,284,059	127,620,305	134,126,595
Special education needs	1,341,066	1,447,815	1,560,245	1,707,074	1,906,652	2,059,667

	2011 Projected (BZ\$)	2012 Projected (BZ\$)	2013 Projected (BZ\$)	2014 Projected (BZ\$)	2015 Projected (BZ\$)	2016 Projected (BZ\$)
Secondary education	54,777,221	54,531,878	56,299,878	57,334,225	56,135,245	55,154,836
ITVET	3,743,313	3,952,826	4,155,432	4,370,373	4,597,981	4,829,459
Higher Education	32,221,109	33,735,103	35,386,934	37,222,062	39,349,473	40,572,066
Cross-cutting expenditure	22,776,843	23,004,612	23,234,658	23,467,004	23,701,674	23,938,691
Total Expenditure	218,010,121	226,067,869	236,479,074	248,246,655	261,722,769	268,724,358

Cross cutting expenditure (costs for central MOEY and DEC administration, transport etc) is expected to rise from 8% (in 2010) to 10% (in 2011). This increase in the funds will support the governance reforms and capacity building programmes to be implemented at central and district levels.

In 2010 recurrent expenditure accounted for 99% of the total education sector budget; this is projected to fall as capital expenditure increases from 8% in 2011 to 10% in 2015, see figure 8. Within recurrent expenditure, personal emoluments in 2010 were 74% of the recurrent budget; during ESS implementation, personal emoluments are expected to rise significantly to 83% of the recurrent expenditure.

Figure 8 : Projected recurrent, capital and total expenditure framework by subsector, 2011-2016



Resources

Since the fiscal year of 2010/11, the Ministry of Finance has been projecting multi-year budget estimates and forecast for both revenue and expenditure. Four pilot line ministries, including the Ministry of Education, have been given budgetary allocations for the medium-term (MTBF), 2011/12 to 2013/14 period, based on projected revenue, economic growth, and debt commitment figures and national priorities. The full multi-year estimates can be found in the annex; below are the key assumptions from the MTBF pertaining to the education sector:

- Average annual GDP growth rate at 3% (nominal terms);
- Average annual Tax revenue as percentage of GDP at 23.5%;
- Average annual government debt as percentage of GDP at 64.7%;
- Annual education share of the total recurrent budget at 26%;
- Annual education share of the total capital budget at 2.3%.

In addition, forecasts have been calculated on the level and likelihood of external donor support – on and off-budget activities, in-kind contributions have also been projected. However, given limited fiscal space, high debt ratio, and growing amortisation payments for the GOB and donor’s own resource constraints, the amount of ODA from development partners, particularly loans, available to Belize have been conservatively forecasted.

Table 10: Financial Overview, 2011-2016

	2011 Projected (BZ\$)	2012 Projected (BZ\$)	2013 Projected (BZ\$)	2014 Projected (BZ\$)	2015 Projected (BZ\$)	2016 Projected (BZ\$)	Total (BZ\$)
Expenditure	218,010,121	226,067,869	236,479,074	248,246,655	261,722,769	268,724,358	1,459,250,846
Recurrent	199,758,566	206,173,659	215,372,385	225,179,590	236,098,127	248,193,090	1,330,775,417
Capital	18,251,555	19,894,210	21,106,688	23,067,065	25,624,642	20,531,268	128,475,429
Resources	197,524,000	207,692,000	217,363,000	227,516,000	238,174,050	249,362,648	1,337,631,698
Domestic resources	185,524,000	195,692,000	205,363,000	215,516,000	226,174,050	237,362,648	1,265,631,698
Recurrent	183,552,000	191,919,000	201,515,000	211,591,000	222,170,550	233,279,078	1,244,026,628
Capital	1,972,000	3,773,000	3,848,000	3,925,000	4,003,500	4,083,570	21,605,070
External resources	12,000,000	12,000,000	12,000,000	12,000,000	12,000,000	12,000,000	72,000,000
Financing Gap	20,486,121	18,375,869	19,116,074	20,730,655	23,548,719	19,361,710	121,619,148
	10.4%	8.8%	8.8%	9.1%	9.9%	7.8%	9.1%
Financing Gap (without external resources)	32,486,121	30,375,869	31,116,074	32,730,655	35,548,719	31,361,710	193,619,148
	17.5%	15.5%	15.2%	15.2%	15.7%	13.2%	15.3%

Table 10 shows the available resources to the education sector. Over the period of the ESS these total BZ\$ 1.338 billion. With projected expenditure requirements of BZ\$ 1.459 billion this leaves a total financing shortfall of BZ\$ 121 million, between 2011 and 2016. Table 5.5 shows the predicted annual financing gap. As would be expected the financing gap reduces near the end of the period as efficiency measures take their full effect throughout the education system.

Implications and future strategies

Table 10 shows the projected financing gap from 2011 to 2016. The gap is significant but manageable. Reducing the funding gap may be achieved through a number of complementary approaches:

- i. Further efficiency improvements, especially in primary education and secondary education, based on: (i) a better allocation and deployment of teachers, (ii) increasing pupil-teacher, pupil classroom, teacher contact hours and teacher utilisation rates. It must be noted, though, that targets set for admissions and flow rates are ambitious though achievable.

- ii. GOB and education providers will need to explore new cost-sharing arrangements, for example a student loan scheme and increased private sector participation at tertiary level;
- iii. GOB will need to continue to develop strong partnerships with donors, the private sector, NGOs and other non state providers to deliver or finance key services in the sector;
- iv. GOB must continue the current pace and extent of public financial management reforms in order to create a more favourable, less risky operating environment for potential (or returning) investors;

Nonetheless, there is a considerable risk that this gap may not be bridged, calling for prioritisation of funding, at the cost of not fully meeting all of the policy objectives outlined in this ESP. The costings used in this framework are based on achieving an ambitious set of policy outcomes. However, a less challenging scenario, wherein increases in performance over the existing baselines are more modest, is described below to illustrate what can be achieved with fewer resources and a smaller financing gap:

- 46 % GER at pre-primary level;
- PTR of 25 at primary level;
- 55% of teachers certified at primary level;
- 71% GER at secondary level;
- 41% of teachers certified at secondary level;
- ITVET at 70% capacity;
- Average funding gap of 5% per annum (including external support).

Given the economic constraints on the GOB, there is a need to periodically review spending plans and the MTBF as more accurate information becomes available. This will be done through the annual planning and budgeting process, and the implications for the delivery of the ESS priorities will be reviewed annually. MOEY will continue to take steps to improve the accuracy of forecasting through reviewing unit costs and baseline data and developing staff skills in finance and planning, both centrally and at district level.

CHAPTER 5: IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS, MONITORING and RISKS

This chapter sets out how the ESS will be implemented, describes the monitoring and reporting arrangements that will be put in place, presents a monitoring framework and finally identifies the key risks with their mitigating measures.

Implementation

The ESS will be implemented through the existing structures of MOEY and other bodies, including most importantly the Managing Authorities and other affiliated bodies, such as the Belize Board of Teacher Education, that take on key roles in the delivery of education. Effective implementation of policy can only be achieved when a number of pre-requisites are met. These include:

- Expectations are clearly stated
- Responsibilities are clearly defined
- People are held to account
- Progress is regularly monitored
- Capacity exists
- Resources are available

As we have seen in Chapter 3, MOEY has set out an agenda for improving the overall governance of the sector (Policy Objective 3) which is expected to improve capacity to deliver results.

One of the key constraints identified in the sector diagnosis, and consistently verified in consultations during the development of the ESS, is the “siloed” culture of working that exists within MOEY. Delivery of successful outcomes in education is heavily dependent on the inter-relationship between various players or departments; the most obvious being the essential interplay between curriculum, teacher training, resource production and procurement and assessment. In addition there may be discord or lack of coordination and understanding between central authority, district agencies as well as the non-state providers, including the churches. The way the ESS has been developed, the way responsibilities have been assigned and the way it is proposed to manage and monitor progress are expected to counter this “silo” culture by forging more results focussed partnership between various parts of the system. This is described below.

The ESS sets out **expectations** through a series of outputs and targets: the picture of what the education system will look like in 2015/16 is clearly stated. There will be many more children in schools, all schools will be doing better in terms of their performance, and all who are involved in providing a service will be far more accountable for what they do. Central to this, and to the subsequent issues of responsibility and accountability, are the formal rules that govern the system. These are under revision and will be finalised early in the ESS period. Expectation is very much about standards: agreed levels of service and performance that users can expect from the system. Throughout the ESS emphasis is placed on defining standards: what a good school should look like, what a good teacher does, what service school leaders should provide etc. Agreed standards that are communicated openly and widely define form the basis of defining expectations. Leadership, at all levels, is critically important and much attention is given in the ESS to improving the capabilities of education leaders. The system will produce, publish and use much more information about performance, through regular reporting of progress and achievement will be improved which will be clearly and consistently measured: not only are expectations clearly stated, these expectations will be far more widely shared and known.

The ESS assigns **responsibility** for results. In developing the ESS, each output has an assigned **output owner** who will assume strategic oversight of all actions that take place under each strategy that contributes to the achievement of the output. The output owner does not do everything, though many will also have very specific operational roles. The output owner's role is to coordinate, monitor, quality assure and report on progress. Thus there are clear and specific lines of responsibility for each of the outputs essential for delivering the policy objectives. Each strategy identifies the individual or entity (Service Area, District Education Centre or group of individuals such as Managing Authorities) who are expected to assume the lead role in taking forward that strategy. The ESS also identifies the other players who have a role to play in each strategy. These are identified in the Policy Framework at Annex 1. Output owners will be responsible for drawing up an annual workplan that sets out the actions to be undertaken against each of the strategies proposed in the ESS and against which progress will be monitored. This is described further below.

There is considerable attention paid in the ESS to improving **accountability**. Assigning responsibility means little unless systems of accountability are in place. This weakness in the existing system was identified as the critical area by those who worked on governance issues in developing the ESS. The emphasis throughout the outputs and strategies of Policy Objective 3 are all grounded in a drive to improve accountability. These include:

- Re-examining the grant-in-aid arrangements to link funding to delivery against policy objectives and maintenance of agreed standards
- Publication of audits of school accounts
- Improved performance management system linked to ESS outputs

During ESS there will be far greater disclosure of information relating to performance, from individual child reports at the school level to the publication of an annual National Education Report.

Accountability can only be improved if the system is adequately monitored. A comprehensive performance **monitoring** framework has been established for the ESS. This will be used as the basis to drive an internal system of progress checking through regular reporting of progress.

The Monitoring and Reporting Chain

National level oversight of ESS resides with Senior Management Team at MOEY. The Senior Management team, under the direction of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will through quarterly meetings review progress based on reports received from output owners.

A central role will be taken by the Policy and Planning Unit (PPU) in driving a robust planning, reporting and review process. Under this process all Output Owners will be required to produce annual work plans that detail the activities they will undertake in order to deliver on the strategies agreed in the ESS. Work plans will be expressed on a pro-forma that mirrors the policy framework contained in the ESS (ref ESS Annex 1). Care will be taken in the design of this monitoring and reporting protocol not to make it overelaborate, to focus on key actions and on progress towards the desired results and targets. The key question will be: "Are we on track"?

Monitoring Framework

A comprehensive series of performance and monitoring tables have been prepared to track progress of the ESS. The monitoring table for the high level Policy Objectives is presented as Table 6.1 below below. The full set of monitoring tables is given at Annex XX.

TABLE 11. MONITORING FRAMEWORK FOR POLICY OBJECTIVES

INDICATORS	BASELINE 2011	MILESTONE 2012	MILESTONE 2014	TARGET 2016	SOURCE
Policy: Equitable Access at all level of Education					
Net Enrolment Rate pre-primary (by gender, district and location)					Annual School Census, Population Census
Net Enrolment Rate primary (by gender, district and location)					Annual School Census, Population Census
Net Enrolment Rate secondary (by gender, district and location)					Annual School Census, Population Census
Net Enrolment Rate tertiary (by gender, district and location)					Annual School Census, Population Census
Completion Rate pre-primary (by gender, district and location)	50%	55%	57%	58%	Annual School Census, Population Census
Completion Rate primary (by gender, district and location)					Annual School Census, Population Census
Completion Rate secondary (by gender, district and location)					Annual School Census, Population Census
Completion Rate tertiary (by gender, district and location)					Annual School Census, Population Census
Policy: Improve Quality and Relevance of Education at all Levels					
PSE score (by gender, district, location and award)					Examination Results
CSEC score (by gender, district, location and award)					Examination Results
Policy: Strengthened Accountability for Increased Student Achievement at all levels					
Publication of annual education reports against ESS priorities					School records, Supervision records
Annual staff and departmental performance reviews					School records, Supervision records

Risks

There are a number of risks to achieving the targets expressed in the ESS. These together with the mitigating measures are expressed in the Table 6.2 below.

Table 12: Risk Assessment

Risk description	Mitigating measures	Level of likelihood/impact
Silo culture prevents collaborative working across and between players	Collaborative cross departmental planning and monitoring linked to outputs and strategies. Effective reporting and accountability measures in place. Performance appraisal system improved.	Medium/Medium
Capacity to engage and sustain change, particularly with regard to Managing Authorities	Training and support to build capacity. Review of grant-in-aid arrangements, linking performance to financing. Build incentives, driven by public disclosure and interest, to reward change	Low/Medium
Political will and interest reduces, competing government priorities	Youth vote is important, education likely to remain a key electoral issue linked to skills and work (or unemployment)	Low/Medium
Lack of resources, failure to achieve efficiency targets and lower than anticipated levels of	Secondary financing reform incentivises efficiency. Similar could be applied at primary level through proposed fee regulation measures. Belize's fiscal situation remains parlous.	Medium/High
Natural disaster	Disaster mitigation measures to protect education property in place to include adequate infrastructure maintenance, safe storage for movables, and good management routines to protect assets.	Low/High

ANNEX A: Summary Framework - Policy Objectives

Please see document attached

ANNEX B: M&E Evaluation Framework

Please see document attached

ANNEX C: Selected Digest Stats

Please see document attached

ANNEX D: List of the Key documents

1. Belize Country Strategy Paper 2011-15, Caribbean Development Bank. (July 2011)
2. Belize Country Strategy Paper 2008-2012, Inter American Development Bank (May 2009)
3. Imagine the Possibilities, Manifesto of the United Democratic Party (2008)
4. Towards a Sustainable and Efficient State: The Development Agenda for Belize, Inter American Development Bank, Martin, D and Manzano, O (ed), (2010)
5. Belize Medium Term Development Framework 2010-2013, Ministry of Economic Development (July 2010)
6. Belize Country Poverty Assessment, Government of Belize/ Caribbean Development Bank (Aug 2010)
7. Belize Education and Training Act 2010, Government of Belize
8. Belize Education Sector Assessment. Inter American Development Bank, Castellanos, R R. (Nov 2007)
9. Enhancement of TVET Project, Draft Project Completion Report. Caribbean Development Bank (March 2010)
10. Policy on Amalgamation of Schools, Ministry of Education and Youth.
11. Belize Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, Statistical Institute of Belize/UNICEF (2006)
12. Education Financing Reform: Toolkit for Administrators and Principals, Ministry of Education and Youth (Sept 2010)
13. National Standards for School Leadership Programs in Belize. Belize Board of Teacher Education (May 2010)
14. Education Statistical Digest Tables 2009/10, Ministry of Education and Youth
15. Education Statistical Digest Tables 2008/09, Ministry of Education and Youth
16. Belize Approved Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for Financial Year 2010/11 (March 2010)

ANNEX E: Breakdown of capital expenditure by type and subsector

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
	18,251,555	19,894,210	21,106,688	23,067,065	25,624,642	20,531,268
Pre-primary	2,513,910	2,635,901	2,763,415	2,896,714	3,036,074	2,225,579
New constructions	1,192,140	1,246,012	1,302,320	1,361,181	1,422,723	759,455
New equipment	324,310	338,915	354,177	370,129	386,804	207,074
Reconstruction	997,459	1,050,973	1,106,918	1,165,403	1,226,547	1,259,050
Primary	7,154,083	8,749,186	9,638,313	11,723,998	16,030,097	13,336,509
New constructions	5,355,842	6,853,771	7,667,303	9,621,676	13,690,038	11,032,042
New equipment	206,637	264,432	295,802	371,167	528,248	425,668
Reconstruction	1,591,604	1,630,984	1,675,208	1,731,155	1,811,812	1,878,798
Special Education Needs	109,491	130,988	145,531	182,676	251,693	239,169
New constructions	88,184	108,695	122,358	157,931	224,330	211,180
New equipment	2,144	2,642	2,974	3,839	5,453	5,133
Reconstruction	19,164	19,650	20,198	20,905	21,910	22,855
Secondary	6,656,371	6,431,628	6,433,905	5,869,030	3,449,664	2,429,541
New constructions	5,985,603	5,739,767	5,713,086	5,141,435	2,789,776	1,796,174
New equipment	209,690	201,091	200,494	180,671	98,530	62,718
Reconstruction	461,078	490,770	520,325	546,924	561,358	570,649
ITVET	32,833	38,986	48,172	60,053	74,500	82,206
Renovation and maintenance	32,833	38,986	48,172	60,053	74,500	82,206
Higher Education	1,338,262	1,456,450	1,621,771	1,874,457	2,317,874	1,748,877
New constructions	1,049,874	1,164,634	1,320,542	1,553,080	1,953,311	1,459,509
New equipment	73,588	84,822	100,933	126,355	172,674	92,394
Reconstruction	214,800	206,994	200,295	195,022	191,889	196,974
Cross Cutting	446,605	451,071	455,582	460,137	464,739	469,386

New constructions includes water/sanitation facilities, labs and staff-rooms

New equipment includes furniture and fittings

Reconstruction includes separate water/sanitation facilities

ANNEX F: Number of infrastructure required by the main subsectors

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Pre-primary						
Classrooms	8	9	9	10	10	6
Staffrooms	4	4	5	5	5	3
Toilets	4	4	5	5	5	3
Primary						
Classrooms	46	58	65	82	116	93
Staffrooms	5	7	7	9	13	11
Toilets	10	14	16	22	33	31
Other	11	14	15	19	28	23
Secondary						
Classrooms	48	46	46	41	22	14
Labs	10	9	9	8	4	3
Staffrooms	4	3	3	3	2	1
Toilets	5	5	5	4	2	1
Other	5	5	5	4	2	1