

The Alternative Secondary Transitional Education Programme (ASTEP)

INTRODUCTION

Members are being asked to note the update on the Alternative Secondary Transitional Education Programme (ASTEP).

BACKGROUND

The Alternative Secondary Transitional Education Programme (ASTEP) was designed as a two year transitional programme to provide a safety net for children who, at the end of the primary level, did not possess the prerequisite literacy skills and competencies to successfully access traditional secondary education. The delivery of ASTEP commenced in September 2011.

The Programme now consists of three (3) main groups - cohort one which commenced September 2011, cohort two in 2012 and cohort three in 2013. A total of eight thousand and eight (8,008) students are currently enrolled in the Programme, with an anticipated two thousand (2000) to be enrolled in September 2014.

STATUS

The following provides an update on the status of the cohorts;

- Cohort 1 has already completed two years in the Programme and has started a special modified high school programme.
- Cohort 2 is now in the second year of the Programme and will be assessed later in this school year in an effort to determine the students' readiness for entry into the regular secondary school system. Based on their performance, some will transition to secondary level schools while the others will be placed in a special educational programme, where their individual needs will be assessed and catered to.
- As of September 2014, a new intake will be assigned to the Programme, making a total of four (4) groups now addressed by this Programme.
- There are currently one hundred and forty one (141) ASTEP Schools across the six regions, moving from an initial total of one hundred and sixty three (163) schools. The reduction of schools was achieved through the removal of most primary schools from the programme, with the students being relocated to All-Age and Primary and Junior High Schools in proximity. No increase is expected in the current number of schools, as other primary schools that will be removed from the programme will be replaced by the addition of All-Age or Primary and Junior High Schools to accommodate the students.

- One hundred and thirty nine (139) Centre Coordinators are contracted to the Programme representing the total number of contract staff at this time. It is possible that this number may decrease with the shifting of centres from primary schools to All -Age and Junior High Schools with excess teachers on staff. These Teachers would be expected to handle the incoming students.

In preparing the budget, the four (4) cohorts have been considered and appropriate funds allocated to address the needs of the students. **Table 1** provides an estimate of funds allocated to each cohort assigned to each group.

Table 1: FUNDS ALLOCATED TO ASTEP

Group	Numbers Enrolled	Estimated costs (\$J)	Comments
Cohort 1	2,022	10,000,000	Group commenced September 2011. This group is currently being accommodated in All Age and Junior High Schools. Special intervention being provided
Cohort 2	3,270	*188,000,000	Group commenced September 2012. Cost relating to teachers and resources will be shared with the new intake group as they will be utilizing the same Centres.
Cohort 3	2,716	203,000,000 (*188,000,000)	Group commenced in September 2013. Resources are being shared with earlier groups to reduce costs.
New Intake	2000	100,000,000	Group will commence September 2014. These students will also be sharing resources.
Total	10,008	313,000,000	

* Reduction due to shared costs

BUDGETARY ASSUMPTIONS

The Programme will provide interventions and alternative solutions for 10,008 students as follows:

Groups	Numbers Enrolled	Comments
Cohort 1	2,022	Commenced September 2011
Cohort 2	3,270	Commenced September 2012
Cohort 3	2,716	Commenced Sept 2013
New Intake	2000	Will commence September 2014
Total	10,008	



Ronald Thwaites, MP

Minister

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