

NEWS

\$6 million to sanitise schools for upcoming CAPE/CSEC exams

CSEC and CAPE examinations will begin on July 13. The announcement was made by Education Minister Anthony Garcia during a news conference at his ministry on St Vincent Street in Port of Spain on Friday.

He said the date for the start of exams was decided by regional ministers of education and the CEO of the Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) at a meeting on May 8.

However, with the covid19 pandemic still a reality, the ministry is putting measures in place to ensure the safety of students and staff.

The ministry has allocated \$6 million for the sanitisation of schools and the procurement of thermal scanners to monitor the temperature of anyone entering the school compound.

Reporters were told the ministry will also provide additional sinks and sanitisers upon request, and soap and disinfectant will soon be made available.

While the Ministry of Health is advising people to wear masks while in public, the ministry said students will be exempted from doing so during the exams, but invigilators will have to. Desks will be sanitised before and after and signs advising on covid19 precautions will be posted throughout the schools.

Chief Education Officer, Lisa Henry-Davis, said if a student or teacher displays flu-like symptoms while on the compound, that person will be taken to a



Minister of Education Anthony Garcia and acting Chief Education Officer Lisa Henry-David share a light moment at a news briefing on Friday. PHOTO BY ROGER JACOB

“secluded area” and steps will be taken to have them removed. They would only be allowed back if they have a medical.

“In our discussions with the Ministry of Health, we spoke of students who may have allergies and they are coming in with their medicals so they can show ‘I may be sneezing, and here is why.’”

Plans are still on for the re-opening of all schools on September 1.

Asked about the decision to have the exams in July even though reservations were expressed by the TT Unified Teachers’ Association, Garcia said CXC is the body which administers the exams and there was a collective agreement from the ministers of education. Garcia then took a proposal to Cabinet on Thursday and govern-

ment agreed with the date.

He said it’s now the government’s responsibility to ensure all is in place so that students can seamlessly write their exams.

The exams will include a multiple-choice paper and school-based assessments (SBAs). Subjects for which SBAs are not required will have a paper two. These subjects include French, Spanish, Portuguese and human and social biology. Students will be required to do a journal for visual arts to replace the SBA.

For physical education, students will be required to write a plan for the tournament, instead of hosting a physical tournament, and for theatre arts the students will be judged on a written portfolio instead of a presentation.

UWI modifies entry requirements in light of covid19

The UWI has announced its decision to modify the matriculation requirements for the upcoming 2020/2021 academic year.

In a statement released on Thursday, the university announced its board of undergraduate studies made the decision on Tuesday, following the closure of schools and postponement of exams due to covid19.

The statement said students will qualify as normal matriculants to the UWI if they have passed at least two CAPE subjects either at unit 1 or 2 (grades 1-4), have the requisite CSEC subjects and are currently registered for either unit 1 or 2.

It said the decision is grounded in scientific analysis of students’ predictive performance which shows that passes at CAPE unit 1 (grades 1-4) were 97 per cent predictive of success at CAPE unit 2.

The statement said, “The proposal on the adjusted matriculation requirements was jointly presented by the UWI and the Caribbean Examination Council to the ministries of education at CARICOM’s council for human and social development meeting earlier this month, where it received endorsement.”

Pro Vice-Chancellor of the board, Prof Clive Landis said universities around the world have had to adapt to more flexible admissions processes in response to the pandemic. “As a world-ranked university, com-

mitted to serving our Caribbean region, the UWI too has to consider how it can better support students in this time.”

Landis is also chairman of the UWI covid19 task force. He said, “This is absolutely not about lowering standards. It is a fair and reasonable proposal given the prevailing circumstances.” He added, the change in policy is more about building flexibility into the UWI application process.

The statement said prospective students who have completed their first year of CAPE can apply to the UWI right now. “The faculty can make a firm offer to applicants who meet this new matriculation standard.”

The statement said the decision on students who merit admission remains with the faculties. Competitive screening of applicants and faculty-specific admission regulations that go by the matriculation standards for subjects such as law and medicine still apply.

The statement said universities in the US have long adopted the practice of accepting CSEC and CAPE Unit 1 results for admission and scholarships to Caribbean students, while the UWI waits on CAPE unit 2 results.

The board said matriculation is defined as “a minimum admission standard.”

It said meeting the minimum requirement does not guarantee a right of entry for a matriculant into every degree programme.”

More people visit Living Water Community for hampers

GREVIC ALVARADO

The Living Water Community (LWC) distributed more than 930 hampers to families in need of help on Friday. It was the seventh such distribution since measures were put in place to curb the spread of covid19.

People began arriving and lining up at the Frederick Street, Port of Spain venue since Thursday night.

By Friday morning, the line extended to Keate Street with several police officers helping to keep order and ensuring people were practising physical distancing guidelines.

The distribution of hampers started at 6am and people were at-

tended to in batches of 20. This continued until around 9am, but some in the line were left empty handed as the hampers ran out. They were advised by the police to try to arrive a bit earlier next week to get a number. Last week, about 875 hampers were distributed.

One woman told Newsday, “It is a good help because many of us are out of work at the moment. We hope this will continue as the country returns to normal.”

Living Water officials said the program will continue as long as individuals and companies continue to collaborate.

The office continues to receive donations Monday through Thursday from 8am to 4pm.



A police officer assists those who went for help at the Living Water Community on Friday.

PHOTO BY SUREASH CHOLAI