

## ABSTRACT

### **Planning Practices in Selected Secondary Schools in Jamaica: Implications of Strategic Planning for Improving School Quality**

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This dissertation examined the extent to which planning is carried out in selected secondary schools in Jamaica. The implications of strategic planning are well documented, and the investigation sought to assess practices in this area. The following variables were examined: methods of planning, type of planning, directional strategies, resource management strategies, performance management strategies, leadership strategies and instructional management strategies. Impressions on the implications of formal, strategic planning were also gathered. The review of related literature addressed planning practices which have contributed to the growth and development of secondary education in Jamaica, the theoretical framework for the study, the nature scope and importance of planning, strategic planning, and problems/challenges of strategic planning in secondary schools in Jamaica, the meaning of quality education, and quality school.

The sample which was obtained by stratified random sampling comprised 48 principals and 375 teachers from 19 Reclassified High, 14 Junior High and 15 All Age Schools selected from four of the six educational regions in Jamaica. This represents approximately 23% of the target school population. The instruments comprised two sets of questionnaires, one for the principals, and the other for the teachers. A pilot study was conducted to ascertain the reliability and the validity of the questionnaires. Descriptive and

inferential statistics including, frequency and relative frequency distributions, t tests, the One Way Analysis of Variance and measures of central tendency (mean; midpoint of range of scores) were used to analyze the quantitative data.

The data for this dissertation revealed that formal and informal methods of planning were carried out in the schools but not extensively. Strategic, long, medium and short term types of planning were done; however, more attention was given to short and medium term planning. Strategies relating to the schools' direction were employed to great extent; however, strategies relating to resource management, performance management and leadership, were planned and utilized but not extensively. Use of instructional management planning strategies was given little attention. Principals and teachers in rural schools held more favourable opinions than their urban counterparts on the extent to which planning strategies relating to the schools' direction, resource management, performance management, leadership and instructional management were utilized. Principals who were formally trained in educational administration or management held similar opinions to their untrained colleagues on the extent to which planning was done. Experienced principals held more favourable opinions than their colleagues in other experienced groups, on mobilizing resources; vice principals held more favourable opinions on the extent to which certain directional, resource management, performance management, leadership and instructional management strategies were planned and utilized. Also, Junior High School principals and All Age teachers held more favourable opinions on the extent to which directional planning strategies relating to setting targets were employed. More favourable opinions were held by All Age and Reclassified High

School principals on the extent to which planning was carried out for specific indicators of resource management; whereas teachers in Reclassified High and Junior High Schools held more favourable opinions on the extent to which aspects of resource management, performance management, and instructional management planning strategies were employed. However, Junior High School teachers held less favourable opinions on the extent to which strategies relating to management's commitment were planned and utilized. Strategic planning as expressed by respondents, has both positive and negative implications for school quality. However, principals and teachers agree that strategic planning has the capacity to create an orderly organization, to improve performance, aspects of the physical environment, interpersonal relations and the schools' public image. It is recommended that all principals of secondary schools should become involved in formal, strategic, long term planning and the minimum duration of plans should be five years. Principals should involve parents in the planning process for school improvement. Further research should be done on the relationship between strategic planning and performance in the Jamaican school setting.