



Draft Professional Standards for Teachers

Ministry of Education, Guyana

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Introduction

The Ministry of Education is committed to ensuring that our teachers enjoy the status and recognition they deserve. In addition to creating structures aimed at delivering excellent educational outcomes, various strategies have been implemented to foster a developmental culture within which teachers can realize self-actualization.

Teachers now enjoy a better quality professional experience; fewer teachers are leaving the profession and we are attracting larger numbers of intelligent, enthusiastic young people to the profession. There is, however, a tremendous amount of work to be done to solidify the professional standing of teachers and teaching.

A critical component in attaining that end, as well as its concomitant broader educational objectives, is the establishment of standards for the profession. Through a consultancy facilitated by the Guyana Improving Teacher Education Project, draft professional standards for teachers were developed after widespread consultation with various education stakeholders.

These standards capture the vision for the education system as defined by the senior policy makers and are informed by educational best practices in the Region and further afield. These draft standards capture the benchmarks against which performance within the profession can be measured and are vital in improving educational outcomes since the functions our teachers carry out are directly connected to student performance. Beyond that, such standards will facilitate the maintenance of established competencies of all education professionals and will bring to the profession a much needed degree of professional accountability.

This draft document gives all education stakeholders, especially teachers who are the direct beneficiaries, an opportunity to have direct input in defining the standards ultimately adopted for the profession. As such, your input is of significant importance in moving this process forward and we trust that you will embrace and make full use of this opportunity. Bear in mind that ultimately the greatest beneficiaries of the improved outcomes which will be facilitated through this initiative will be the students we love and serve.

Professional Standards

Professional Standards set expectations to achieve the desired educational outcomes. In general, the Standards speak to the performance of those who teach, lead and or supervise the education system. Undoubtedly, such performance is the collective outcome of pre-service training, on-going professional development and the experience gained through the practice of the profession. However, it is the education professional who is ultimately responsible for his or her impact on the system. Notably, assessment of the standards is based on practice, more so, than on examinations, hence outstanding professionals are able to exceed the expectations.

The Education Professional Standards are not intended as a tool for punitive action. They reflect professional consensus of what is desirable in the supervision, leadership and delivery of education and, provide a framework that permit professionals to assess themselves. The Standards advocate for research and practice to generate new knowledge and to maintain a responsive profession that takes a diagnostic approach to the delivery of education. Inclusiveness, equity, commitment and a desire for excellence inter alia are the under-pinning principles of the standards.

The standards focus on the quality of education. Professionals are expected to apply these standards within the variety of situations that arise as they provide services at the various levels of education. Unlike production factories, in education responses to inputs are not always predictable or similar in similar situations. Ultimately improved achievements will depend on the education professional's' commitment, competence and determination that all those who pass through the education system ought to and will achieve optimum success.

How the Standards should be used?

Professional standards will:

- a. be the reference point for development and assessment of training programmes for education professionals
- b. offer education professionals clear expectations of their performance
- c. provide a framework within which to assess the performance of professionals and to make objective decision concerning professional status
- d. bring coherence to the profession establishing synergy among its dimensions – pre-service training, on-going professional development, practice, evaluation and feedback
- e. be a reference point for public accountability
- f. enable professionals to identify their strengths and weaknesses and build their competences accordingly
- g. promote equity and inclusiveness in the approach of education professionals
- h. provide a basis to be self-evaluative in monitoring and assessing progress toward desired benchmarks

Teaching Standards

No attempt will be made to standardize teaching methods and approaches that would stifle the creative and innovation responses of teachers to the diverse needs of learners and the learning environment. The Teaching Standards offer the professional community specifications against which teachers are able to set goals for personal development and progress in the profession. The standards are multi-dimensional and give cognizance to the key props for learning to take place, namely: (a) a motivated and willing learner; (b)

effective teaching and learning and, (c) an enabling environment. The excellent teacher is one who is able to create, stimulate and integrate the props to get optimum student achievement.

Who gains entry into teacher training?

- i. Minimum entry level - Candidates with no less than five Caribbean Secondary (CSEC) subjects (including Mathematics and English) obtained at level 1 or 2.
- ii. Graduates of recognized, accredited universities and programmes
- iii. Any other equivalent qualifications approved by MoE/TSC
- iv. Mature entry (age, years of experience, performance, etc.)

Who is a trained teacher?

To be categorized and registered as a trained teacher, the individual must have obtained certification, having completed a professional programme, assessed by the Ministry of Education, accredited by The Guyana Accreditation Council, and approved by the Teaching Service Commission. Following this certification, the individual would be required to undergo at least one year of successful induction /mentorship in order to be licensed/certified as a trained teacher.

The guiding principles for the teaching standards

There are six guiding principles for the Standards:

1. Teachers know the subject(s) that they teach
2. Teachers know how to teach the subject(s) for which they are responsible
3. Teachers are committed to children in their care and effectively manage diversity to promote inclusiveness in the learning process
4. Teachers sharpen their professional skills
5. Teachers interact with parents and the community
6. Teachers conduct themselves in a manner that will uplift the profession

The guiding principles and standards are not mutually exclusive. Their inter-relation is manifested in overlaps in interpretation of the Standard statements. Because of the complexity of teaching and learning, added to the various social and economic changes that may impinge on the learning environment, it is recommended that teaching standards be reviewed every five years.

It is important to note that the teaching standards are inclusive and apply to all teachers including the special education teachers.

Assessment of the Standards

Teaching standards will be assessed through annual teacher appraisal, teacher portfolio to be presented to the principal or any other individual or body the Ministry of Education deem necessary to be provided with this information.

Definition of Terms

Classroom refers to all official approved settings within which teaching and learning take place.

Learners refer to all children and young people in a learning environment including those with special education needs.

Stakeholders refer to anyone having a vested interest in education, that is, teachers, parents, public and private sector employers and employees, community members, trade unions and professional associations.

Subjects refer to structured areas of learning identified in an approved syllabus or curriculum.

Teacher refers to trained individuals who imparts knowledge to another who is not his child with the intention that the learner will attain educational levels related to the education system.

TVET is an acronym for Technical Vocational Education and Training.

Well-being refers to the rights of children.

Teacher Portfolio refers to a compendium of evidence of teacher performance

Interpretation of the guiding principles in a set of standards

Quality outcomes of education can only be realized in a context of effective teaching and learning. To this end, the principles have been expanded into standards and further into sets of performance actions to guide the teacher towards achieving excellence in teaching and learning.

Teachers know the subjects that they teach

- Know the content of the subject they are teaching, its constructs and how it can be organized to bring about learning for children at various stages
- Understand the curriculum that embodies the subject(s) and see its relationship to the attainment of national goals
- Know how to integrate teaching subjects to reinforce knowledge, being able to identify related concepts in other subjects and use such concepts to strengthen the teaching subject
- Have clearly stated goals for each class and how to measure their achievements
- Access and keep abreast of knowledge and developments in the subject area, using technology and other sources of information

Teachers know how to teach the subjects for which they are responsible

- Develop in the learners critical thinking and ways to identify and solve their own problems
- Know and able to apply theories of learning and incorporate such understanding in the practice of teaching
- Engages in reflective teaching and action research to evaluate the impact of his or her instructional choices, actions and interactions on the achievements of the learners
- Enable learning through motivation creative thinking and innovative approaches to deliver subject matter
- Use effective verbal and non-verbal communication techniques as well as a variety of instructional media and technology to ensure that learners receive the intended message
- Foster competence, self-confidence and a desire for knowledge through a collaborative, supportive and an interactive teaching and learning environment
- Interpret and integrate national goals into class organization and management to inculcate values and attitudes for social, cultural and economic development

Teachers manage the learning process recognizing diversity among learners and fostering inclusiveness, care and commitment in teaching and learning experiences

- Hold high expectations for all students and perform their role as facilitators of learning
- Identify learning differences and the barriers that impede learning and demonstrate competency in adapting instructions to meet the diverse learning needs of students with exceptionalities
- Stay on track with individual student progress assessing the various learning outcomes of the subject areas and utilizing such outcomes to diagnose and address learning needs in a holistic manner
- Know the background knowledge that learners from various groups bring to their education and adjust their methods to take advantage of early positive learning experiences of all learners
- Set the foundation for lifelong learning in building student capabilities for problem-solving, self-assessment, research and self-learning
- Participate in extra-curricular activities to assist various dimensions of the development of learners
- Within the constraints of school class structure, create opportunities for group learning and individual attention to meet the variable needs of learners

- Encourage social interaction and character development through a variety of group structures
- Know, understand and execute responsibilities concerning child welfare, respect for all learners and abide by all enacted laws, regulations and the Safety and Security guidelines of the Ministry of Education.

Teachers sharpen their professional skills

- Rigorously assess ones' performance in the teaching and learning process, collaborate with peers to critically examine ones performance and create a framework for improvement
- Seek out and pursue opportunities for improving mastery of content and methodology
- Maintain higher order functioning through strengthening abilities to reason, reflect, make fair judgment, evaluate, analyze and interpret
- Learn from experiences in the profession and, in a professional manner, question traditional/official approaches that may be ineffective for the learner

Teachers interact with parents and communities

- Communicate with parents/caregiver to stimulate their interest in their children' progress and reinforce learning always giving priority interest to the learner
- Engage parents and community in promoting values and attitudes that are consistent with national educational goals
- Engage community members to build trust, to foster open communication and to work collaboratively with parents to benefit students achievement levels
- Put professional responsibility in the forefront in face of challenges involving the community

Conduct of teachers to uplift the profession

- Act with the knowledge that teaching is a public activity and teachers are constantly being scrutinized and assessed by members of the public
- Commit to the success of learners as individuals and of the institution as a whole
- Teachers have a moral responsibility to themselves and those whom they serve
- Teachers are members of professional bodies that enable sharing of experiences and opportunities for advancement in professional competences
- Teachers act as positive role models
- Adhere to professional code of ethics and standards

Leadership Standards for Principals

The Leadership Standards for Principals are designed to provide the knowledge and skills necessary for proficiency in leadership. They reinforce commitment to high expectations for student achievement while promoting the school as a true community of learning.

The Ministry of Education values for principals is used as the core standard to determine appropriate content and process skills. The standard is aligned to Organization of American States OAS, CARICOM and international standards. The relationship between knowledge and application is crucial to each principal's success and should be emphasized. The performance standards encompass fifteen major areas, and they are:

Assessment – The collecting and analyzing of student performance data to identify patterns of achievement and underachievement in order to design and implement appropriate instructional interventions

A cohesive and comprehensive system is in place to ensure that all teachers use assessment data to design and adjust instruction to maximize student achievement.

A variety of effective and balanced assessment techniques is routinely and systematically implemented by teachers as part of a comprehensive school-based assessment and evaluation system.

Behaviour Management – Implementing and monitoring a behavioural plan which reinforces appropriate behaviour for students while in the learning community.

The principal knows, understands and applies the behaviour management policy of the Ministry of Education.

Community Involvement and Support – The school as a community of learning involves parents, and community members as active participants. Everyone collaborates to help the school achieve its continuous improvement targets and short- and long-range goals.

Set the school's vision and mission on the basis for all aspects of continuous improvement. All stakeholders within the school have achieved consensus regarding their shared sense of vision and mission, which serves as the basis for all facets of the continuous improvement process.

The principal reinforces the continuous improvement process through active and sustained involvement of student, family and community stakeholders.

Curriculum – A system for managing and facilitating student achievement and learning based upon content and performance standards.

The principal will ensure that the school's curriculum is sequenced, organized and aligned with the Ministry of Education. Teachers know what to teach, students know what they are learning and information is available to parents and community stakeholders.

Principal ensures that the teachers are engaged in a process of collaborating planning for curriculum implementation and they agree on core content and required student performance criteria.

Principal directs the adaptation of the curriculum based on the learning needs of the students (benchmarking).

Principal ensures that teachers use a systematic process for monitoring the implementation of the curriculum.

Ethical Behaviour – Acts with integrity, fairness, and honesty in all aspect of carrying out the responsibility of a principal.

The principal acts with integrity, fairness and honesty in an ethical manner with all stakeholders of the school.

Evaluation – Monitoring the success of all teachers and students in the learning environment Utilizing summative and formative evaluation measures to manage and respond to the needs of the learning process.

A variety of evaluative assessment tools are utilized to provide feedback measures to ensure accountability for all participants engaged in the educational process.

Financial Management – Acts in accordance to the legislation and regulations as applicable in ensuring the successful financial management of school funds.

The principal collaborates with the Ministry and ensures that all fiscal management requirements are adhered to with the utmost regards.

Reinforces the ability of the school to achieve its continuous improvement goals while ensuring the academic success of all students

Governance – The process and procedure associated with how the school facilitates and utilizes the resources for the continuous improvement of the organization.

The principal should know and apply the process and procedures on how the school facilitates and utilizes the resources for maximum output.

Planning and Organization – The processes, procedures, structures, and products that focus the operation of a school on ensuring attainment of standards and high levels of learning for all students.

A current school vision and mission are the basis for all aspects of continuous improvement. All stakeholders within the learning community have achieved consensus regarding their shared sense of vision and mission, which serves as the basis for all facets of the continuous improvement process.

The principal allocates resources and ensures that the school facility is adequately maintained, clean, and conducive for teaching and learning.

Strategic combination of human and financial resources are effectively selected and used to ensure the academic success of all learners.

A comprehensive planning process is in place and it results in the creation and implementation of a school improvement plan to guide the continuous process for the school.

Plant Management – Direct key initiatives and appropriate uses of the physical school plant.

The principal operates and maintains the school plant within the policy guidelines of the Ministry of Education.

Professional Learning – Professional learning is the means by which teachers, principals and other school and ministry employees acquire, enhance and refine the knowledge, skills, and commitment necessary to create and support high levels of learning for all students.

The content knowledge of professional learning is reinforced by the principal's understanding and employs strategies to promote professional competency. The principal also ensures that teachers use research-based teaching strategies and assessment processes, and involves the families and stakeholders in promoting student learning.

Safety and Security – A system for preventing and managing school violence and reduce safety risks and liability in an effort to improve relationships in schools and the wider community.

The principal knows, understands and applies the safety and security policy of the Ministry of Education.

The principal identifies the strengths and areas to build upon for the creation of a safe and secure school environment.

School Culture – The norms, values, standards, and practices associated with the school as a learning community committed to ensuring student achievement and organizational productivity.

The principal creates and maintain a school culture that reflects norms, values, standards and practices that reinforce the academic, social, emotional and relational growth for each student and a commitment to the professional growth of all teachers.

Teaching and Learning – Designing and implementing teaching – learning – assessment tasks and activities to ensure that all students achieve proficiency

The curriculum delivered is aligned with the Ministry of Education and serve as a guide for successful teaching practices ensuring that teachers and students know, do and understand the requirements for each subject area, grade level and grading period.

Principal sets high expectations for all learners that are consistently evident, with teachers and students playing an active role in setting personal learning goals and monitoring their own progress based on clear evaluative criteria.

High and clear expectations are established by all teachers and students working in partnership. Students are engaged in work that requires higher-order reasoning.

Technology – Planning and implementing the integration of technological and electronic tools in teaching, learning, management, research and communication responsibilities

The principal creates and articulates a clear vision of technology integration for the school community. He/She uses and encourages the use of technology, telecommunications and information systems to enrich curriculum, teaching, learning, and assessment.

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