



OECS Secretariat, Castries, St. Lucia, September 28th, 2010. OECS Ministers for Education have decided to introduce the Caribbean Primary Exit Examination which is to replace the Common Entrance and Grade 6 national assessment.

This is a major decision coming out of the just ended 21st meeting of OECS Ministers for Education which was held in the British Virgin Islands.

The new examinations will be introduced in 2012 following a two year period of preparation that includes extensive discussion and public sensitisation, teacher training, and school preparation. The examinations will be piloted in September 2011.

The adoption of a common protocol on the use of mobile phones in schools in the OECS was another major development coming out of the 21st meeting of OECS Ministers for Education.



The protocol bans the use of mobile phones in classes or in the possession of persons writing national or regional examinations. Speaking on the OECS News Link www.oecs.org,

Dominica's Education Minister Peter St. Jean explained that:

“ . . . these technologies have really permeated our schools and other educational institutions and we are of the view that the education system has an obligation to teach the students the how and the why of the use of these systems. I need to point out here that there are certain protocols that must be put in place for use of these cell phones and basically we are saying that students will not be allowed to use mobile phones during class, while on the school compound and during any supervised school activity and that all telephones must be turned off during classes or while on the school compound.”

Students found using their mobile phones during classes or any supervised school activity are liable to have these phones confiscated and stored for safekeeping. However the phones will be returned to the student's parent/guardian following the payment of a small storage fee. Possession of cell phones during CXC or other examinations will result in the debarment from the examination in question.

The protocol also has provisions for the use of mobiles by teachers who must also have their phones turned off during classes or when supervising students in any school activity. However, teachers may use their mobile phones in the staff room during non-teaching time and during school outings, particularly in cases of emergency.

These agreements on a common primary examination and protocol on cell phone use in school demonstrate Education Ministers' continued commitment to deepen the OECS integration movement through the harmonisation of education policy and practice. Also during the meeting the OECS Secretariat and the Caribbean Examinations Council commended the British Virgin Islands for their outstanding pass rate in English as well as for their distinction in the OECS for being the leading country in Mathematics.

The 21st meeting of OECS Ministers for Education was held from September 14th to 16th 2010.