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***TEACHER ACCOUNTABILITY-EVALUATING OUR PERFORMANCE***

In a search for effective strategies for upgrading the academic achievement of our students, attention is focused on high-priority educational issues such as the advancement of teacher preparation, the assessment of teaching competence, and the professional development of teachers. Teacher evaluation, as a means of having an impact on the instructional process by ensuring teacher competence and promoting professional growth or change, is now an issue in the federation as a result of the Project Preparation Activities for the World Bank Project, specifically the committee charged with a proposal for a Teacher Appraisal System.

This is a unique time in the history of educational reform regionally and locally. However, we need to be fully cognizant of the three aspects of this reform as it pertains to teachers-Clarification, Edification and Participation. Although it may appear that external forces drive the formalization of the evaluation process, it is in reality a seminar such as this that is evidence of the opportunity for the Ministry of Education and the Teachers' Union to work in partnership to substantially enhance the quality of teaching and to improve the conditions that support effective teaching. We need to focus on the fact that the improvement of teaching is "what matters most" in improving schools, that accountability for the outcomes of teaching is The Ideal Caribbean Person.

**TEACHER ACCOUNTABILITY**

Accountability has always been a basic issue in public education, although ideas about how to accomplish it have changed. In recent years, the urge to improve schools has been a powerful incentive to the adoption of accountability systems. At least five types of accountability systems may exist alongside each other: Political, Legal, Bureaucratic, Professional and Market.

- Political. Legislation by elected officials.
- Legal. Strategy 2 of Pillars of Partnership and Progress: *Accelerate and complete the creation of a common legal framework for education within the sub-region through enacting the new Education Bill legislation in each member state and share regulations that have been developed to share the Act.*

- **Bureaucratic.** Bureaucratic accountability is based on the hope of finding the best system under which all students will be educated. Policies are made at the top and handed down to administrators who translate them into procedures for teachers to follow in educating students. This type of accountability does not hold teachers responsible for meeting the individual needs of students, they can be held accountable only for following standard procedure
- **Professional.** Unlike bureaucratic accountability, whose goal is uniformity and standardization, professional accountability allows practitioners to make their own decisions about how to meet the individual needs of students. This model seeks to ensure that teachers will be highly knowledgeable, competent and committed to good teaching. Consequently, a professional accountability system must pay particular attention, not only to student programs, but also to policies governing the preparation, selection, evaluation and professional development of teachers.
- **Market.** Programs and schools appropriate to student needs.

The purpose of teaching is to educate. The Primary purpose of teacher evaluation is improvement of instruction. We accept that of the five accountability systems we are primarily concerned with professional accountability, a model that demands that we be knowledgeable, competent committed. But whose mission reflects a commitment to teachers to ensure that they are knowledgeable, competent and committed?

I would like to apply the Mission Statement of the American National Partnership for Excellence and Accountability in Teaching (**NPEAT**): to energize and enable those who teach and influence teaching to use knowledge based on research and the wisdom of practice to ensure that teachers have the capabilities, motivation and opportunity to help all students, especially those placed at risk, achieve challenging academic standards.

Accepting that teachers are *the critical interface between the broad systematic reforms being taken in the eastern Caribbean and student outcomes including motivation, school achievement and academic achievement*, the present report is not encouraging.

In 1998-99, the Eastern Caribbean Reform Initiative (ECERP) conducted an investigation of Eastern Caribbean teachers' views of their work, working conditions and the current education reform program. This study confirmed some worrisome concerns:

**Commitment to teaching.** Untrained teachers are significantly less committed to teaching than are teachers with bachelor's level qualifications

**A significant lack of engagement in the teaching profession.** More than half of the teachers surveyed hope to be doing something other than teaching in the primary or secondary school in five years. For about one third of the respondents, their desire is to remain connected to the teaching profession, by moving into school administration, ministry, or counseling positions. Almost one quarter of the teachers surveyed hope to be doing some kind of work outside of the teaching profession in five years.

The critical factors that influence teachers' level of commitment all fall under the sphere of influence of the country's education system:

Among the most important determinants of the teachers' commitment to their work are the career and professional development opportunities, attitudes toward education reform, school administrators and level of qualifications. Of importance is the finding that professional qualifications are determinants of teacher morale, motivation and commitment

This study followed up on the findings from the Eastern Caribbean Education Reform Project (ECERP) Student Attitude Survey conducted in 1998.

The survey results indicate that at a system wide level and over and above remuneration, professional qualifications are a key factor in building the capacity of the teaching cadre to improve student outcomes. These results go hand in hand with the critical role of career and professional development opportunities and reinforce the need for increased efforts in both the upgrading of qualifications in the teaching force, and the provision of adequate opportunities for professional development. A significant finding was that the more positive the influence of career and professional development opportunities, the more teachers are committed to teaching

## THE EVALUATION OF TEACHERS SHOULD BE CONDUCTED IN EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS

Effective schools, regardless of location share a number of common characteristics:

### **Goals and Objectives**

An effective school has goals and objectives based on a mission statement that is developed with parent and community involvement.

### **Funding and Financial management**

Operation of an effective school requires a financial commitment to support the education and related services that all students and teachers need.

### **Academic programs**

An effective school offers academic programs that provide students with the opportunity to master high academic standards and develop skills for life-long learning, including sound reading skills and functional mathematical abilities; oral, written and electronic communication skills; civic education; education in the arts; and the ability to collect and critically analyze information.

### **Assessment**

Effective schools develop assessment programs that lead to improved instruction and increased student learning. Special support is provided for students falling below standards and expectations.

**Parent and family involvement**

Effective schools promote partnerships that increase parental involvement.

**Teachers and Staff**

To insure the academic success of all children, effective schools must provide opportunities for teachers, including degree-certified to regularly enhance their skills.

Effective teachers believe that all children can learn. They assist students by evaluating and monitoring their individual abilities and progress, encouraging them to perform appropriately, assigning tasks that hold students accountable, and provide them with clear feedback and rewards for success.

**Students**

An effective school supports and helps develop each student's individual strengths and talents. These schools have high expectations of their students' behavior and performance and encourage student responsibility and good citizenship.

**Community**

Effective schools foster community and business involvement that results in positive partnerships in support of education.

**Support Services**

Effective schools integrate comprehensive services that address the needs of the whole child.

**Climate**

The climate of an effective school welcomes students, staff, parents and community members and promotes cooperative efforts to assure a safe educational environment. Such schools recognize and respect diversity of cultures, encourage the highest level of student learning and achievement; and permit zero tolerance for drug use and violence.

To ensure a healthy climate, schools can use character-education programs developed with parent and community involvement and should offer alternative educational settings for students who violate safe-school policies.

**Facilities**

Adequate buildings are a critical component of an effective school. School buildings and grounds must be well maintained and safe. They must provide sufficient space for learning and they must be able to support today's educational technology needs.

**Governance**

The principal is a strong instructional and administrative leader.

EVALUATING TEACHER PERFORMANCE-upholding professional standards of practice, following procedure, knowledgeable, competent. Committed to good teaching

#### FORMATIVE EVALUATION

Formative evaluation refers to the assessment of teacher's strengths and weaknesses in order to plan appropriate professional development activities for novice as well as veteran teachers.

The essential purpose of formative evaluation is to provide for the improvement and professional development of teachers. Formative evaluation is positive and should be the main type of evaluation. The intended effects are professional growth, more effective teaching and student learning

#### SUMMATIVE EVALUATION

On the other hand summative evaluation is designed to provide a documentary record which justifies an adverse administrative decision.

#### IMPROVING TEACHER EVALUATION

Ronald T. C. Boyd, in the document Improving Teacher Evaluations ERIC Digest 111 Teacher evaluations are often designed to serve two purposes: to measure teacher competence and to foster professional development and growth. This digest discusses characteristics of effective teacher evaluations and some common teacher concerns.

#### EFFECTIVE TEACHER EVALUATIONS

A teacher evaluation system should give teachers useful feedback on classroom needs, the opportunity to learn new teaching techniques, and counsel from principals and other teachers on how to make changes in their classrooms. To achieve these goals, evaluators must first set specific procedures and standards. The standards should:

- Relate to important teaching skills,
- be as objective as possible,
- be clearly communicated to the teacher before the evaluation begins and be reviewed after the evaluation is over, and
- be linked to the teacher's professional development.

Evaluators should consider a variety of teaching skills. If the evaluators use several sources of information about a teacher's performance, they can make a more accurate evaluation. Some procedures evaluators can use are to:

- Observe classroom activities. This is by far the most common form of data collection for evaluation. The goal of class observations is to obtain a representative sample of a teacher's performance in the classroom. Evaluators cannot accomplish this goal with a sample of only a few hours of observation or with an observation of only one class. Observations can be formal and planned or informal and unannounced. Both forms of evaluation can provide valuable information.

- Review lesson plans and classroom records. Lesson plans can reflect how well a teacher has thought through instructional goals. Looking at classroom records, such as tests and assignments, can indicate how well a teacher has linked lesson plans, instruction, and testing.
- Expand the number of people involved in the evaluations. Most often principals or department supervisors conduct evaluations. Again, many state laws and collective bargaining agreements specify that teacher's supervisors evaluate their performance. This system works well if the only goal of evaluation is to determine competence. If the goal of the evaluation is to promote growth, however, other evaluators should participate. Self-evaluations give teachers' perspective on their work. Surprisingly, few school systems require self-evaluations. Peer and student evaluations, if schools administer them properly, can also benefit teachers.

Teachers who want to improve their teaching are eager to know how other teachers and their students view them. These are the people who interact with the teacher everyday; their perspective should not be ignored during the evaluation process.

#### REPORTING THE RESULTS OF THE EVALUATION

A post-observation conference can give teachers feedback on their strengths and weaknesses. Evaluators must remember to:

- deliver the feedback in a positive and considerate way;
- offer ideas and suggest changes that make sense to the teacher;
- maintain a level of formality necessary to achieve the goals of the evaluation;
- maintain a balance between praise and criticism; and
- give enough feedback to be useful but not so much that the teacher is overwhelmed.

#### LINKING TEACHER EVALUATION TO PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Linking evaluation and development is a difficult task for teachers, evaluators, and principals. Although there are few easy answers, evaluation can be used to

- work with teachers to set specific, achievable goals;
- provide constructive criticism and suggestions to improve weak areas and amplify strengths; and
- enlist experienced teachers to help improve the performance of less experienced teachers.

## TEACHER CONCERNS

Experienced teachers often state that evaluations are not productive. Some of this dissatisfaction is based on experiences which can be avoided:

- **Teachers not having any input into the evaluation criteria.** Other professionals (doctors, lawyers, engineers) control the criteria for entering and maintaining membership in their profession. Teachers, on the other hand, often do not have that privilege. Education officials decide the focus of the evaluation. This leads teachers to distrust the evaluation process and to question the validity of the results it produces.
- **Evaluators not spending enough time on the evaluation.** Teachers complain that the principal, or whoever is conducting the evaluation, does not have the time to gather quality information and provide useful feedback. After a teacher's first year evaluation, he or she may not have another evaluation for two or three years, sometimes longer.
- **Evaluators not being well trained.** Teachers complain that few evaluators have any special training to help them plan and carry out a successful evaluation. Even worse, many have had little or no recent experience in the classroom. The criteria for evaluations are often vague, subjective, and inconsistent. This robs the evaluator of the credibility needed to carry out an effective evaluation.
- **Results of evaluations not being used to further teacher development.** For many teachers, the evaluation process can be a dead end. The results do not figure into salary increases, promotions, or any meaningful program for professional development. Few systems have established a clear link between teacher evaluation and teacher development.

Considering these typical teacher concerns, it is evident that the challenge for evaluators is to make the evaluation process a meaningful experience, not simply an empty exercise, and to avoid the potential conflict between a processes that seeks to judge teacher effectiveness and foster professional development and growth.

## THE PROPOSED EVALUATION INSTRUMENT

The OECS/World Bank/Government of St.Kitts and Nevis Secondary School Enhancement Project is a project involving three OECS countries: St.Lucia, Dominica and St.Kitts and Nevis has as the anticipated outcome improving the access, quality and management of schools. One component of this project in each of the countries is to have a Teacher Appraisal System developed. The committee responsible for this component in St.Kitts and Nevis was given the activity to review the current Civil Service Appraisal System; conduct a feasibility study for modifications and to propose an

option. The option proposed is to modify the Teacher Evaluation Instrument developed by the Education Department in Nevis.

## CHRONOLOGY

1997-1998	<p>Formation of the Nevis Teacher Evaluation Instrument committee Comprising Education Officers and Principals</p> <p>Acquired the services of a Consultant, Dr. Vivian Wylie of Canada. Workshops conducted for Education Officers and Principals. First draft of the instrument completed and distributed to schools for teacher input. Principals and teachers discussed during faculty meetings. Recommendations sent to committee.</p>
1998-1999	<p>Committee expanded to include all Education Officers and all principals. This committee assisted by Dr. Jack Winters who researched and Specific items for inclusion. Dr. Winter's recommendations were added to the first draft and an instrument prepared for submission to the teachers.</p> <p>The teachers in each school had the opportunity to review the instrument, submit recommended, items, request clarification.</p> <p>Committee met to review teacher input and to prepare the final draft of the instrument.</p>
1999-2000	<p>Piloted in schools. Committee met to make final modifications. Copy given to all teachers</p>
2000-2001	<p>Implementation</p>

This instrument under review today is Formative and Summative and includes a pre-evaluation and post-evaluation conference.

## MODIFICATIONS:

My input was basically to ensure:

1. that items were worded to reflect the terminology used in the modules used for the OECS/UWI/DFIDC primary Teachers Education Project and the OECS/EDF/UWI Tertiary Education Programme.
2. Also, I compared items with the List of Quantitative Indicators from the Core OECS Education Indicators in order to determine how the data may be used.



## USING STATISTICAL INDICATORS

The OECS Education Reform Unit has, over the years, supported a series of major reforms in collaboration with the Ministry of Education in each member state including St.Kitts and Nevis and has implemented a number of initiatives aimed at strengthening the capacity of individual countries to plan and implement education reform.

A core set of indicators has been developed that ensure we no longer merely monitor schools, but monitor the system:

- Demographic, Social and Economic context
- Administration, Planning and Supervision of Education
- Access
- Equity
- Resources
- Teaching Learning Process
- System Outputs
- Learning Outcomes

Analysis of the data collected would highlight strengths and weaknesses and provide for the interventions necessary for system wide and school based effectiveness. As a country we have completed the first phase of National Capacity Building. That is, empowering principals to be more than instructional leaders, to be managers. In an effort to enhance the Education Management Information System (EMIS), all principals have been trained in the use of Management tools. A data gatherer is a data user, so we envisage that principals and teachers will be analysing data. These well-conceived indicators, appropriately used can serve as incentives for school improvement and to monitor the quality and equality of opportunities available to students, and then they will support more responsible decision-making by school management teams and provide accountability. Whereas we have common OECS indicators and the EFA Plan of Action 2000-2015 proposes using common measures of accountability, and proposes the design of a common teacher accountability system by 2002, we are here to give input into a Teacher Appraisal Instrument for the federation.

My experience in piloting this instrument last year was to adopt the following strategy. The instrument was discussed with untrained teachers attending the Methodology course. In lieu of an examination question, the participants accepted the option of being evaluated. My procedure was to visit the school, review the teacher's lesson plans, conduct a pre-evaluation conference, observe the lesson, conduct a post evaluation conference, allow the teacher to sign and date my comments on the form, and assist the teacher to develop an improvement plan in a specific area. For beginning teachers, the areas were primarily Instructional Planning and Teaching Techniques including questioning, relating the application to the stated objectives.

For all teachers it was Parent and Teacher Relations. Realizing this concern, I have developed a brochure and a Training Workshop on effective Teacher Parent Conferences,

referring to Pillars for Partnership and Progress Strategy 11: Assist parents to effectively participate in the education of their children and to cope with their responsibilities as parents by:

- Providing continuing education programmes for parents who desire such in order to participate meaningfully in the education of their children
- Improving communication between parents and schools concerning the curriculum and programmes of the school and the progress of their children
- Establishing a framework in which parents can volunteer to support the school in the delivery of the programme
- Requiring schools to have open days and other such activities that will facilitate parents, community members and others to better understand and appreciate the programme of the school.
- Revitalizing parent teacher associations

#### ISSUES FOR A TEACHERS' UNION

Ensuring that at the core of the process are fundamental fairness and reasonableness, as well as procedures that yield a documentary record substantial enough to justify an administrative decision. The evidence must be clear, cogent and convincing before an adverse employment decision is made. The standards of evaluation are to be reasonably related to what teachers are expected to do at each level of schooling, should include who will evaluate, and the procedure guiding the evaluation process should be clearly articulated and properly followed. There is clearly a need for an accompanying document when the instrument is complete, that is,

#### ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES FOR THE EVALUATION OF TEACHER PERFORMANCE

This is not presently a component but is necessary for clarification, edification and participation of all teachers.