

FOREWORD

The June 2003, Statistical Digest, like previous Education Statistical Digests is the output of an annual twelve-month process. This process begins with extensive data collection mainly via an annual questionnaire schools at all levels, Ministry departments, and the Government Statistics Department. The next stage is data validation, which involves callbacks and re-entry of data in the questionnaire, data entry into a database, editing, processing and analyzing.

The processed data is then compiled into a Statistical Digest document highlighting statistical information on various sub sectors including, Early Childhood, Primary, Secondary and Tertiary education, National Enrichment and Learning Program and National Skills Training Program. Some of that information is further analysed and presented as **education indicators**^{*}, and can be found throughout the Statistical Digest. However, highlighted on page xxv are the key indicators of education reform as contained in the Education Sector Development Plan (ESDP). These performance indicators are used as a guide to monitor the implementation of education reform initiatives in St. Lucia.

The Ministry of Education, HRD, Youth and Sports strongly advises on the use of the Statistical Digest for planning at all levels. Every effort has been made to provide as comprehensive a statistical package as possible. The Statistical Digest can also be found on the website of the Ministry of Education at www.education.gov.lc/Statistics Website2. Your suggestions for further improvements are welcomed.

OVERVIEW

Following is a synopsis of the June 2003, Statistical Digest.

Early Childhood Education

During the academic year 2002/03 there was a total of 152 Early Childhood Education Centres (ECEC), a decrease of 1 school over the last year. The student enrolment for this sector decreased from 5,507 to 5,271; a 4% decrease from the previous year. Of these ECEC, 40 were Day Care Centers; 50% of which are government owned and the balance, privately owned. Day Care Centers', enrolment has increased slightly from 1,306 in 2001/02 to 1,332 in 2002/03. The ratio of boys to girls remained at 1:1 and the care giver/child ratio reduced from 1:10 in 2001/02 to 1:9 in 2002/03.

The total Pre-school enrolment decreased from 4,275 in 2000/01, to 4,201 students in 2001/02 and further to 3,939 in 2002/03. The ratio of boys to girls has remained relatively constant over last year, at 1:1. However the teacher/child ratio has decreased from 1:12 in 2001/02 to 1:11 in 2002/03. It should also be noted that all pre-schools are still privately owned. In 2002/03, 36% of these centers were located within the Castries region. In that year also, the enrolment in pre-schools decreased in seven of the eleven communities.

^{*} Education Indicators are relevant statistics that contain useful information about the status or performance of a school, sub-sector or education system.

Primary Education

With the merging of the Methodist Infant and Primary schools, the total number of primary schools decreased from 82 to 81 in 2002/03. Primary school enrolment has continued to decline recording a total of 27,175 students in 2002/03; a 2.8% decrease over last year. This decrease is in keeping with the general decline in population anticipated of that particular age group. The percentage of girls which has remained constant at 48% over the last four years has decreased to 47% in 2002/03.

In the academic year 2001/02, a total of 203 students requested transfers out of St. Lucia, (0.73% of the student population) and 168 students dropped out of school (0.6% of the student population); a marginal decrease over last year. Sixty nine percent (69%) of these dropouts were males and thus, the male dropout rate remains higher than that of females. In 2001/02, approximately 85% of the total dropouts were from Grades 8 and 9 and 67% of those were males; a trend that became apparent in 1998/99.

The repetition rate has increased from 1.8% in 2000/01 to 3% in 2001/02. Male repetition rate has been higher than that for females over the past four years. The highest number of repeaters was recorded in Education District 4 followed by District 3 and then District 1. At the national level Grade 6 recorded the highest number of repeaters (193) followed by Kindergarten (192). Possible reasons are (a) in Grade 6, many students are of age to re-write the common entrance examination if they were not assigned to a secondary school after their first attempt, and they are permitted to repeat the grade; (b) Grade K repeaters comprise many students who started kindergarten below the stipulated age of 5 years.

In the 2002-03 academic year there were 1,057 teachers, 85% of which were females. The teacher/student ratio has remained constant at 1:26 over the past two years. Only 9 primary schools operate at the desired 1:30 teacher/student ratio. Seventy eight percent (78%) of the primary schools' teaching force are trained. This figure has remained unchanged over last year. The percentage of male trained teachers has increased from 71% to 77% in 2002/03, whilst the percentage of female trained teachers has decreased from 79% to 78%. The total number of trained teachers was generally evenly distributed among the eight education districts, with District 2 recording the highest percentage of trained teachers (85%) and District 8 recording the lowest percentage of trained teachers of (69%).

In 2001/02 a teacher attrition rate of 2.8% was recorded at the primary level. This rate includes teachers who left teaching on account of resignation, termination, secondment, retirement and death. In 2002/03, 177 teachers were reported to be on study leave, hence giving a gross teacher enrolment for primary schools of 1,234 teachers.

During the current academic year, 2002/03, approximately 21% of the primary school students benefited from the ongoing School Feeding Programme, and 3.9% received bursaries from the Ministry of Education, HRD, Youth and Sports.

The results of the minimum standards examinations for Grade 2 and Form 3 showed that the mean for Mathematics was higher than that for English language in the 2002 examinations, whilst the results of the Grade 4 exams showed the reverse. Of the 4,532 students who wrote the

Common Entrance Examinations, 2,476 or 55% were assigned to secondary schools. Though this percentage remained unchanged over last year, the total number of students assigned places in secondary schools decreased slightly. Of the total number of students who sat the exam, 48.94% scored at or above the national mean.

Special Education

The total number of special education centres remains at 5 with a combined enrolment of 235 students; 46% of which are girls. Of the total students, 9 are integrated within the mainstream school system and 14 others are visited at home whilst the others attend various institutions. The highest enrolment is recorded by Dunnottar, followed by the Vieux-Fort Special Education Center. Sixty-six percent of all the disabled students are those with Learning Disabilities/Mentally Challenged. There are 45 teachers at the various centres and the teacher/student ratio is 1:5. Sixty percent of these teachers are professionally trained whilst 47% are trained in at least one area of specialisation.

Secondary Education

The number of secondary schools has remained at 18 over the past 4 years. However, the total secondary pupil enrolment has been increasing steadily over the past six or more years. In 2002/03 a slight decrease of 88 students was realised giving a total enrolment of 12,655 students. This represents a gross enrolment rate of 76%*, of which 57% were girls. Further, it should be noted that about 60% of 12-17 year olds are currently enrolled in public secondary school. If the projected expansion of access to secondary education is realized, by 2006/07, secondary gross student enrolment will be approximately 15,540, reaching a gross enrolment rate of 93%.

The secondary school dropout rate has decreased from 1.5% in 2000/01 to 1% in 2001/02, although the total number of dropouts has increased. 2002/2003 recorded a higher male dropout rate (2.1%) than female (1.4%). Approximately 74% of all secondary dropouts were from forms 4 and 5.

There are 706 teachers at the secondary schools, 63% of which are females. Fifty-eight percent of the current secondary school teaching force is trained. This rate has remained unchanged from last year. The percentage of female trained teachers has been higher than male trained teachers over the past 5 years. In 2002/03 there were 62% female trained teachers and 51% trained male teachers. The teaching force also recorded a total of 53% graduate teachers, with a higher percentage of female graduate teachers (57%) than males (46%). This disparity trend is observed as far back as 1997/98. Teacher attrition rate was recorded at 5.8% in 2001/02, a 1.4% decrease over last year.

In 2002/03, 1,180 (9%) secondary school students received bursaries from the Ministry of Education.

* The total number of 12 to 16 year olds is used to calculate gross enrolment rate. See technical notes.

Tertiary Education

The total enrolment at St. Lucia's two tertiary institutions has increased from 1,692 in 2001/02 to 1,867 in 2002/03 (this excludes enrolment in the Department for Continuing Education of the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College). The percentage of female students has increased to 64%. Overall, the Division of Technical Education and Management Studies accommodated the largest quota of total enrolment, followed by the Division of Arts, Science and General Studies.

The total enrolment at the Department of Continuing Education declined significantly from 1,291 in 2001/02 to 608 in 2002/03. This total excludes persons following the defensive driving course.

National Enrichment and Learning Program

The National Enrichment and Learning Program (NELP), has been in existence for almost two years. Courses are offered in two phases, *Phase one* - September to January and *Phase 2* - March to July. The total number of centres increased from 8 in 2001/02 to 11 in 2002/03 and distributed in eight communities in the island. A total of 842 learners were enrolled in Phase 1 of the program, 73% of which were females. A total of 664 learners were enrolled in Phase 2 of the program, 79% of which were females. Thus, a total of 1,506 learners participated in the programme in 2002/03, a slight increase over last year. 411 learners graduated from Phase 1, where a number of technical vocational courses were successfully completed.

Skills Training

The skills training program offered by the National Skills Development Centre (NSDC) has been in existence for just over two years. The centre continues to offer both soft skills and technical vocational courses. There is one main skills training centre, located at Bisee in Castries and 3 satellite centers. The NSDC offers training under various project heads based on financial contributions to the centre. In 2002/03 approximately 553 persons were trained with assistance received under two projects. 65% of trainees were females. In June 2003, 399 females were among the 550 persons who graduated having received specialized training in a wide range of technical/vocational courses. Sixty three percent of those graduates were of the age-group 16-25 years.

Private Education

There are 7 private primary schools on the island with a total student enrolment of 770, 47% of which are females. Enrolment in private primary schools increased slightly over the past three years. There were 46 teachers, 89% of which are females and 63% trained at the private primary level. The teacher/student ratio has remained at 1:17 over the last two years. The total number of private secondary schools has reduced from 3 to 2 in 2002/03.

Enrolment at private secondary schools has been decreasing for the past 4 or more years, from 518 in 1999/00 to 307 in 2002/03. Sixty one percent of those 307 students were females. In 2002/03 there was a total of 19 teachers and the teacher/student ratio remained at 1:16.

The Centre for Adolescent, Rehabilitation and Education (CARE) also provides training in a number of skills areas including technical/vocational courses as well as academic courses. The programs are of 2 years duration. In 2002/03, there were 7 centres on the island with a total enrolment of 325 students, 40% of which are females. There were 27 tutors with a student/teacher ratio of 1:12.