

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

THE HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA EQUIVALENCY PROGRAMME
(HSDEP)

INTRODUCTION

Members are being asked to note that the implementation of the High School Diploma Equivalency Programme (HSDEP) has begun under the direction of the Jamaican Foundation for Lifelong Learning (JFLL). The Programme has a current enrolment of three thousand eight hundred and twenty four (3,824) and the recruitment activities are underway to increase this number to seven thousand five hundred (7,500) in 2015/2016 and increase this number by 30 per cent (30%) in each succeeding year. Every Jamaican in need of upgrading his or her educational levels should be encouraged to avail themselves of the opportunities of this “Literacy Renaissance”.

BACKGROUND

In the 2012/2013 Academic Year, approximately twelve thousand (12,000) students left the secondary school system without any form of Caribbean Secondary Examination Certificate (CSEC) qualifications. In 2013, the age 16 population for grade 11 was fifty five thousand, three hundred and thirteen (55,313), that is 28,246 males and 27,068 females. From the total population, only forty two thousand two hundred (42,200) students were enrolled in public schools. Of this number, twenty thousand eight hundred and two (20, 802) were males and twenty one thousand three hundred and ninety eight (21,398) were females.

Additionally six thousand nine hundred and twenty two (6, 922), that is five thousand five hundred and sixty five (5,565) males and one thousand three hundred and fifty seven (1,357) females would not have sat any form of examinations. A further four thousand nine hundred and seventy one (4, 971) – two thousand six hundred and one (2,601) males and two thousand three hundred and seventy (2,370) females would have failed all subjects taken at the CSEC level. (*Planning Division, MoE*)

While the MoE introduces measures to stem the outflow of dropouts and non-achievers from the school system, the HSDEP is being implemented to respond to

the needs of such persons and those who did not pursue or complete secondary level education.

CHALLENGES & INITIATIVES

The present enrolment level represents the number accommodated in JFLL's existing twenty eight (28) centres. Please see **Appendix 1** for a distribution of the centres. A partnership with the Jamaica Library Service's network for the sharing of facilities and technology is nearing completion. This, along with the use of schools, Church halls and community centres, will allow for the doubling of opportunities this year and increases thereafter.

The JFLL has also commenced training teachers to deliver the HSDEP. Volunteers and trained but unemployed graduates will be recruited and where necessary, paid a stipend of between J\$800 and J\$1,200 per hour for their services.

PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION

The HSDEP provides a second chance and an alternative pathway to a general education programme for adult learners aged seventeen (17) and older. The programme is a direct response to the growing demand for education and skills training for the adult population. It is expected to improve the outcomes of the adult learner by forming the foundation for the acquisition of skills needed to make them marketable, both locally and internationally.

One of the benefits of acquiring the HSDE is that this credential has international recognition. To this end, the JFLL's certification will be accepted by the City Adult Learning Center, Ontario, Canada and the Office of Adult and Continuing Education – the largest provider of adult education in the United States of America (USA).

DETAILS OF PROGRAMME

The HSDEP has a duration of forty (40) weeks and is comprised of eleven (11) modules offered over three distinct levels - Basic, Intermediate and Proficiency Levels.

- The **Basic Level** is equivalent to Grades 1 to 6 in the formal education sector. Four (4) subjects are offered, namely, **Mathematics, English Language, Life-Skills and Information Technology**. Upon successful

completion of this level, learners will receive a certificate recognising their mastery of standard equivalent to primary standard education.

- The **Intermediate Level** is aligned to Grades 7 to 9 and the five (5) subjects offered are **Mathematics, English Language, Science & Technology, Information Technology** and **Social Studies**. This course of study is premised on a competency - based curricula that will equip the adult learner with a core of knowledge, skills and attitudes. Upon successful completion of this level, learners will receive a certificate recognising their mastery of a grade nine standard education to help them transition to the HEART Trust/NTA for advanced studies in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).
- The **Proficiency Level** is equivalent to Grades 10 to 11. The instructional programme is guided by the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) syllabus. Learners will be competent to sit five (5) subjects, including **Mathematics** and **English Language**.

The HSDEP will also administer the programme to the CAP (General) learners in their pursuit of technical and vocational education. The CAP General learners, at the Basic and Intermediate Levels, will be exposed to a pre-vocational programme in Mathematics and English Language and an Introduction to Skills Training which will prepare them to matriculate to the HEART Trust/NTA for further education and skills training. Complementarity between Literacy, Numeracy and skills training is the objective and thus a close working relationship between the HEART Trust/NTA and JFLL has been established.

Preparations will be completed by April 2015 for the virtual (on-line) delivery of all elements of the HSDEP where facilities allow.

On-going assessment is a critical feature of the HSDE programme so as to appropriately place learners and to track their progress on a pathway to them attaining their High School Diploma.

The HSDEP will be benchmarked against international standards. At the basic and secondary levels, assessments will be based on the CSEC and the **Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE)**. The TABE is a placement and diagnostic assessment

which measures mastery in literacy and numeracy in four areas (Mathematics, English Language, Vocabulary/Spelling and Reading). The diagnostic assessment will also produce a profile which will be used to:

- i) Track and monitor the progress of the learner
- ii) Inform the instructional decisions of the Facilitator
- iii) Recognize and reward students for improvements made and Facilitators for utilizing best practices in the classroom.

FEE STRUCTURE

The following is a breakdown of the fee structure for the HSDE Programme:

Levels	Cost (\$) per year (40 weeks)
Basic (Grade 1-6)	J\$12,000
Intermediate (Grade 7-9)	J\$15,000
Proficiency (Grade 10-11)	J\$15,000

The Programme is highly subsidized. The actual cost per learner per year is approximately Fifty Thousand Jamaican Dollars (J\$50,000). A payment plan is also in place. No learner will be turned away because of inability to pay but shared responsibility for costs, according to means, will be emphasized.

PROJECTIONS

JFLL has embarked on an ambitious recruitment drive to increase learner enrolment and retention in the HSDEP, and by extension, significantly improve youth and adult literacy rates. Where resources permit, JFLL projects an annual increase of learner enrolment at a rate of 30 per cent (30%), starting with seven thousand five hundred (7,500) for the 2015/2016 Academic Year. This will be achieved through strategic partnerships with Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), the Church, schools, libraries and the Private Sector.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The entity's 2014/2015 Budget is Two Hundred and Fifty Six Million Jamaican Dollars (J\$256M).

Twenty seven Million Jamaican Dollars (J\$27M) was allocated to the development of the HSDE. This covered testing, curriculum development, review of learning materials, school management system and the launch of the programme in July 2014.

Over Seven Million Jamaican Dollars (J\$7M) was spent on procuring computer and Information Communication Technology (ICT) equipment to re-tool centres island-wide.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ronald Thwaites', written over a horizontal line.

Ronald Thwaites, MP

Minister

January 27, 2015

File No.