Community Participation in Educational Reform:
A Jamaican Experience

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto

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**Abstract**

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This thesis aims to explore the issue of community and parental involvement in the reform process of the Jamaican system of education. The research will address the following issues:

1. What is the value and effectiveness of community and parental involvement in the process of school management at the institution to be studied?

2. What measures or strategies are in place to encourage and strengthen the home-school relationship?

3. What are some of the challenges hindering the home-school relationship?

4. What strategies can be recommended to address the challenges, and strengthen the home-school relationship, and the overall management of the school system in question?
It is hoped that the findings rendered from this research will provide valuable insight and practical recommendations to the school administration at the research site; and also serve as a guide to educational policy-makers and practitioners as they attempt to enhance and strengthen the home/school relationship, a significant educational benefit.
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While doing this thesis I had the opportunity of conducting my research at my alma mater. Being there I was constantly reminded of the school's motto, my motto: 
Hard Work, Brings True”. This is true. But if I did not have the network of support that I had during this endeavour, I would not have been able to complete it.

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RES SEVERA VERUM GAUDIUM!
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Chapter 1
Introduction

A common characteristic shared by plants, animals and human society is the inherent ability to grow and develop. Regarding these changes in human society, Fagerlind and Saha (1989) have argued:

... these changes are based on the assumption that both society and individuals have innate biological, psychological and sociological capacities, which can be evaluated, in terms of their level of actualization. For example, individuals can be physically healthy or sick, happy or sad and participative or not participative in their social environment. Likewise, societies can be judged as efficient or inefficient in making possible the actualization of their human potential... (pp.3).

For the possibility of social actualization to occur, social scientists have postulated that a process of modernization and development must be initiated.

Drawing upon classical sociological assumptions, social scientists, economists, and students of development have attempted to explain the inhibiting factors of development, so as to prescribe the conditions necessary to stimulate development in the developing nations. The proponents of the development discourse theorized that society, like humans, experiences a “single-fixed” or “unidirectional” movement towards social evolution. But before this process could occur, drastic transformation had to be initiated in the social, political, and economic structures of the developing nations. To accommodate this transformation, the “internal obstacles”-archaic social, political and economic institutions and inappropriate value systems- had to be replaced by modern attributes-capital, educational institutions, and cultural value systems and patterns of behaviour- diffused from the centers of modernity.

The twentieth century has witnessed tremendous efforts by developing nations to bring about substantial social and economic change in their societies. The advent of the development discourse, with its emphasis on the human capital theory, has established education as a significant factor in the development process. This is attributed to the prevailing discursive assumption that, through education, the investment in human capital will facilitate and maintain the much needed and sought after economic growth and development and social change. In other words, education has been established as both a “condition” and a “stimulant” for economic development.
Both governments and individuals gave high priority to education and the development of human resources during the period. This expansion in the stock of human capital took place against a backdrop of considerable political change, as many countries achieved political independence, and took responsibility for determining their educational policies and choices. Governments gave high priority to education in allocating resources, reflecting both a strong political will to generalize access to education, in the conviction it would foster national unity and satisfy social justice and respect for an essential human right, and at the same time an urgent need to develop their human resources in order to contribute to the economic and social growth of their societies (Hallack 1990: 5).

Since gaining independence, the condition of development has been top priority on the political, social and economic agenda of Caribbean states. The development agenda served two particular needs and functions. According to the development strategy, educating the pool of skilled labour would be paramount to stimulate the "accumulation of human capital" and a "sustained economic growth and development". In addition, education, by social standards, was the route to social mobility, and the recognized agent of social change needed to address the socio-economic disparities inherited from the colonial predecessors.

This faith in the development and modernization doctrine resulted in widespread commitment by Caribbean governments to invest in large-scale educational reform and expansion. Gordon (1963) reiterates:

...the process of decolonization set in motion political and economic changes which led to important quantitative and qualitative changes in the school system. The system of tertiary education was developed and articulated with the high school, the number of schools increased and high school places were significantly expanded. The elementary school system was modified by the creation first of senior, and then of junior secondary and new secondary schools, which extended the education of those who failed to get into the academic high schools... (p.182).

Despite significant quantitative and qualitative expansions of educational systems in the Caribbean region, a number of challenges continue to plague the educational system in the form of gross inefficiencies and inequalities. Farrell (1994) describes:

...while significant quantitative expansions had been achieved in many educational systems, very large numbers of children were still without schooling and many more received minimal exposure to education; the absolute number of illiterate adults was increasing due to population growth in excess of educational expansion; education and its benefits
continued to be unequally distributed and the quality of education provided was low and appeared to be declining... (p. 4501).

The conditions described were also exacerbated by the international economic recession of the 1970s and 1980s. The crippling effect of the economic crisis negatively affected the capacity of the Caribbean nations to further finance the educational change process. The development thrust has not produced the anticipated results of "sustained economic growth and the accumulation of human capital", thus leaving the developing nations in a state of arrested development.

The debt crisis and the implementation of policy measures designed to achieve structural adjustments of the economy reduced the financial resources available to all social services. Despite these circumstances, the governments of these newly independent states continued to embark upon social development initiatives. As a result, development aid was mobilized in the form of loans and grants from the World Bank and other international development agencies to implement social development programs. In the case of Jamaica, this nation has strongly committed itself to social and economic development. As an indication, the government of Jamaica initiated a Social and Economic Support Program with a human resources development emphasis.

Within this context of social and economic development, educational reform has taken on greater significance for the government of Jamaica and its people. The government has recognized that in order for it to realize its social and economic development mandates, and to stimulate economic growth and development and social change, the education of its citizens and therefore the development of the education sector must be a central component of the development initiative. Furthermore, there has been growing discontent among parents, teachers and students regarding the gross inefficiencies embedded within the educational system, and the varying quality and inequitable access to educational opportunities and provisions. In response, the government has invested in large-scale educational reform and expansion. In this context of the educational change now underway in Jamaica, it is important to understand that the home-school-community, of which parental involvement and participation is a key component, is important to the educational change process in two critical ways: (a) it lends itself to the effective management of school systems; and (b)
the establishment of an effective and representative system of education. This research project is based within this context of socio-political change.

There is growing acceptance in the field of education that the home-school relationship is a crucial and integral factor in the effective management of schools, and the overall educational change process. This issue has become relevant to the Jamaican education context due to the education reform process now underway, which is exploring alternative and effective means of educational management. In addition, parents and school officials are also demanding that the education process be more effective and representative.

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It is hoped that the findings rendered from this research will provide valuable insight and practical recommendations to the school administration at the research site; and also serve as a guide to educational policy-makers and practitioners as they attempt to enhance and strengthen the home/school relationship, a significant educational benefit.
Systems are shaped by the social, political, and economic context in which they have their genesis. Thus, it is necessary to focus our attention on the "sociological dimensions" of the educational systems. That is, the link between education and society, the structure of the internal dynamics and contradictions of this system, and the sociological function and impact of education on society, and society on education. Cerych (1971) confirms that the "sociological dimension" is an important conceptual and analytical framework for understanding the issues related to the educational system. There is an obvious link between education and society: these systems mirror, and to a large degree, interact and inform each other. One could therefore reason that the aforementioned "sociological dimensions" are essential in establishing a useful analytical framework. It is with this in mind that the Jamaican system of education must be explored.

In order to understand the socio-political context of the educational development in Jamaica, and to be able to appreciate the educational change process, it is important that we examine the development of the Jamaican system of education.
Chapter 2

Education and Society in Jamaica: The Development of the Jamaican System of Education.

A Brief History

On his second voyage to the New World, Christopher Columbus discovered Jamaica in 1492. The island then became and remained a possession of the Spanish Crown for 150 years. Its favourable location, fertile soil, and pleasant climate made it very attractive to the European powers in the period of colonization. Britain, subsequently, captured the island in 1655 and retained it against serious challenges until 1962, when it became independent.

The advent of sugar played an integral role in the social, political and economic development of the Jamaican society. As a British colony, Jamaica flourished as a sugar plantation society employing a large labour force of African slaves and, to a lesser extent, East Indian and Chinese indentured labour. The establishment of the sugar plantation society has determined the racial mix of the population and the institution of a social class hierarchy and structure, where class and colour bear strong correlation. The Whites and the fairer skinned people-a small, powerful elite group-occupy the apex of the social ladder and are often descendants of the wealthy plantocracy. The majority, who are primarily African descendants, occupy the base of the social ladder and account for the semi-skilled, the unskilled, and the unemployed. The middle of the social hierarchy has evolved out of the intermixture between the top and the bottom strata producing an influential group of professionals, technicians, and bureaucrats. In retrospect, the advent of the sugar plantation system has been the single most significant element in the evolution of the racial mix, social structure, and educational development of modern Jamaica.

The Development of Public Elementary Education

The development of the public elementary and the secondary education system emerged as a result of the inevitable changes that occurred in the social, political, and economic structure of the Jamaican society, namely emancipation and the decline of the sugar economy. With the prospect of Emancipation looming, the colonial government was confronted with the dilemma of how to address the profound socio-economic

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implications of emancipation on the social structure of the Jamaican society. How would the elite continue, after emancipation, to secure the maintenance of order, stability, and economic viability in those colonies where the social and economic structures had been largely supported by slave labour? According to Turner (1987):

The coercive laws, the repressive police actions, and the barbaric punitive measures that had been instituted to demoralize and control the slave population could not, after 1838, legally be used to hold together the fabric of a free society (p. 60).

The fact is that emancipation posed an indelible threat to the social, political, and economic supremacy of the colonial elite. What new method or methods of social control would now be utilized?

Turner (1987) emphasizes:

...the plantation-based economy determined the development of the pyramidal social structure characterized by a small elite of white landowners, estate managers, and government officials and a broad base of largely black estate and general labourers, peasant cultivators, artisans and unemployed. The British and Jamaican governments intended to maintain and reinforce this social structure because it was their assumption that the white elite was the repository of civilized values without whom the society would degenerate into barbarism, while the ex-slaves were needed to provide a cheap and reliable labour force for the plantation... . (p. 54-55).

Emancipation was a threat to the established status quo, and therefore measures had to be taken to secure the social order of the upper class. Hence, in anticipation of these changes, the colonial government, in a report prepared by Reverend Sterling in 1835, demanded that the British government institute government-supported popular education in the West Indies. Sterling warned that ignoring the report would have an irreversible and irreconcilable impact on the colonial society. Turner (1987) illustrates that according to Sterling:

...if measures were not taken to keep the mass of the people within the civilizing reach of British influence and values, society would surely collapse. He [Sterling] feared that any drift away from the plantation society, combined with the personality of the Negro, which, he [Sterling] claimed was characterized by ignorance, vagrancy, debauchery, deceitfulness, contented ignorance, would prove disastrous to civilized life in the colonies... .(p.55).
Consequently, there was an apparent need for a new mechanism of social control.

In response to Sterling’s report, the British government established the idea of public education in 1833 and presented it in the fifth resolution of the House of Commons along with the tabling of the Emancipation Act. According to Shirley (1963), the Emancipation Act offered the first opportunity to provide schooling for the mass of people. The Act of Emancipation included a grant of money by the Imperial Government to promote Negro Education in the ex-slave colonies: this became known as the Negro Education Grant, 1835-45 (19). This development represented the first of many efforts to develop and manage the large-scale educational development in the British colonies. It was also the most ambitious endeavour of its time, only to be rivaled by post-independence expansion efforts (Miller, 1989 & Shirley, 1963). However, it is important to ask: what kind of education was being implemented and for whom was it intended?

As already established, the development of the public education system in Jamaica was a direct result of Emancipation (1834). In order to set the foundation of the educational system, the colonial administrators depended highly on the institutional transfer of the British system of education. This meant that Christian institutions provided the delivery of education, and it was a segregated or dual system of education. There was no reason to change the nature of the education system. During emancipation and for many decades later, the original intention of education was not to encourage upward social mobility, but to maintain the status quo. Given the reality of a free-slave society, it was the assumption of the elite that without their influence over the society, it would degenerate into barbarism. Therefore, it was imperative that they explore other means of maintaining the social order.

One of the main emphases of Sterling’s report outlined that the free slave society would prove detrimental to civilized life of the colonial society. As a result, there was an aggressive effort on behalf of the colonial administrators to develop and manage two separate systems of education. Miller (1989) in his observation of the development of the educational system in Jamaica has illustrated that public education in a “real sense [was] two separate systems of education” (206). This is evident in the development of the primary or elementary school system, which under the jurisdiction of the Department of Education was established to cater mainly to the lower strata of the society namely,
the ex-slaves and the high school system specifically for the upper class. According to Lawson (1998), the education structure that emerged was not intended to assist the black people to make the transition from slavery to freedom. Nor was the objective to offer them an opportunity to participate as full citizens in a society moving towards democracy. Rather, Lawson quoting Turner, argues that education was to provide:

...good moral training to the children of the working class and to develop habit-custom-not book training, not pure mathematics, not trigonometry, but habit training, doctrine, and discipline (Turner 1987, p. 60). Consequently, all the major components of the educational project were enlisted to fulfill the colonial educational mandate. (1998, p. 40)

In other words, the development of the system of education was formulated as a new mechanism of control and a new way of reaching into the minds of the people in order to socialize them in a desired pattern of behaviour. This illustrates that the colonial supported educational efforts were aimed at perpetuating the social class structure, and at the same time, creating a stable and docile labour force.

In order to achieve the colonial educational mandates, the church as an institution, played a critical role in providing church-based instruction at the elementary and secondary schools levels, and also in establishing the learning objectives on behalf of the colonial administrators. The religious bodies were able to establish secondary schools called "church-schools" for personal and denominational needs. The Baptist, Presbyterians, Methodists and Wesleyan churches were among the first to establish and institute religious based instruction throughout the emancipated British colonies. The religious bodies were charged with the dual responsibility of educating the masses as a means of integrating the community on the basis of English culture.

According to Hurdle (1980):

...in Jamaica education as an institution arrived first with the missionizing religious bodies whose task was financed by donations, which each missionizing group procured from Europe and England. The sole expressed aim of such educational endeavour was the indoctrination of the mass of heathen. (p. 56).

However, prior to the emancipatory period of 1834, education was only provided for the children of the free and wealthy classes. Hurdle (1980) argues that the aim of education, during this period and for many decades after, was to prepare the children of the ruling class for positions in government or for secondary and overseas education in the mother
colony. From its inception, education in the colonies was established as an upper class social activity.

It was an educational system that found its roots in the anxieties of the upper class who were concerned about equipping their children with a prestigious classical type education, fashionable in Europe during the period of expansion of the metropole overseas. (Hurdle 1980:58).

It must be emphasized that there wasn't an immediate need to develop an education system or a national identity in the colonies. Riak (1983) argues that the colonists had no intention for large-scale educational development because, the colonists viewed their "stay in the colony as temporary", and the societies as "transient and a political appendage of England" (p.46). Therefore, they retained their loyalty to the mother country without developing a feeling of interest or identity with the islands. This was to the detriment of the educational system and the national identity of the Caribbean community.

As we have established, the changes in the socio-economic nature of the Jamaican society, to a large extent, influenced the nature and structure of the Jamaican educational system. We will go on to see that there was an aggressive effort on behalf of the upper-class to put in place an educational system that reflected, reproduced and perpetuated the British norms, values, and patterns of behaviour. As a result, the public elementary school system, as opposed to the secondary school system, received little or no attention and management from the colonial administration. Secondary school education developed and expanded at the expense of the public school education system. The socially divisive nature and structure of Jamaican society would heavily impinge on the Jamaican public education system, significantly determining the access, quality and efficiency of educational opportunities and provisions. This character of the Jamaican system of education would become one of the major issues addressed in future educational reform efforts.

**Formation of the Secondary School Education System**

The secondary school education system was established in 1879. Its development can be divided into three periods: 1879 to 1911, 1912 to 1943, and 1943 to the present. The periods under review are essential to the understanding of the nature and structure of the present system of education, and the purpose of the current reform
efforts underway. King (1979) in her research on educational development in Jamaica provides a compelling analysis of the development and expansion of secondary school education with particular emphasis on the formative period, 1879-1911. In her analysis King (1979) points out:

...the secondary schools developed in Jamaica at this time because the decision-makers felt that the middle classes deserved and needed an education superior to that being offered to the poorer classes in the elementary schools, and because, with the decline in the fortunes of sugar, the majority of the white ruling class could no longer afford to send their children “home” to England to be educated... .(p. 42).

1879 to 1911
The Jamaica Schools Commission and the Piggott Report.

The first sustained effort to implement a system of secondary education materialized in 1879 under the direction of the Musgrave Administration. Towards this end, the colonial administrators passed Law 34 of 1879 establishing the Jamaica Schools Commission. This independent statutory body was invested with the responsibility of administrating the management of the newly established secondary school system and “providing education of a higher grade for those classes of the community who would value it, if it were placed in their reach but whose means do not enable them to send their children to Europe for the purpose of receiving it” (King 1979:44). Fashioned after the English Endowed Schools, with all intent and purpose, the colonial administrators hoped to extend the British educational ideas and institutions to British subjects everywhere. The Jamaica Schools Commission would play an integral role in the development and expansion of secondary school education in Jamaica.

In their capacity as administrator of the newly formed secondary school system, the Jamaica Schools Commission assumed the role as a corporate body which:

...could sue and sued, and could buy and sell property. It was an unpaid Commission and was to consist of a chairman, a vice-chairman, five members appointed by the governor and holding office during his office. It was to meet at least every two months at a set place. Minutes had to be kept and an annual report submitted to the governor in Privy Council. The Commission could also make or revoke rules for effecting the law, it could receive property and funds for the purpose of the law, and it could raise loans... . (King 1979:44).

One of the first initiatives of the Jamaica Schools Commission was the establishment of the Jamaica High School (now known as Jamaica College). This was
made financially possible from the property and funds made available from the Wanton Free School. The purpose of the Jamaica High School was to provide a liberal education and promote higher education. The curriculum reflected this purpose. It consisted of Latin, Greek, mathematics, natural science, and modern languages. The doors of the school were open to a select few—those who could afford such an elite education. In an administrative capacity, the Jamaica Schools Commission appointed and paid masters and visited and inspected the school once a month. According to King (1979):

...Jamaica Schools Commission was to have definite power of the school, governing the admittance and removal of scholars, the number of scholars and foundationers, the admission of day school scholars, the discipline of the school, the course of study, and the system of examination, the appointment and remuneration of examiners, the auditing of school accounts, and even the establishment of prizes and exhibitions... (p. 45).

The Jamaica High School was therefore under the sole jurisdiction of the Jamaica Schools Commission. With all intent and purpose, the Jamaica Schools Commission established the Jamaica High School as a first-grade school, the apex of the secondary school education system. In the case of the other endowed schools that were re-organized in 1896, they were to provide high school education for the poorer whites. These schools were managed by a board of Trustees who acted in an intermediary capacity, while the Jamaica Schools Commission concentrated their efforts on the development of the elite Jamaica High School.

Since its inception, the Jamaica Schools Commission had been instrumental in the development and expansion of the secondary school education system. By the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, the Commission felt sufficiently confident to accept the offer of the Colonial Office to make available one of Her Majesty’s Inspectors of Schools—Mr. H. Piggott—to evaluate the secondary school system. King (1979) has summarized the Piggott Report (1911) and presented the following:

- The total number of students in 12 schools visited was 842, of which 534 were boys and 308 were girls. The figures are equivalent to approximately one percent of the population of boys and girls of their age of all classes together.

- Most of the particular boys had not attended school at all until they were, according to Piggott, "too old to obtain the full benefit of the training to be obtained from
secondary school. The average duration of school life of the proceeding had been 2.5 years.

- Many of the high achievers were unable to complete their course of study because of financial reasons.

- The government was giving grant-in-aid to the other well-to-do schools, while neglecting the needy schools. Furthermore, accessibility to higher education for poor white students was restricted because scholarships were limited.

- Unqualified teachers made up almost 50% of the teaching staff in schools visited.

The conclusion of the Piggott Report (1911) emphasized the need for improvements in the areas of attendance of boys in school, duration of school life, access to scholars, teacher training, and financial assistance to schools that are in need. The report made the following recommendations:

- The implementation of a scheme to improve the quality of teachers, especially men, teaching in secondary schools.

- The establishment of a scholarship for girls to attend university

- Better provision for girls to receive secondary education

- Less ambitious and less academic curriculum for day school than for boarders

- The engaging of an art teacher for Kingston schools.

- The implementation of measures which would extend the average length of school life of secondary school pupils.

- The institution of an annual conference of headmasters, headmistresses, and assistants in high schools.

- The phasing out of the Cambridge University Preliminary examinations.

- The use of uniform admission registers in schools and improvement in record keeping.

- The provision of school libraries to improve general reading and teaching of English. (Miller 1979:110).

The Piggott Report (1911), the first Royal commissioned report, was a significant event in the process of educational development in Jamaica. It highlighted the development and expansion of secondary school education under the direction of the
Jamaica Schools Commission. In so doing, the report legitimatized and endorsed the work of the Commission. Furthermore, Piggott's study functioned as a road map for future educational reform efforts. In other words, it symbolized a launching pad for educational reform efforts that characterized the educational system in the twentieth century and beyond that would endeavour to address the issue of quality education for all.

**1912-1943**

Miller (1979) has observed that the years 1912-1943 constitute a distinct period of high school history in that they fall between the Piggott evaluation of high schools of 1911, which marked the end of the formative period, and the Kandel Report of 1943, which set the policy framework for the post-war reform of secondary education in Jamaica. The period of 1912-1943 includes significant reforms of high schooling following on the Piggott evaluation of 1911, and is essential for understanding the post-war reforms and therefore the current structure of the secondary school system (109). The developments occurring during the era under review will be explored in the following periods: The Piggott Report, 1912-1920; New Framework for Secondary School Education, 1920-1930; The Kandel Report, 1930-1943.

**The New Definition of Secondary Education**

In response to Piggott's recommendation, the secondary school system underwent a number of significant educational developments between 1912 and 1920. The first of which was the enactment of Law 34 of 1914 signifying the "New Definition of Secondary Education" which ushered in a number of educational provisions for teachers and girls. The Piggott Report (1911) was the catalyst that the Jamaica Schools Commission utilized to intensify their efforts to further the development and expansion of secondary education. This sentiment is reflected in the Annual Report of the Commission (1911-1912) where the Commission stated that:

> The Commission feels that all who take an interest in education will appreciate the value of Piggott's report which, with its criticisms and suggestions, is on the whole favourable to most of the schools inspected and gives proof of the unstilted labour on the part of one who has brought experience and unbiased judgment to bear on the subject. The report affords a most useful account of the state of secondary education in Jamaica today and gives wise and helpful advice as to the development of secondary education in Jamaica in the near future (Miller 1979:112).
In response to this most favourable assessment, the Jamaica Schools Commission in 1912 prepared a deputation based on Piggott's recommendations for the Governor. The deputation included the following issues that, to the Jamaica Schools Commission, needed immediate attention:

- The inadequacy of the provisions for girls compared to boys.
- The desirability of having scholarships which would permit girls to attend university abroad.
- The inefficiency and expensiveness of the staffing of very small schools and the need for grants for schools.
- The need for a scholarship scheme to allow untrained teachers to complete their studies abroad.
- The acquisition of an art master for Kingston schools.
- The need for a good history and geography of Jamaica for use in the higher classes in schools and training college.

(Miller 1979: 112).

Consequently, with the development and expansion of the secondary education system in full gear, and to better administrate and manage the secondary system,

The Government in 1914, on the advice of the Commission, consolidated into a single law, the laws governing secondary education which had been passed over the years and to define secondary education on a different basis. These were accomplished through Law 34 of 1914. (Miller, 1979, p. 113)

Previously, Law 34 of 1879 defined secondary education as a “higher grade of education provided for those classes of the community who would value it if placed within their reach but whose means do not enable them to send their children to Europe for the purpose of receiving it” (p. 12). Law 34 of 1879 essentially defined secondary education as middle-class education. However, under the provision of Law 34 of 1914 secondary school education was re-defined as the following:

... a course of education which does not consist chiefly of elementary instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic but which includes instruction in Latin, the English Language and Literature, Modern Language, Mathematics, Natural and Applied Science, Commercial Arithmetic, the Principles of Agriculture, Commercial Geography, Book-Keeping, Shorthand, Drawing or in some of such studies, and generally in the higher branches of knowledge... . (p.14)
In essence, with Law 34 of 1914, the Jamaica Schools Commission was prescribing a new way of seeing and experiencing secondary education. This new development necessitated the effective ‘change’ of the secondary school from its class-based orientation to a system defined by content or curriculum.

World War I inflicted a serious blow on the efforts of the Jamaica Schools Commission to implement, fully and effectively, their proposal for educational change in the secondary school system. But, the Jamaica Schools Commission did not allow the war to bring their efforts to a halt. Two significant developments during this war period were the Commission’s conclusion that government assistance was needed to support the development and expansion project of secondary education; and the establishment of scholarships for girls. First, in 1916, the Commission was under the view that in order to provide a satisfactory level of secondary education, the income from fees and endowments had to be increased, especially for smaller schools. In addition, according to Miller (1979), the Commission thought that providing pensions for secondary school teachers was an essential element in improving the quality of staff. Improved salaries appeared to be only one part of the solution to the problem not only of attracting men to the profession of teaching, but of keeping them there (p.115). But, the pension scheme for teachers could only be afforded with the assistance of the government. The government-supported scheme would not materialize until the reform policy of 1920s-1930s.

Secondly, the Commission noted the “inadequacy of the provisions for girls compared to boys” and the “desirability of having scholarships which would permit girls to attend university abroad”. Upon the recommendation of the Piggott report, the Commission towards this endeavour decided that “in order to adjust the provision for the education of girls and provide more opportunities for secondary education it was more economical and simpler to bring the existing private secondary schools into the public system than try to build new schools” (Miller 1979:115). As a result, the church, which already had established itself as “the largest and the most stable element of the private secondary system”, was incorporated into the public secondary system. This was a significant development.
On the eve of the Piggott evaluation, the period 1912-1920 was characterized by the intensified efforts of the Jamaica Schools Commission to put into place recommendations that would furnish the improvement of the secondary education system. A number of significant educational changes were proposed and realized, namely, the “new definition of secondary education” under Law 34 of 1914, the thrust towards government supported assistance, and the incorporation of the church-run private schools into the public secondary education system. The following period of the 1920-1930 would see to the implementation of a number of the reform policies proposed in the preceding period of 1912-1920. The first to be established was the move towards government assistance.

**New Framework for Secondary School Education.** As stated earlier, the Jamaica Schools Commission recognized that in order to provide “a satisfactory level of secondary education” and “to improve the quality of staff”, it was imperative that the government be solicited for financial support. The Commission, so as to gain government financial support, prepared a memorandum for the Governor, which contained the following:

- Secondary schools are needed in the island to supply personnel for the government services, the professional and the mercantile, and agricultural services of the country.

- While a few wealthy citizens could afford to send their children to Europe for secondary education, the majority of those interested in secondary education in the island had to depend on education provided locally.

- The decrease in purchasing power of the money had made it impossible for the schools to accrue savings from their annual income that would be used for the gradual expansion of the schools.

- Efficient secondary education and secondary schools depended on efficient staff. Existing salaries being paid in the schools were insufficient to attract competent staff. It was undesirable to continue the practice whereby senior boys and senior girls in schools were promoted to positions of junior masters and mistresses in the secondary system.

- Bounteous government aid was being given in England and other progressive countries, and the feeling was that, the situation in Jamaica required similar help from the government. The assistance should be in a certain form and schools should meet certain criteria before they would be eligible for such assistance.

Two kinds of grants were envisaged:
- Special grants for building and equipment to permit the expansion of the secondary system.
- Annual grants to assist salaries and services.  

(Miller 1979:119).

The government in response to and in support of the Commission’s recommendations developed a “New framework for Secondary School Education” which included the following provisions:

- A grant-in-aid for secondary school.
- A pension scheme for secondary school teachers.
- Scholarship for children living in parishes without secondary schools.

To solidify the “New Framework for Secondary Education”, the government passed Law 25 of 1926. Miller (1979) reiterates:

...the reformed structure of secondary education was realized with Law 25 of 1926 which consisted of the original endowed and government schools under the Jamaica Schools Commission, augmented by church schools through the grant-in-aid system. Both types of schools would be able to pay salaries through annual grants from the government and to expand their existing facilities through special grants from the government from time to time. In addition the teachers would enjoy a pension and teachers recruited from abroad would have the Jamaican service count for pension within the English pension scheme...[And finally] children who lived in parishes without secondary schools or without trust fund which would provide scholarships for them, would now be eligible for special government scholarships specifically provided for those parishes... (p.125).

The Kandel Report.

In Miller’s analysis, the period of 1930-1943 rendered little or no changes in the reformed system of education. He attributes the “compartmentalization of the educational administration” as a major factor that has restricted any form of educational reform at this time in secondary school history (Miller 1979:125)

The economic depression of the 1930’s seriously impacted on any effort to further expand secondary school education. According to Miller (1979), the impact of the Depression on secondary education was indicated by the decrease in enrollment, reduction in staff in several schools, and even reduction in salaries. However, the most profound effect was probably the unemployment of high school leavers. In the 1930’s, the annual output of secondary school leavers was under 700. Unemployment was
clearly as a result of the depressed economy, but the responsibility for unemployment was laid squarely at the feet of the students and schools (p.126).

The Director of Education, B.H. Easter, in the annual report of the Department in 1936 expressed his concerns regarding the state of unemployment of the school leavers. He stated:

...all these pour out large numbers of persons each year, many disqualified for productive labour, but without having reached sufficiently high standard of education to warrant employment in any important capacity. Such a state of affairs can only result in discontent and failure... Consideration is, however, being given to the possibility of re-organizing some of the rural schools in lines which bear closer relation to the economic life of the country, and suitable syllabus has been drawn up. It is hoped that before long some of the schools may be induced to remodel their curriculum along these lines... . (p. 126).

In essence the Director was establishing, in the rural schools, vocational institutions. As Miller (1979) has pointed out, the Director would use the economic climate of the period and the unemployment of secondary school leavers to even further restrict elementary school children in rural areas from access to secondary education.

The Hammond Report (1941) formed the basis of this position of the Director of Education, and it also had much support of the ruling class. It took the position that "secondary education was not and should not be first call on resources. Elementary education, adult literacy and vocational education were given priority for secondary education merely aggravated the middle-class employment" (Miller 1990:135). It shifted the emphasis from the development and expansion of secondary schools to the formulation of a new initiative, the post-primary plan. This new policy was devised by the colonial administration as a means to further restrict the access of blacks to secondary education by relegating this population to technical, agricultural, and vocational education. Hence, defining post-primary education as exclusively for blacks or the lower class. This report, however, did not reflect the social and political imperatives of the 1940’s. Consequently, following the social upheavals of 1938, there was a mandate to make recommendations regarding the assistance of secondary education. The enquiry was undertaken in 1943 under the direction of the Kandel committee.

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Against this background, the Kandel committee approached the enquiry into the future development of secondary education, and thus:

...the Kandel Committee of Enquiry and its report of 1943 constituted an important milestone in the history of secondary education. The social unrest of the 1930's ushered in considerable political change based upon adult suffrage and responsible government. The constitutional changes, soon to be implemented, signaled the shift in political power to the blacks in the society, and with this expectation, including secondary education. Any recommendations concerning secondary education had to take into account this political reality.... (Miller 1990:135).

The conclusion of the report focussed mainly on the need for education reform designed to bring about improvements in the development of the secondary system of education.

Kandel's blueprint for secondary education was novel in that children from both elementary and preparatory schools would sit in common examination to determine the type of post-primary education they would receive. This system, based on ability, meant that black children could enter academic secondary schools, and conversely that brown, Jewish, and white children could end up in vocational schools and trade training centres. The criteria would be ability and aptitude, and not social background or parent's financial status. In this new structure the plural past of the educational system would be totally obliterated, and the heterogeneous future ushered in. Kandel was proposing fundamental change (Miller 1990:145). However, the report was not well received by the colonial administrators. It (the committee) reported that while the opinions showed a large measure of agreement with Kandel's recommendations there were criticisms and disagreement. The committee took the position that except in the areas of disagreements, the Kandel Report recommendations were regarded as statement of policy, and its task was to devise concrete plans to effect these policies. In essence, the committee was stalling in their attempts to implement these changes. And as Miller (1990) has noted instead of waiting to “devise concrete plans to effect the changes” of the Kandel Report, the committee went ahead and implemented their Plan for Post Primary Education which was a deviation from the Kandel Report and recommendation. But, the change in constitution would provide the avenue by which the Kandel Report could be acted upon. Kandel's recommendation would influence and characterize the educational reform efforts of the new social and political era in Jamaica.
The history of secondary education, during the period of 1912-1943, is characterized by a number of important educational developments. Following the Piggott study, the Jamaica Schools Commission armed with its policy initiatives— the "new definition of secondary education" and the "new framework for secondary education"— continued to influence the process of educational development and expansion of the secondary school system. This established the government financial support of secondary education and the incorporation of the private church-schools into the public school system. Other policies that were established included the scholarships for girls, salary and pension scheme for teachers, the establishment of an examinations and curriculum, and institutional provisions made available by government support.

However, in retrospect, the formative period up until 1943, the public education in Jamaica did not result in any fundamental changes in the education system. There was no effort on behalf of the administrators to democratize the system. For the most part, a dual and segregated system of education developed and expanded reflecting the social divisiveness that characterized British colonial society. Every effort was made to severely restrict blacks from having access and participation in the secondary and tertiary education. Miller (1979) in his overview of the development of high schooling in Jamaica concluded:

...probably the most important change occurred in the language describing the system. Colour and race were totally absent from the descriptions by 1943. The social system was now described using educational terms and in terms of wealth and poverty...the colour differences in the system were now implicit not explicit and racial differences were covert and not overt... (p.140).

There was content-based reform, however, infrastructural change that would give blacks access to secondary and tertiary education was not considered.

However, the Kandel Report (1943) proposed drastic new measures aimed at democratizing the secondary school system, however; this was not without resistance. The new constitutional era of political change that included adult suffrage and self-government would pave the way to educational reform efforts reflecting the new social and political reality of Jamaica.
Chapter 3

Educational Development in Independent Jamaica

One result of the political, social and industrial changes of the century has been to evolve education into the great constructive tool for modern political society...As people are freed from autocratic rule and take upon themselves the functions of government, and as they break loose from their age-old political, social, and industrial moorings and swing out into the current of modern world civilization, the need for education of the masses to enable them to steer safely their ship of state, and take their places among the stable government of modern world, become painfully evident. In the hands of an uneducated people a democratic form of government is a dangerous instrument, while the proper development of natural resources and the utilization of trade opportunities by backward people without being exploited, is almost impossible.

(Ellwood, 1920, p. 83)

The above statement illustrates the modernization or development assumptions that were forging a new political philosophy after World War I. Furthermore, the quotation reflects the belief that education is an important and critical factor in the process of development. Education evolved as an imperative to the development platform, and newly independent or emerging nations, like Jamaica, have adopted this development strategy to develop the pool of educated and skilled personnel that progress requires, and at the same time, to bring about social change.

Since gaining independence, a number of developing nations attempted to make their respective educational systems more self-sufficient, and reflective of the needs and aspiration of its citizens. In 1944, Jamaica was granted a new constitution. Under this political provision, Jamaica, a former Crown Colony, was now a Representative Government enjoying parliamentary democracy based upon adult suffrage, with a well established two-party system. Since then, Jamaica has moved from self-government under British supervision to a fully sovereign independent state in 1962. King (1987) has noted:

...Jamaica along with other Commonwealth Caribbean territories has witnessed a tremendous surge of interest in secondary education—an interest which has been reflected in a fairly consistent policy of expansion in that field. This expansion has for the most part taken the form of an increase in the visible facilities of secondary schooling...these changes have been related to and influenced by the growth of national feelings associated with the achievement of political independence, the growth in
understanding and consciousness of national needs and problems, and
the growing acceptance of responsibility for meeting these needs and
finding solutions to the problems identified... (p.51).

During the 1920's and 1930's, many attempts were made to merge the primary
and secondary education system. However, the attempts were futile until the formalized
creation of the Ministry of Education in 1953. The establishment of this educational
governing body signified a new era in the political and educational development of
Jamaica. The Ministry of Education was mandated with the task of promoting national
development and accessibility to a democratized system of secondary education,
needed to meet the demands for qualified personnel necessary for development. In
order to fully understand and appreciate the educational reform efforts during this period,
it is imperative that our discussion begins with the political and educational
developments during 1953. I will focus attention on the period from 1953 to 1988, a
significant era in political and educational development, which I have divided into two
important periods-1953 to 1978 and 1979 to 1988. The former will be characterized as,
Miller has coined, the “period of development and expansion” and the latter, the years of
“retrenchment and reversals”.

As was stated earlier, the anticipation of political nationalism ushered in a growth
of nationalist feelings. The political nationalists recognized the need for development to
occur and saw education as an “instrument of development and an agent for promoting
desirable social change” (International Encyclopedia of Education, 1989). Consequently,
the political and educational goals reflected this philosophy. Education became the
“promise and premise of their nationalists movements”, and towards this end, a number
of educational reform initiatives were implemented to address the social needs and also
to meet developmental requirements. So as to have a better understanding of the
context and significance of these reform policies, it is important that we briefly
emphasize one of the distinctive characteristics of the inherited colonial system that has
defined the educational experience in Jamaica.

Unequivocally, the Jamaican educational system has inherited a number of
characteristics from its British counterparts, such as the nature and structure of the
system to the very dependence on the British for external professional and financial
support. But, the colonial characteristic that would challenge future reform efforts is the
“social divisiveness of the British-derived educational system”. Without a doubt, there
have been notable developments in the Jamaican educational system. However, it still remains that the system resembles the traditional British system, and, to a large extent, the access to high school is still determined by social class biases that are inherent in the nature and structure of the system. Miller (1989) has argued:

...while there have been some changes since independence, the colonial patterns can still be clearly seen in the present system. Changes have occurred in some areas, but other areas have been unchanged. Such changes as have occurred have not brought a radical transformation of the very nature of the system itself. The colonial past is still prominently reflected in the sovereign present.... (p. 226).

Murray (1979) confirms Miller's (1989) observation in his overview of the development of the Jamaican educational system by commenting:

...one of the graver defects of the British-derived educational system is the social divisiveness they encouraged. In Jamaica this is evidenced at the pre-primary and primary stages in the existence of infant and preparatory schools for one class, and basic and primary schools for another, to be followed later in the individual's life by the secondary high school and the new secondary school, respectively.... (p. 183).

In other words, the Jamaican educational system was built upon social injustice and inequality. Two separate systems of education emerged, each catering to the social cleavages of the society. It is in this context that the reform efforts of the new social, political, and economic era must be assessed.

**Expansion and Development, 1953 –1978**

The period under review is described as the period of expansion and development in the educational development of the Jamaica. Understandably, given the prospect of Independence, the need to meet the pre-requisites of development, and the social inequalities of the educational system, it was imperative that efforts were made by the political nationalists to democratize the educational system and formulate strategies that would have the educational system reflect the needs and aspirations of its citizens. This social context became the catalyst for the expansion and development of the educational system that characterized the era of educational development in this period. This would be accomplished in the policy reform initiatives between the years 1953 to 1978 in which three important reform periods emerge, 1953, 1966 and 1973. These reforms took shape with the formalized creation of the Ministry of Education in 1953 and focussed on three main provisions expansion of schools facilities, increasing access to
secondary education through awarding free-places to high school, and teacher training initiatives.

**The Reform of 1953**

The Kandel Report (1943) was an important development in the expansion of the educational system in Jamaica. The Kandel Report (1943) reflected the new social, economic, and political reality of the Jamaican society of the 1940's, and subsequently, provided the blueprint and main influence for the policy framework of primary and secondary education in the post-war period that would be characterized by the move towards a more egalitarian educational system.

The first sustained attempt at democratizing the educational system was realized through the 1957 reform initiative. After two years of planning and deliberation, the new government embarked upon the task of educational reform, including secondary reform. These reforms were tabled in Parliament in the Ministry Paper No. 10, 1957-1958. The major underpinnings of the 1957 reform were direct recommendation from the Kandel Report (1943) which highlighted the following:

1. Universal primary education children between the ages of 7 and 11.

2. The provision of educational opportunities, to the full extent of finances, to children who possessed special abilities in order to meet from the resources of the country, the needs of the community for trained people in industry, agriculture, farming, trade, commerce, and the professions.

3. Educational opportunities provided by government open and available to all on the basis of genuine equality.

   (Miller, 1990, p. 154)

In response to these recommendations, the 1957 reform initiative made the following proposals:

1. The introduction of the Common Entrance Examination (CEE), on basis of entry to high schools. The policy encouraged the assumption that high school entry would now be based on the students' ability as judged by performance in the CEE.

2. The creation of additional free places to high schools, bringing the total number per year to 2,000. Such students would have their full tuition cost paid by the government. In addition, further assistance was available to poor parents through the welfare system.
3. The conversion of the Kingston Technical school and Practical Training centers of Holmwood and Dinthill into technical high schools and the creation of similar schools in St. Andrew and St. Elizabeth.

4. The establishment of the College of Arts, Science, and Technology, which was originally, named the Institute of Arts and Science.

5. The building of additional Senior Modern schools. These were three-year schools related to the elementary system that the colonial administrators had begun to introduce.

6. The expansion of teachers’ colleges in order to increase the number of trained teachers in elementary schools.

7. The introduction of the principle of parity of pay for elementary and secondary schoolteachers based on their qualification and years of teaching experience.

(Miller 1989: 210-211).

The 1957 reform was a momentous milestone in the development of education in Jamaica. It signified a notable departure from the efforts of the colonial administrators. Miller (1989) emphasizes this by stating:

...the 1957 reform differed from the plans drawn by the colonial administrators in three important respects. First, the emphasis was different. The main focus of the reform was the expansion of academic high schooling whereas that of the colonial administrators was on vocational education. Second, technical education was to be offered at a higher level than was planned. Third, some of the barriers between elementary and higher school teachers were to be removed, particularly, those that had to do with the salaries these teachers were paid... (p. 211).

Moreover, the 1957 reform left an indelible mark on the educational system, in that it attempted to address and rectify the issue of social injustices and inequalities, especially within the educational system. This was to be accomplished through the process of integrating, in one unitary system of educational governance, the dual system of Jamaican education. The reform began integrating teachers, students, and schools that were formerly separated by segregated structures and relationships (Miller 1989:211). Education would be conceived as education for adolescence, a stage of human development and not for a social class (Miller 1990:144).

The Reform of 1966 - “New Deal for Education”

Considered the first official reform for education in independent Jamaica, the 1966 reforms were formulated between 1963 and 1966 and incorporated into the “New
Deal for Education" under the new independent government. The main thrust of the reform did not change from its predecessor, but were adjustments of the broad parameters of the 1957 reform policy. However, it must be noted that a significant development to come out of the 1966 reform was the 70:30 system.

The 1957 reform policy had stipulated that the award of 2000 free places was predicated on the basis that "a large number of poor parents, who in the past, were unable to enter school and pay fees should be afforded the opportunity of good grammar school education, the fees being paid by the government" (Miller 1990:156). However, the free place system did not meet the expectation of the government. It was observed that the free place system-the Common Entrance Examination-awarded more than 50% of the free places to children from the elite preparatory schools, and children already in high school. This was obviously inconsistent with the purpose of the free-place system, and subsequently, resulted in the further restriction of access of children from the poor primary schools to secondary and high school education.

In response to this issue the government introduced the 70:30 system which stipulated that 70% of the free places would be awarded to children from primary schools and 30% to children from preparatory schools. It must be noted that the intention of the 70:30 system was never intended to exclude the access of children from preparatory school, but to provide a class historically discriminated against, the chance to have access to higher education. The provisions made for children from preparatory or the elite schools were that they would enter high school based upon grants, rather than a free-place. But despite this fact, the parents of the middle and upper class protested against what they considered the discriminatory practice of the 70:30 system. Unfortunately, the 70:30 system resulted in the practices of double enrolment of children in primary and preparatory schools; children attending preparatory school for six or seven years and then enrolling in primary school the year they are eligible to sit the examination; and principals accepting children as full-fee-paying than were permitted. It strengthened the feeling that many primary school children did not merit their place in high school (Miller 1990:157)
The other policy provisions made under the 1966 reform included:

- The creation of junior secondary education by the conversion of sixteen Senior Modern schools into junior secondary high schools, the building of fifty new schools, the training of special teachers for this level of education and the formulation of special curricula for these teachers, students, and schools.

- The changing of the programme of teacher training from being three years intramural in the colleges to two years in college and one year internship in the schools. In addition, teachers’ colleges were mandated to prepare the teachers for the junior secondary schools. This was the first time that these colleges were given the responsibility to prepare teachers for any type of secondary schools.

- The inclusion of comprehensive high schools as a part of the secondary system of education. Comprehensive high schools would admit students from both CEE and from feeder schools in their neighbourhood. They would also offer a wide range of subjects at different levels and with different orientations.

- The building of primary schools so that all children in the 6 to 12 age group would have a place in school.

- Giving grants to basic schools. Government’s responsibility for education had been restricted to formal system commencing at age 6 years. Churches, voluntary organizations and private individuals had established basic schools serving the poor communities. The Jamaica Teachers Association in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce had promoted this initiative. Government now moved to give assistance to such schools that would satisfy certain criteria.

(Miller 1989: 211)

“The New Deal for Education” (1966) continued the expansion and development of the Jamaican system of education, however, with emphasis on the creation and expansion of other types of post-primary institutions. According to Miller (1989), the New Deal reforms have had a lasting impact on Jamaican education for at least three reasons. First, they brought the largest single capital expansion of the educational system in its history since 1834. The system was established substantially at all levels. Secondly, they secured international assistance for Jamaican education from such multilateral agencies as UNESCO and the World Bank and from bilateral agencies as USAID and CIDA. Thirdly, they helped galvanize support for early childhood education through basic schools.

**The Reform of 1973 – The Educational Thrust of the 70’s**

This government’s philosophy envisages the creation of a society based on the twin pillars of social justice and equality of opportunity. (Five-Year Education Plan, 1978-83)
The People's National Party armed with its socialist democratic platform ushered in a number of reform policies aimed at further improving the democratization process of the Jamaica system of education and society. The Five-Year Plan highlights the socialist sentiments that were held by the government of this period. Most importantly, it explicitly enunciated that all citizens of the country should have equal access to the education publicly provided, unhindered by consideration of social class, race, financial, or political attention. Also there was the expressed intention of the government to strive for adequate provision of educational facilities (International Encyclopedia of Education 1985: 2762).

Even though there were no fundamental or radical reform initiatives presented in the 1977 reform, the adjustments based on the previous reforms are important to the overall development and expansion of the Jamaican educational system. The major components of the reform are summarized as follows:

- The introduction of free high school and university education. This measure abolished tuition fees for students and offered some form of assistance for boarding where this was required of the students.

- Curriculum development for all levels of the public system. The previous 1966 reforms had restricted curriculum efforts mainly to junior secondary schools which were its major focus. Curriculum reform was now being extended to all other areas of the public not covered by the previous reform. The particular programme was the Curriculum Development Thrust.

- The transformation of the junior secondary schools into five year secondary schools by the addition of Grades 10 and 11.

- The establishment of an in-service programme for teacher training to provide an opportunity for those pre-trained teachers who for various reasons were unlikely or unable to go to college in the foreseeable future. This service was labeled the In-service Teacher Education Thrust.

- The inclusion of special schools for handicapped children as a part of the public system of education. Hitherto such schools were organized and funded almost exclusively by private sources.

- The establishment of community colleges. These colleges were created to serve three main functions: to prepare students to qualify for entry to the university, to train personnel for middle level jobs in the labour force, and to be a community training resource in the cycle of training and re-training that is not common as a result of rapid changes in the technology.
• The establishment of the JAMAL Foundation with the mandate to eliminate illiteracy in the out of school population.

• The introduction of double shift system whereby primary and secondary school buildings would be used twice in a single day to accommodate two sets of teachers and students in a single school.

(Miller 1989: 213)

The period of 1973 witnessed the replacement of the Oxford and Cambridge Examination body with the local Caribbean Examination Council. The CXC, as it would be called, became the body examining students at the end of high school.

The major contribution of the period under review included the introduction of free high school and university education, the inclusion of special schools into the public system, and the establishment of the JAMAL foundation, and community colleges. However, in large measure, the 1973 reform were adjustments and rationalizations of various aspects of the previous reforms (Miller 1989:213).

In the independence period the educational system has been Jamaicanized at all levels. Jamaicans constitute the senior and junior staff in the schools and in the central bureaucracy. The change in this area represents almost complete reversal of the past. The majority of the non-Jamaicans employed in the educational system are Caribbean nationals who cannot be regarded as expatriates. The Jamaican employment of personnel in the educational system is probably the single most complete reversal of a colonial pattern. The curricula of the schools have also been Caribbeanized and Jamaicanized. At least the example informing learning in schools are now more indigenous than in the colonial past (Miller 1989:224-225).

The period of 1953 to 1978 can be assessed as a period of unparalleled capital expansion and development of the Jamaican educational system. The uninterrupted economic growth of the 1970's, fostered by the recovery of the sugar industry and banana industries, the high returns on bauxite and tourism, and the growth of the local manufacturing sector, made it feasible for the government to implement educational reform. But, the economic growth was short lived, and consequently, this had a negative impact on the ability of the government to continue to implement educational change. The economic decline even resulted in major reversal of already implemented educational initiatives. The period of expansion and development was severely restricted.
A Decade of Retrenchment and Reversal 1978-1988

The downturn in the economy resulted primarily but not exclusively from the OPEC crisis of the 1970's. The sharp drop in oil production resulted in the orbital increase in oil prices. This meant that Jamaica had to borrow money and subject itself to the conditionalities of the International Monetary Fund (Lawson 1998:69). The impact on education of the policies occasioned by the Fund's conditionalities has been negative. While it must be noted that the International Monetary Fund has not prescribed any specific education measures, the conditions prescribed by the lending institution have been used as the basis of justification of numerous cutbacks in the educational provision. The retrenchment and reversals in the public educational system and their consequences are listed below (Miller 1989:214). Some of the major reversals are summarized as follows:

- Teacher education suffered the greatest reversals over the decade. The In-service Diploma training programme for graduate teachers and ISTET training for primary school teachers were discontinued...The enrolment of all teachers training college was reduced. Some staff were made redundant, others retired. The preliminary year in the teacher's college was suspended. The reversals took place between 1984 and 1986, and 1988 there was a noticeable shortage of teachers at all levels of the educational system.

- Fees that had been abolished officially in 1973 were re-introduced unofficially by high schools that found themselves unable to cope with the lack of provision of the necessary funds by the government to cover costs of running the schools. The Ministry simply ignored the violation of the law. Poor parents had no recourse but to face embarrassment if they could not afford to pay the fees.

- Fees for university students were re-introduced by way of a cess levied by the government. Here the policy of free university education was officially reversed.

- In 1986 the ministry closed eight primary and all-age schools in rural areas. These were schools located in remote rural areas. After protest from the Jamaica Teacher’s Association and resistance from churches who owned most of the schools, they were re-opened in 1987.

- By 1984 government was taking action to increase the teacher-pupil ratio of the primary schools to 1:55. This was the level that existed in colonial times...Government’s intention now was to return to the colonial standard...

- In the 1950's expenditure on education was just over 10 per cent of the total recurrent expenditure of government... In 1988 education's share of government's recurrent expenditure had fallen to 12 per cent from 15 per cent.
• Education's decline in importance in the national budget was reflected in the state of repair of school buildings and school furniture. Many schools were in a poor state of repair because of a lack of proper maintenance...

• Between 1973 and 1985 the cost of living in Jamaica had increased by more than 650 per cent. Teachers' salaries had increased by only 312 per cent. Therefore, teachers had suffered about 50 per cent decline in their standard of living in circumstances in which the conditions in the schools in which they worked were also deteriorating rapidly.


Clearly, the external dependence of the Jamaican economy on the IMF for financial assistance and the implications of the imposed conditionalities prescribed by the IMF has severely restricted the efforts of the Jamaican government to fund capital intensive educational reform efforts. What this illustrates is:

...education reforms, under these conditions, ebb and flow with global market forces, a reminder that Jamaica's autonomy is severely limited. Under such precarious circumstances, there are no guarantees that reforms will hold. On the contrary, all reform can be easily reversed depending on the economic priorities of the day. (Lawson 1998:70).

**Major Reform of the 1980s and 1990s**

After the debt crisis and the implementation of policy measures designed to achieve structural adjustments of the economy, there was drastic reduction in the financial resources available for all social services. Development aid was mobilized in the form of loans and grants. Recognizing the gross inefficiencies in the educational system, and the growing discontent of parents, teachers and student, the Jamaican government in 1982 commissioned UNESCO to do a study of the Jamaican system of education. A year later, the study released the report, Jamaica: Development of Secondary Education.

The purpose of the study was aimed at identifying the inefficiencies of the system of education and prescribes strategies to rectify these problems. Furthermore, the study was designed to "rationalize the diverse post-primary institutions of the past forty years" (Miller 1990:168) and "consolidate the quantitative achievements of post-primary education in Jamaica by qualitative rationalizing and restructuring in order to translate the qualitative assets for economic and social development" (UNESCO 1983:21).
The following are major issues identified by the UNESCO report as in need of reform:

- The extremely low performance of primary education system, leaving almost one out of every two-grade entrants below adequate levels of literacy and numeracy.
- The exclusion from secondary school education of as much as 40% of enrolment of the 12-15 years age group...
- The low degree of relevance of large parts of secondary school, in particular, its pre-vocational aspects...
- The qualitative inefficiencies of secondary education in particular of the New Secondary schools...
- The great variety of grade 11 certificate exams which reinforce the built-in tendencies of diversification of secondary education which...lends to perpetuate differences of quality of education and inequalities of access to good education.
- The great variety of post-primary and secondary educational institutions and the divergent curriculum applied at different schools; impeding equal access of students to the same or comparable level and quality of knowledge.
- The limited capability of educational management and lack of adequate policy analysis and planning capability of the Ministry of Education.
- The absence of a common curriculum for grades 7-9 of all categories.

In addition:

- The high rate of mobility of teachers out of the profession, particularly, well-qualified and experienced teachers.
- The lack of a system of continuous professional support for teachers, and the absence of sustained efforts at in-service training.
- The absence of effective and central, Ministry based inspection and insufficient mandate and staffing of the Regional Educational Offices.
- Limited financial resources for improvement and development of secondary education and training.

(UNESCO 1983: 19-23)

With this in mind, and based upon the analysis of the situation, the UNESCO report proposed that the following measures be planned, prepared, and carried out as

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the crucial elements in a coherent strategy of educational development. These measures were as follows: (a). the reinforcement of primary education as the basis of secondary education; and (b). the rationalization and restructuring of the educational system by emphasizing a new approach to pre-vocational training, unifying the examination system, and (c) the improving of measures for qualitative efficiency and the reinforcement of the management of secondary education.

The UNESCO study, in outlining the inefficiencies of the educational system, did not introduce any major new findings. But rather, enunciated the fundamental ideas of the 1940s reports and plans which influenced the reform efforts of the period of educational expansion and development, 1953 to 1978. The UNESCO report, therefore, emphasized and endorsed the reform initiatives of this period. It, however, never made reference or commented on the impact of the World Bank structural adjustment policies on the educational reform efforts and the need for alternate educational financing approaches.

In response to the report, the government of Jamaica with the financial and technical support of the World Bank undertook the task of reforming the secondary system of education. The project became known as the Reform of Secondary Education (R.O.S.E).

Extensive field research and the UNESCO report highlighted that in order to improve qualitative and quantitative outcomes of the educational system focus had to be directed on the following areas:

(a). Stratification of the secondary system;
(b). Lack of common curriculum;
(c). Quality control and management of educational system;
(d). Teacher training and in-service support; and
(e). The rationalization of the examinations.

Consequently, the rationale of the reform was to address the qualitative inefficiencies of the system of education by providing access, equity, and quality in the educational system.
The first phase (1993-98) of the R.O.S.E project has witnessed the implementation of a number of significant initiatives.

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<td>Continue field-testing and revision of new curriculum.</td>
<td>Implement curriculum in remaining schools.</td>
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<td>Develop Curriculum in additional subjects.</td>
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<td>Implement new programme in 72 Secondary and All-Age schools.</td>
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<td>Review and reproduce instructional and resource material for 60,000 students in</td>
<td>Institutionalize procedure for periodic curriculum review.</td>
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<td>Expand Book Rental Scheme to all Secondary Level schools.</td>
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<td>Collaborate with textbook publishers re: new books for the new curriculum.</td>
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<td>Train 5400 teachers; orient supervisors; teacher trainers, etc, regarding new</td>
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<td>programme; institutionalize new curriculum in Teacher' College Programme.</td>
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<td>Construction and/or refurbishing and extension; and basic equipment for 132</td>
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<td>schools. Rationale system. Postpone selection to Grade 9. New Grade 9 exam in</td>
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<td>place. Study options for expansion for Grade 19 and 11.</td>
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<td>Expand provision for Grade 10 and 11.</td>
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**Figure 1. Action Plan Reform of Secondary Education Project (R.O.S.E)**

Other initiatives that have been implemented include: first, significant increase in personnel for the education system and training and professional support through the Joint Board of Teacher Education. Second, the development of the Core Curriculum and Technical and Vocation Education arm of the Ministry of Education directed to design and supervise curriculum development and teaching methodologies. Third, the Common Entrance Examination has been replaced by the National Assessment Program, and the establishment of an endowment fund for the Educational Research Centre at the University of the West Indies. Finally, the development of the National Council on Education, which represents various interest groups that will advise the government on educational policy issues.
Conclusion

There has been a plethora of reforms aimed at democratizing the educational system. King (1979) has noted “the history of education in Jamaica has been a history of partial remedies, half-hearted reforms, and short-term palliatives designed to cope with an ever-recurrent crisis situation, the roots of which are deeply embedded in the society’s past” (154). Miller (1990) has also argued that the reform efforts, past and present, have not brought about any radical or fundamental changes. But rather, “appear to be attempts to consolidate and balance or rationalize the previous reforms”. (168). But like the past reforms, the question still remains to be asked: will the educational change process fall prey to King’s conclusion regarding the “half-hearted and short-term palliatives” nature of previous reforms? Will it be effective in its attempts to rationalize, restructure and, ultimately, democratize the secondary system of education?

One of the first steps in addressing King’s concern is for the process of educational change to be defined according to the specified needs and aspirations of the Jamaican people. Furthermore, local initiative and participation, that is the stakeholders, must be mobilized and defined as an essential component of the reform initiative, and also encouraged to take part in this process. Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991) provide a conceptual framework for this process of participatory development in education. The authors have emphasized that within the last two decades the educational change process has been re-conceptualized into what, they refer to as, the “new meaning of educational change”. Within this new paradigm, the authors stipulate that the major stakeholders-teachers, parents, educational administrators and students- must be integral and active participants in this process of change. In other words, in order for the educational process to be relevant, sustained and effective, the local, regional and national agents of change must be implicated within this reform initiative. In light of this, I will focus on parental involvement and participation in the educative and socializing task of schooling as an example of local participation and a key component of an effective and sustainable educational change process.
Chapter 4

Literature Review

This review summarizes recently published literature concerning the topic of parental involvement and participation as a critical and integral factor in the effective management of the school system; and the various components and structures needed to support this significant educational relationship.

Within the past four decades, the educational landscape has been and continues to be transformed by the sweeping wind of educational reform. Schools are being forced to re-organize to encourage and support both parents and students around the educative and socializing task of schooling. A consequent derivative of this movement is the study of the organization and management of effective school systems. Central to this thrust has been the need to explore the subject of equal opportunities in education for the disadvantaged and minority students.

School effect studies, in their earliest stages, have derived main influence from two functionalist schools of thought: the first was the economic orientation, which focused on input/output analysis. The second was of the sociological framework with its emphasis placed on social stratification and its function in influencing and determining occupational and social mobility. The main thrust of these studies has been to focus on exploring, testing and developing theories and practices related to school effectiveness and improvement.

According to Lee, Bryk, and Smith (1990), the term “effectiveness” is operationalized in terms of outcomes, that is student achievement and engagement and teacher efficacy and commitment. In the following conceptual model, the authors have argued that an effective school is characterized by a number of critical internal and external factors that directly influence student and teacher outcomes.
Figure 2. Heuristic Model of the Organization of Secondary Schools
As already established, internal operation of the school system directly influences student and teacher outcomes. But to get a better understanding of this conceptual model, it is necessary that the various variables in the model be defined. According to Lee, Bryk and Smith (1990), the internal organization of schools, the nucleus of this model, contains several subunits: (a) the organization of authority, which includes constructs tapping the structure of governance; the nature of administration; the underlying beliefs, values, and explicit goals of the school; and teacher empowerment; (b) the organization of teachers’ and students’ works; and (c) the social organization (i.e., the structure of social relations). School systems operate within a large and complex external environment. The critical and integral aspects of the external environment that directly impacts on the school system include the type of students attending the school, the school size, and the nature of parental involvement. “All of these factors are influential in determining a school’s internal operation and also have some direct effects on teachers and students” (Lee, Bryk & Smith, 1990:175).

Teacher outcomes discussed in the model includes satisfaction with teaching, teacher’s sense of efficacy in accomplishing instructional goals with their students, staff morale as a collective property of adult work within a school, and teachers’ commitment to effort. This latter concept is indicated by such measures as time spent in school-related activities, intensity of professional development efforts, and the amount of absences from school.

Regarding student outcomes, the principal issue is academic achievement. In addition, the degree of engagement in the school setting and educative tasks plays a crucial role in determining student outcome. Some positive behavioural manifestations associated with parental involvement and participation include: participation, connection, attachment and integration into school life. In contrast, the negative behavioural manifestations associated with the lack of parental involvement and participation are: alienation, isolation, separation, and detachment. These behavioural patterns are considered antecedent to the ultimate form of disengagement: dropping out.

The conceptual model of the organization of secondary school provides a benchmark by which educators, parents, and students can measure the effectiveness of school management. It is therefore apparent that the stakeholders demand that the
necessary components be put in place to guarantee and safeguard the functional community centered around the school setting and the educative task.

Within the general scope of this paper, the researcher has focused attention on the external factor of parental involvement in effective school organization, management, and the educative and socializing task of schooling.

According to Jowett et al (1988) and Wolfendale (1983), parental involvement and participation represent a broad spectrum of activities that attempt to bridge the gaps between the home and the school. This therefore presupposes that an effective relationship exists between the home and the school, parents and teachers. And furthermore, it also presupposes that parents are active participants in the learning process of their child, key players in the management of their child's institution. The consummate result of this ideal home-school-community partnership is the creation of a total learning experience and environment for their child, and an effective and representative system of education.

Over the years in the field of educational research, there has been growing acceptance of the fact that parental involvement and participation in the school community is of significant educational benefit. Within this context, London & Smith (1981) argue that “education operated within a complex multi-level framework of interrelatedness, including the home, school and community, with each area seen as a potential focus of educational change and improvement” (12). It therefore is apparent that adopting a structure that supports the home-school-community relationship or parental involvement and participation in the school community, is necessary and prudent to establish an effective school management system. But this typology can only be effective when there is congruence between the home, school and community.

There is general consensus among educational researchers that in order to establish an effective home-school-community relationship, there must be correspondence between the home, school and community. Researchers also argue that the school structure must institute support mechanisms that will encourage and enhance the home-school-community relationship.
There are a number of benefits and advantages attributed to a close home-school-community relationship and parental involvement and participation in the school community. Some of these are: (a) improved relationship between the home and school and the galvanization of institutional legitimacy, both of school and home, (b) effective management of the school system, (c) improved academic performance and behaviour of students, (d) better parent-teacher/student relationship, (e) creation of a total learning experience for the student which involves parents and teachers, and (f) better support system for parents and teachers. However while there are numerous advantages and benefits to establishing an effective home-school-community relationship, several significant hindrances exist. Three main areas of contestation are the (a) dynamics of the parent-teacher relationship; (b) the school organization and management; and (c) the demands of home and work.

According to Skau (1996), “without infrastructure or detailed plans, the downloading of decisions to the school level has the potential to create tensions between the differing ideologies and expectations that individuals bring to the decision-making situation” (35). Lightfoot (1978) has argued that the home-school relationship is highly and inherently characterized by conflict. Gordon-Muir (1985) commented that the “different priorities and perceptions of the families and schools, for example, the concern over one’s own child versus responsibility for process, would inevitably lead to conflict over the means of attainment of common goals” (29). Furthermore, Swap (1993) adds that there had been a certain degree of ambivalence regarding the role of parents and the school.

...Most teachers regard their schools as “turf”, not to be invaded by active groups of parents, who in their perception might seize control. In such an instance, the premise from which most schools operate is that of a 'Protective Model'. Its aim is to protect schools from interference from parents. The relationship precipitated from this 'Protective Model' is an avoidance and adversarial parent-teacher relationship Consequently, there is a lack of opportunity for open dialogue between parents and teachers (45).

Finally, educational research indicates that the situations at home, such as competing demands of family and work, act as significant hindrances to the home-school-community relationship. Tangrie and Leith (1982) in a study of inner city high schools concluded that competing home responsibilities most often prevented parents
Unfortunately, without fully understanding the varying home and work situations, teachers interpret and stereotype the "lack of parental involvement and participation" as an indication of parents having little or no interest in the academic progress and development of their children. Recognizing the value, effectiveness and relevance of the home-school-community relationship, educational stakeholders must philosophically and systemically implement strategies that will support, encourage and enhance the triad partnership. A logical place to start improving the school’s effectiveness is by addressing the issues hindering the development of the teacher/parent relationship and the school’s organization and management.

In order to establish an effective home-school-community relationship, and to determine the type and relevance of the parental involvement that will be effective in the school environment, a needs assessment of the school and the possible avenues of parental involvement and participation must first be determined. Towards this end, Epstein (1996) highlights that parental roles must be defined in collaboration with the needs of the school so as to make their involvement and participation in the school community more relevant and useful. She proposes the following types of involvement that encourages school-home-community partnerships and which assists “educators to locate where they are starting from in their present practices, plan more comprehensive programs, and monitor progress in school, family and community connection” (Epstein 1996: 8). In addition, Epstein’s typology of involvement provides parents with the opportunity of defining possible roles within the educational context that will complement the needs of the school, establish relevant and useful parental roles which will allow parents to become participants in creating a total learning environment for their child and an effective management structure for the system of education.
Epstein's Six Stage Typology of Involvement

**Type I: Parenting:** Assist parents with parenting and child-rearing skills, family support, understanding child and adolescent development, and setting home conditions to support learning at each age and grade level. Assist schools to understand families.

**Type II: Communicating:** Communicate with families about school programs and student progress with school-to-home and home-to-school communication.

**Type III: Volunteering:** Improve recruitment training, work and schedules to involve families as volunteers and audiences at the school or in other locations to support students and programmes.

**Type IV: Learning at home:** Involve families with their children in academic learning activities at home, including homework and other curricular linked activities and decisions.

**Type V: Decision-making:** Include families as participants in school decisions, governance, and advocacy through PTA committees, councils, and other parent activities.

**Type VI: Collaboration with community:** Co-ordinate the work and resources of the community businesses, agencies, cultural and civic organization, colleges or university to strengthen school programmes, family practices, and student learning and development. Also provide services to the community.

Despite, large volumes of educational research on the topic being discussed, it is a growing fact among parents, teachers, students, and educational administrators that parental involvement and participation significantly decreases at the secondary or high school levels of education. Brian (1994) argues that a possible reason for the lack of parental involvement and participation at the high school level could be because the issue is not well defined in educational research literature. Especially when contrasted with parental involvement and participation at the elementary level of education, Brian concludes that parental involvement and participation at the high school level is without a conceptual framework. Most of the research and published reports on parent involvement have involved elementary school parents. We do not know if high school parents' and teachers' views concerning parental involvement correspond to elementary parents' and teachers' views, how the roles parents play in education of their child changes when the child is in high school, if high school parents want to be involved, and if parental involvement at the high school level will have the same benefits that have
been ascribed to parental involvement at the elementary level (Brian 1994). Seeing that this research will focus on parental involvement and participation in high schools, what are the implications of Brian's argument to this context?

Gordon-Muir in her study, *Attitudes of Teachers and Parents to Parental Involvement in the Jamaican School System* (1985), highlighted that her research findings were consistent with other research in the field: parents and teachers had positive attitudes towards parental involvement in the Jamaican school system. Furthermore, there was evidence of various forms of parental involvement throughout the schools included in her study. So in response to Brian's argument, Gordon-Muir (1985) establishes that parental involvement at the high school level is equally relevant and necessary as with parental involvement at the elementary school level.

Gordon-Muir (1985) suggests that while parental involvement, in it various forms, exists within the Jamaican school context, a number of significant factors continue to contribute to the limited involvement and participation of parents in "classroom activities and curriculum planning". She attributes this fact to: (a). the known and unknown implications of having parents in the classroom and its impact on classroom dynamics; (b). competing priorities, for example, the socio-economic realities for many low-income parents who would prefer to go to work to provide food for the family, rather than "interfere" with school responsibilities; and (c). distance i.e. many of the schools especially in the rural areas are many miles away from home. And as already stated by Gordon-Muir (1985), there are economic constraints with traveling to and from school to participate in parental activities would be costly and add to the constraints. In summary, parental involvement and participation in the Jamaican school system is widely considered by parents and teachers as necessary, but there are factors that have contributed to the limited participation of parents.

It is the intention of this research to provide insight into the relevance of parental involvement and participation and the home-school-community relationship as an important components of school management, and a critical factor in establishing an effective and representative system of education, especially, with regards to the democratisation of the system of education. Furthermore, the study will provide practical recommendations to parents, teachers, and educational administrators to strengthen the
home-school-community relationship. This research intends also to contribute to existing theory and empirical data about the issue of school-home-community partnership.

Finally, within the general scope of this research project, I will also attempt to address some very pertinent issues and concerns raised from the literature review.

1. Are the concepts of parental involvement and the home-school-community relationship considered important at the high school level?

2. With the changing needs of high school, is Epstein's Six Stage Typology of Involvement relevant and applicable to the Jamaican system of education?

3. Given the context of the Jamaican system of education, what are some of the factors that encourage or hinder the home-school-community relationship? Are there educational policies and practices within the present reform initiative that effectively nurture and encourage parental involvement and the home-school-community relationship in the schools?
Chapter 5
Methodology

Research Design

As a preliminary research project, descriptive exploratory study was conducted to address the issues and concerns regarding parental involvement and participation, and its role in the effective management of a selected high school in Jamaica. A case study methodology was used, which drew heavily on qualitative data collection and data analysis research methods. While this research project was not geared towards establishing generalizations, the case study approach was used to provide the opportunity for probing the subject area being discussed. This is done for the purpose of testing and developing theory within this exploratory research design. Furthermore, it was intended that the theoretical basis and analytical framework developed in this project would provide a foundation upon which other comparative analyses could be based.

Instrumentation. Data collection methods were based on a one dimensional research site study. At this school, a site study was conducted using the following data collecting methods: naturalistic observation; semi-structured interviews with parents, teachers, students, and education officers; questionnaires; unobtrusive data collection and content analysis of newsletters, Parent-teachers' Association minutes, educational policy documents and statistical reports and other relevant archival materials. In addition, a type and level of involvement scale was designed to assist the researcher in identifying some of the parental involvement strategies which are already being practiced at the school and at the homes of the students. In order to test the effectiveness of these strategies, the researcher designed a Parental Involvement and Academic Progress and Development Chart. The purpose of this instrument was to test if the type and level of parental involvement being practiced had any direct impact on the academic progress and development of their children. Secondary sources of information include:

1. Demographic information on the research area;
2. Administrative information, such as enrolment, attendance and budget reports;
**Procedure**

The research was conducted over a two-month period. Naturalistic observations of the school environment took place during regular school hours. Keen attention was paid to classroom sessions, teachers’ conference meetings and the parent-teachers’ forum. There were approximately 15-20 naturalistic observations of the three aforementioned sessions, lasting 10 minutes to an hour.

In addition, unobtrusive data collecting techniques were used, which included the "observation of documents and artifacts that are indirect surrogates for values, expectations, and behaviours that might otherwise be difficult to see and assess" (Eisner 1991:185). This included document review of:

- educational policy statements, newsletters, other materials to parents;
- correspondences to parents from school, school policy handbooks for students or parents;
- minutes from parents/teachers’ forums, the school calendar, minutes of meetings of interest, teacher directives from the office, teachers’ conferences and school budget;
- and further observation was made of presence or absence of parent rooms in the school, location of teachers’ workrooms, parent patterns of dropping off and picking up students, presence and location of parents in the school building, etc.4

The naturalistic observations of the school environment and the unobtrusive data collection methods provided the researcher with the opportunity of becoming familiar with some of the pertinent themes and issues to be further discussed in the interview sessions.

Semi-structured interviews and questionnaires were another important data-gathering technique. Due the limited amount of time, 8 teachers, including administrative personnel were interviewed. The teachers were selected based on their current positions, grade level and years of teaching experience. Interviews were scheduled at the participant’s earliest convenience. The interviews lasted roughly 45 minutes to an
hour. With the permission of the participants, interviews were audio-taped and transcribed. Pseudonyms were used to maintain anonymity and confidentiality.

The researcher was asked to do a presentation to the Parent-teachers' Association. The researcher used this opportunity to invite the participation of interested parent in this study. In addition, parent selection and participation was done with the assistance of the principal, or at random.

Questionnaires were used to gather data from parents, teachers and students. They were given out to participants prior to interviews so that the participants would have time to ponder some of the pertinent issues that would be later discussed. Due to time constraints and scheduling conflicts, a limited number of interviews were done. Questionnaires were used instead. At the end of the parent and student questionnaire session, the researcher cross-referenced the type and level of parental involvement of identified by parent and student with the academic progress and development of the students. This was done with the intention of establishing whether there was any significant relationship between academic progress and development and the type and level of parental participation and involvement. The researcher also sought to establish whether the role and attitude of the teachers to the idea of parental involvement and participation was an important factor in creating a supportive environment for the realization of an effective home-school partnership at the research site. Finally, informal interviews were also conducted with secretaries and custodians. These interviews were not tape-recorded, but notes were taken.

In order to determine the types of involvement already in existence in the school management strategy, Epstein's six typologies of involvement was used as the primary guide. The various forms of involvement have been described in the questionnaire to parents and teachers. The responses regarding the types of involvement were cross-referenced with Epstein's conceptual framework to establish the type, level, and degree to which Epstein's typology is relevant to the Jamaican context. This exercise was important as a comparative method used to locate other possible forms of parental involvement being practiced at the site, which may not have been documented in

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List was developed with the assistance of Donna Brian's 1994 study of Parental Involvement in High Schools.
Epstein’s typology. Finally, the various forms of involvement were cross-checked with socio-demographic data to see if the class background of parents was a factor in determining the type and level of parental involvement and participation.

While Epstein’s typology was integral in determining the types of parental involvement being exercised at the research site, it was also necessary in establishing the level of involvement by educational levels. A scale of involvement was designed to index and document levels of involvement.

A Pilot study was conducted to test the validity of the research project, and also to test the procedures that were used in the main study. Furthermore, the pilot was used to correct obvious flaws.

**Content Analysis**

Content analysis is an on-going process of systemically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes and other material that have been accumulated to increase your understanding of them and enable you to present what you have described to others. Analysis involves working with the data, organizing them, breaking them into manageable units, synthesizing them, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned and deciding what to tell others (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998: 157).

Upon gathering the raw data the primary sources- interviews, questionnaires, unobtrusive and naturalistic observation- content analysis will be utilized to get a general survey and sense of the re-occurring themes and issues as they emerge in this discovery process. Glaser and Strauss’ (1976) grounded theory approach to data analysis provided guidance to the researcher because their approach is an effective and useful data analysis procedure.

The first stage of the grounded theory approach is the constant comparative method. The researcher simultaneously coded, organized, and analysed data so as to develop the emerging themes and issues into coherent concepts. It follows that as the themes and issues become apparent, they were compared to and their relationship with
the "grand theory" established. The second stage is the theoretical sampling procedure. According to Glaser and Strauss (1967) theoretical sampling allows the researcher to select new cases to study according to their potential to expand and re-define the concepts and theories that already exist.

The method of analysis provided the researcher with some level of competence. And furthermore the method gave the researcher the opportunity to explore, analyse and develop the issues into a conceptual framework that added to the already existing theoretical and empirical data on the topic of home-school-community participation in educational reform.

Qualitative research depends heavily on analytical induction, and the close link between research data and what people say and do. These factors assisted the researcher in gaining a better and clearer understanding of the research setting and the people to be studied. It therefore necessitates that techniques of trustworthiness be implemented to safeguard the aforementioned linkage, reliability and validity. Triangulation of primary and secondary data sources and field observations, and member checks were used to establish reliability and validity and also as an integral component of the data analysis process.

**The Research Site**

The research site is an exclusive all-girls school, nestled in the hills of rural Jamaica. This school falls under the umbrella of the Anglican Diocese of Jamaica. Ultimate responsibility as well as the financial means for maintenance and governance is the under the portfolio of the Government of Jamaica’s Ministry of Education and Culture.

The school has a population of over 1000 students drawn predominantly from the middle and lower class strata of the society. The students pursue a broad-based curriculum for five years. A board of governors, the principal, and the vice-principal govern the school’s management and administration. There are approximately 25-30 members of staff. The teachers are with either university degrees in education or hold
teacher education diplomas. The teachers involved in this case study have an average of 5-7 years of teaching experience.

The school has made great efforts to provide an environment that supports and encourages the holistic development of their students. The school’s mission statement establishes the school's commitment to “provide the students with quality education; therefore, it seeks to promote and encourage high academic achievements”. In addition, the school’s commitment goes beyond academic development and embraces “training that is geared to the fostering and engendering of social adjustment in all areas of life. Students are educated to take responsibility for their individual development. By doing they will cultivate and display cultural, environment and moral awareness”. The ultimate goal of this endeavour is to ensure that students will emerge “as leaders able to articulate desirable societal values and attitudes” (School’s Mission Statement).

The school has adopted a number of strategies to assist in the educative and socializing task of schooling. One of the strategies related to this project is the “Home and School: A Partnership for Success” policy. This policy emphasizes the school values and beliefs in the effectiveness and the educational benefits of the home-school relationship. Furthermore, the school has adopted an “open door policy” so that parents can come and discuss the progress and development of their child.

**The Subjects and Their Selection**

As a result of my previous professional relationship and contact with the research site, I have been made acutely aware, from teachers and some parents, of the need for improved parent-teacher relations and also for effective school management strategies. Consequently, I was able to formulate a context and rationale for this research project. With this background and the opportunity of already gaining access to the research site, I was able to make contact with some key stakeholders whom I believed offered much to this project. I made a presentation at one of the parent/teachers’ forum regarding the issue of parental involvement. The researcher was provided with the opportunity to invite parents to partake in the study. Moreover, with the assistance of the principal, additional participants were recruited.
The principal, vice principal, heads of upper-level department, parents and students were asked to participate in this research project. The other key participants included Regional Community Relations Officers and Ministry of Education personnel and counter informants.

Upper level year group co-ordinators were asked to provide a list of students from the upper year groups, grades 9-11. Selection of students was based on student outcomes measured by academic progress. That is, students whose academic achievement fell in the categories of (a) average; (b) above average; and below average were chosen. There were 12-15 students selected from each year group. The parents of the students chosen made up the parent sample. The total number of students and parents were forty-nine; and teachers were fifteen.
Chapter 6

Limitations of the Study

Needless to say, the research process is flawed by limitations. In the case of this study, the areas of challenge were in the research design process and methodology. First, this project was a case study and for this reason it was limited because it was one dimensional. Moreover, due to the fact that the sample was small, it could not be regarded as a generalizable representation of the whole school population within the Jamaican system of education. In other words, the data obtained can only be cautiously described as "universalistic". However, it does suggest that the problems being experienced at this research site may well be issues being experienced in other school systems. This limitation implies that there is need for further large-scale studies into the subject of parental involvement and participation.

Second, there are a number of advantages using questionnaires: low cost; avoidance of potential interviewer bias; less pressure for immediate response; providing a greater feeling of anonymity, (Judd, Smith and Kidder 1992: 215), however, there are a number disadvantages. For example, the researcher had some difficulty controlling the data collection process in the following areas: (i) the inability to predict the rate of response (ii). the lack of accuracy and completeness of responses; (iii). the inability to control the context of question answering; (v) the inability of some of the respondents to interpret and answer the questions correctly; and (vi) the instances of students filling out questionnaires for parents. In light of this, the major concern of the researcher was how to establish and safeguard an adequate and representative research sample. This was of particular concern especially seeing that the quality of the research and the research process is determined by a methodologically sound research project. How can the researcher ensure an adequate and representative research sample that would give a "correct" representation of the sample? How would this, in turn, affect the interpretation and concluding results of the project?

It is recognized that there are built-in limitations with the research design and the sample size, which have had an impact on the validity, reliability, and the quality of the
data obtained and its analysis. In order to address this issue, keen attention was paid to triangulate the results and making conceptual linkages with other works done in this area. Furthermore, the inherent limitation of the research, such as the size of the sample and the research methodology, limited the ability of the researcher to make generalizations. Therefore, the research results obtained are suggestive in nature. The researcher made an effort not to go beyond the interpretations based on the reliability of the data obtained. Finally, as stated earlier, the purpose of this research was not intended to form generalizations about the issues being discussed as it relates to the wider school system, but to show that the results obtained may be consistent with the issues and concerns being experienced elsewhere in the school system. It is hoped that the possible transferability and consistency of these findings will speak to the dependability and integrity of this preliminary research endeavour.

Finally, despite the limitations discussed, the project provided significant insight into the issues and concerns related to the home-school relationship, its role in establishing and effective and representative school system, and the relevance of the home-school relationship to address the educational inefficiencies at the research site. From this study, the results obtained suggest that there is growing acceptance that parental involvement and participation is an important component of establishing an effective and representative school system, and its potential to remedy some of the problems facing the school management and administration. In addition, the research also indicates that further studies into this subject is warranted, especially regarding how to address the internal and external impediments to establishing an functional home-school relationship.
Chapter 7
Results And Analysis

Parents, Teachers and Students: How They Responded

The purpose of this case study was to explore the topic and address the relevance of community participation in educational reform within the Jamaican context. Within this general scope, the value and effectiveness of the home-school relationship and its role in establishing an effective school and overall educational system were examined. In addition, particular focus was placed on current strategies aimed at encouraging and strengthening the home-school relationship, with the intention of suggesting recommendations for areas in need of improvement to the school’s administration. Keen attention was placed on parental involvement and participation at the upper level, grades 7-9.

The results obtained from the case study were consistent with other research findings in this area and indicated that parents have a general understanding and appreciation for the value and effectiveness of parental involvement and participation in schooling and its educational benefits. However while this is so, the lack and inconsistency of parental involvement and participation was now becoming an increasing trend at all levels of the school. Moreover, it was noted that the lack of parental involvement was not limited to one general category of the sample but was consistent throughout the sample group. The participants identified three of the main factors, both external and internal, that were responsible for the lack of participation. These factors have, therefore, impacted the nature and dynamic of the home-school relationship, and thereby, the overall management of the school system. This, in effect, has limited the effectiveness of the home-school relationship and the internal operations of the school, consequently resulting in the ineffectiveness of the school system. The barriers are:

1. Declining Socio-Economic Conditions
2. Misperception of the Parent-teacher Relationship
3. Dysfunctional nature of the Parent Teacher’s Association
Parents

Parents should be allowed a democratic input in the running of school affairs, rules, discipline, social and extra curricular activities by setting up appropriate mechanisms by which this can be achieved (Parent Questionnaire).

Forty-nine questionnaires were given out to the parents of the students selected to participate in this study. Twenty-nine of the questionnaires were successfully completed and returned for analysis. This represented a 60 per cent rate of response. The parents in this case study closely reflect the general population of the school's demographics. There was an uneven rural/urban split, with the majority of parents representing the rural areas of the surrounding school district.

The sample consisted of twenty-four females and five males. The majority of the participants, 62%, ranged in ages 31-40; and the minority, 1%, represented the 18-30 and 51 and over age categories. 55% of the sample was from nuclear families; and 41% represented female-headed single parent homes. The educational attainment category indicated that the group sampled had a higher than elementary school education. The majority of the participants, 31%, had obtained high school education, while the least of the participants, 10%, had post-secondary education.

Questionnaires were constructed with the intention of gaining insight into the beliefs and assumptions of parents regarding the issue of parental involvement in schooling; and also to get an idea of how parents constructed their role in the process of parental involvement. Parents responded accordingly. Epstein's Typology of Involvement (see Appendix i) was used as a guide in the body of the questionnaire to assist parents in identifying the type, nature and level of their involvement in the schooling of their children. Some of the categories of involvement highlighted in Epstein's Typology include:

1. The Basic Obligation of Parents (Type I)
2. The Basic Obligation of Schools, Communications (Type II)
3. Parental Involvement at the School (Type III)
4. Parental involvement in Learning Activities at Home (Type IV)
5. Parental Involvement in Governance and Advocacy (Type V)
6. Collaboration and Exchanges with the Community (Type VI)

(Epstein's Six Typologies of Parental Involvement)

In conjunction with Epstein's Typology of Involvement, a Scale of Involvement was also constructed so as to establish the levels of parental involvement and participation. (see appendix)

The data analyzed indicates that parents, regardless of family size and composition, educational attainment, age, sex and marital status, have the highest regard for the educative and socializing task of schooling. As a result, there is growing acceptance among them as to the value and effectiveness of parental involvement and participation, and the essential role of this educative process in the establishment of a representative and effective school and educational system. Based on Epstein's Typology, parents overwhelmingly defined their roles in the process of learning as an "active" participation in the everyday school activities of their children. Parental involvement and participation is the "supportive" network between parents and teachers in creating a stimulating learning environment for the student, at home and school, that will enhance and nurture the academic, social and spiritual well-being of the individual students, while establishing a democratic and effective home/school community.

However, while parents understood and appreciated the critical function of the home-school relationship in schooling and their role in this process, there were a number of critical issues and concerns that are limiting the effectiveness of the home-school relationship and the efforts to strengthen it. These barriers will be introduced and discussed in depth in the proceeding pages.

In order to understand the value and effectiveness of the home-school relationship and its specific function within the process of creating an effective school system, it was necessary to test the hypothesis: parental involvement and participation in the schooling of students has a direct and positive impact on the academic progress and development of students, and creating an effective and representative school environment. A correlation of role construction (how parents defined their role in the process of parental involvement and participation) and the levels of parental involvement and participation were conducted. It was noted, and consistent with educational research
data, that parental involvement and participation has a direct and positive relationship with academic progress and development. But more importantly, the data indicates that high academic progress and development was influenced and determined, not only by parental role construction, but also by the level of parental involvement and participation in the schooling process of the child. In other words, parental role construction and parental involvement and participation are two critical factors in the process being discussed.

The two essential components of the home-school relationship inform and interact with each other: role construction influences the level of participation, and the level of participation defines the parental role. This result affirms the conclusion reached by Humprey-Dempsey & Sandler (1985), where they identified parental role construction as one of the critical influencing factors in the basic decision of parents to participate in the education of their children. In other words, role construction is admittedly an essential ingredient in the process of parental participation. But while this is so, role construction is a necessary, but not a sufficient variable to determine and influence high academic progress and development. The level of parental involvement and participation is also a prerequisite and a necessary condition. And while parental involvement and participation was shown to have a positive impact on academic progress and development, it also contributed to the creation of a total learning experience for teachers, parents and students in a healthy home/school environment.

This was indicated by the data that emphasized that the parents who perceived themselves as integral players in the schooling of their children, were “actively” involved in the school life of their child (i.e. attended P.T.A regularly, contacted teachers on a regular basis for progress reports, attended school activities to support student and school) saw high academic progress and development in the child. However, while parents understood that their role and level of parental involvement and participation were critical and influential factors of the high academic progress and development of their child, only a minority were able to actively be involved and participate in the academic development of their child. This has resulted in a number of issues that are now negatively impacting the effectiveness of the home-school relationship and the effectiveness of the school system. The data shows that only 27% of parents had a “high” participation rate, while 62% accounted for “medium” and 13% “low participation
It must be carefully noted that while the inconsistent involvement and participation of the “medium to low” group may be easily considered as an indication of a lack of interest on behalf of these parents, any such conclusion without further analysis of the reasons for these results would be misguided and misleading. A significant number of this sample group, especially the female single parents, expressed with regret that because of the declining socio-economic conditions, their competing home responsibilities, their work situations, and the fact that they are the sole bread-winner of their families, these situations do not permit them to “actively” participate in the schooling process of their children. However, a number of these parents have made it clear that while they are unable to participate at school, they make every effort to participate in schooling activities at home when they can. Despite this endeavour, the inconsistent nature of parental involvement among the parents in question is limiting the dynamic and effective home-school relationship.

Unfortunately, the crippling effect of the declining socio-economic conditions and reality in Jamaica has had a negative ramification on the ability of parents to consistently and effectively be involved and participate in the learning experience of their children. The school’s administration has cited a number of issues and concerns that have emerged from the lack of parental support. These include lack of discipline, growing incidence of verbal and physical abuse towards teachers and students, and negative student outcomes. The external factor of the socio-economic condition has negatively impacted the internal operations of the school, thereby limiting the development of an effective home-school relationship and community.

While parents express relative satisfaction with the general aims and objectives of the school’s position and efforts to encourage and strengthen the home-school relationship, they have emphasized that more needs to be done on their and the school’s behalf. One such area identified was the P.T.A.

5. The “high”, “medium” and “low” categories of the involvement and participation rates are defined by the Scale of Involvement, with the categories of Involvement and Participation corresponding to the categories outlined on the Scale of Involvement.
Parents have stressed that the P.T.A has a critical function to explore creative ways to build support and encourage dialogue within the home-school relationship so that the home/school community can adequately and efficiently address the limitations of this educational resource, and their negative effects on school administration and management. In addition, parents also highlighted:

1. The open-door policy of the school needs to be more “open”. A number of parents complained that they “felt left out” of the decision making process regarding the issues concerning their children.

2. Lack of communication was also cited as a sore point.

3. Parents feeling that their children would be “targeted” if they made any complaints about the teachers.

4. Parents were not “invited” to participate in some of the school activities.

5. Parents are in need of more parent-teacher interaction outside of the Open Days when parents pick up reports and get to meet teachers. Parents were only contacted when their child was in trouble.

6. Parents prefer the institution of a Parent-teachers’ Day so that they can build a relationship and gain mutual understanding of each other’s role in the learning process.

7. Parents feel that too often they are “lectured” to in the P.T.A meetings, and not asked for their feedback.

8. Change in “Open Days” and other school activities to accommodate the work schedules of parents.

Teachers

I think that parents and teachers need to work together more. For instance, before the start of a new year the two parties could sit together and plan the year’s calendar. They could discuss the year’s curricular, discipline, and other school activities. Generally relaying information, which would ensure that parents and teachers understand and appreciate each other.

Finally more social events between teachers and parents are needed which would assist in closing the gap between them. Maybe then both parties would stop searching for ways to blame the each other.

(Teacher Questionnaire)
Given the context of the educational change process in Jamaica, teachers, like parents, are becoming more vocal in their demands for the improvement of the quality and standard of educational provisions and for equitable educational opportunities. Teachers are becoming more accepting of the idea that parents can make significant contributions to the establishment of an effective and representative school system, if they are given the chance.

Fifteen members of staff, fourteen females and one male, were invited to participate in the questionnaire session. The teachers sampled ranged in ages 22-50. The teachers had a number of years of teaching experience. The majority, 87 per cent accounted for 5-9 years, and the minority, 13 per cent, had 12-16 years of teaching experience. Sixty-two per cent of teachers were married and 38 per cent were single.

The opening quotation provides a glimpse of the nature and the resulting dynamics of the parent-teacher relationship at the research site. Teachers were asked to elaborate on the importance of parental involvement and participation in the schooling process, and its related advantages and benefits to improve the home-school relationship and the school system.

**Question 1:** What is the assumption and attitude of teachers towards the importance of parental involvement and participation in the learning process of their children, and in establishing an effective and representative school system?

Regardless of age, sex, marital status and years of experience, there was general consensus among teachers that parental involvement and participation in schooling is of significant benefit to establishing a total learning experience for students. In addition, parental involvement and participation is viewed as an essential factor in fostering and maintaining a healthy parent-teacher relationship, and a sure way to improve the school system. As a matter of fact, a number of teachers highlighted that they have noted a direct and positive correlation between student academic progress and parental involvement and participation in schooling in a number of their best students.

Furthermore, a number of teachers with whom I had casual conversations on the topic being discussed expressed their excitement at having such an ideal school system.
Many of them, roughly 80 per cent, emphasized that having an effective home-school relationship would be ideal to address some of the critical issues and concerns, such as the lack of discipline and the decline in academic performance, facing the school at this point in time. Almost ninety per cent of teachers were of the opinion that the lack of discipline was a direct result of inadequate parenting skills, and parents not being supported enough of the school to address these issues.

In all my fifteen years of teaching, I have never seen such in-discipline. It seems to be getting worse and worse. I do believe and am certain that if we had more parents supporting the school and paying more attention to their children, the issue of in-discipline would not be this out of control.

(Teacher Questionnaire).

While teachers were positive in their responses regarding the advantages and benefits of parental involvement and participation in schooling, their attitude towards any parent-teacher initiative in the context of the present parent-teacher relationship, was one of ambivalence. Teachers argued that given the contentious parent-teacher relationship, a home-school partnership in this environment would be unproductive. Furthermore, teachers noted that the lack of parental involvement and the non-supportive nature of the parent-teacher relationship have contributed to some of the deficiencies of the school system, and because of this teachers are wary of the parent-teacher relationship. Overall, teachers are unsatisfied with the level of parental involvement and its inconsistency. For example, teachers have noted that parental participation, such as parent’s attendance to P.T.A and casual visits to see subject teachers of their children within the last school year, fell sadly below fifty per cent.

Right now teachers and parents don’t see eye to eye. They see each other as enemies. If we intend to change the nature of the parent-teacher relationship and to address some of the issues facing the school, the two parties have to start working together for the sake of the students.

(Teacher Questionnaire).

**Question 2: How is parental involvement and participation defined by teachers?**

Teachers perceived parental involvement and participation as the “active” participation of parents in the learning process of their children through formal or informal contact with the school. Teachers were asked to comment on whether they thought there was any place for parents in the classroom. Teachers, in excess of ninety
per cent, overwhelmingly responded that in an ideal situation, they saw advantages to having parents in the classroom in a number of supervised capacities. For example, "parents could help with teaching and learning activities", and "they would have a first hand experience seeing what we do as teachers and how their children behave in class" (Teacher Questionnaire). But teachers were cautious. They also saw significant disadvantages to this enterprise.

I see a number of problems here. Parents will want to take control of the classroom and criticize us teachers and our teaching styles. And what about the parents who cannot come to participate? It would probably create resentment among students and parents. It seems that the disadvantages out weigh the advantages. (Teacher Questionnaire)

Some other concerns highlighted by teachers were they feared parents taking over the class and adding to the discord. And finally, the lack of teaching skills is also another important point to consider.

**Question 3: From the teacher's perspective, what are some of the barriers to the home-school relationship and how can they be addressed?**

Ninety per cent of the teachers agree that the major barrier to the parent-teacher relationship was as a result of parents not being interested enough in the academic well being of their children. Teachers cited that parents lacked the adequate skills needed to raise their children and the “don’t care” attitude of some parents is also cited as a major impediment. One teacher commented: “The parents of our students today are themselves children. They are immature, irresponsible, and generally lack the necessary skills needed to be good, responsible parents. They have no idea about what they are doing, and so most times we are left with the responsibility of being parent, and teacher. The responsibility is getting too much for us. We cannot do it on our own we need the assistance of the parents” (personal conversation, May 23, 2000).

Teachers were asked what they thought were some ways that the barriers to the home-school relationship could be addressed. Teachers emphasized that:

1. There needs to be a joint effort on behalf of parents and teachers to explore ways where the home-school relationship can be enhanced and strengthened.

2. Parents need to be more responsible with their children
3. Parents need to acquire the necessary parenting skills, which could be provided by the school through the guidance department.

4. There needs to be more interaction between teachers and parents. Parents and teachers need to have more direct communication.

5. Parents and teachers need to renew their commitment towards the interest of the students and school. We need to stop blaming each other.

**Students**

I perceive parental involvement in school as the active role of parents and teenagers in the school to make the home an integral part of school, and the school an integral part of home. This is very important because home is referred to as the first school and parents as the first teachers in a child’s life. Therefore, when the child actually begins school, healthy social and academic development cannot only be done by teachers, since the parents have more influence on their children than any one else.

(Student Questionnaire).

As critical consumers of the educational goods and services being provided by the Jamaican system of education, students are essential to this process of inquiry for two main reasons: (i). students can act as barometers of the current strategies aimed at encouraging the home-school relationship; and (ii). students can provide a wealth of information which can be used to improve the home-school partnership.

Forty-nine questionnaires were given out to students; 35 were completed and returned. The corresponding return rate was 69 per cent. The majority of students, 65 per cent represented the 15-19 age group; 35 per cent ranged in ages from 12-14, and 0 per cent ages 9-11. The grade levels represented were as follows: grade 9 – 26 per cent; grade 10 – 29 per cent; and grade 11 – 44 per cent.

Like parents, students were asked to comment on the value and effectiveness of their parent involvement and participation in their schooling experience and its impact on their academic progress and development. Overwhelming, more than ninety per cent of the students agreed that parental involvement and participation is essential and critical in providing them with a “stable”, “nurturing” and “total learning environment necessary for a healthy academic, social and spiritual development” (student questionnaire). Students further cited that parental involvement was vital to establish closer and meaningful linkages between the home and the school; needed to nurture better understanding between parents and teachers regarding the school’s expectations and the child’s
capacity and ability to meet these expectations; and finally, a healthy home-school relationship will contribute to the overall improvement of the school by improving the child's attitude and behaviour towards school.

However, while the importance of the home-school relationship is recognized, students have noted that for many of them, parental involvement and participation is lacking in their schooling experience, and to some extent, has had an impact on their academic progress and development. For a significant number of them this impact has been negative. But students have been careful to note that the decline or perceived "lack of parental involvement" is not to be misconstrued as an indication that "parents lack of interest" in their schooling activities. But rather, students have cited that there are a number of factors limiting the capacity and the ability of their parents to participate in their schooling, and the overall impact of the effectiveness of the parent-teacher relationship. For example, the majority of students, 90 per cent, highlighted the current parent-teacher relationship and the competing home demands and responsibilities, including work situations as the two most influential factors limiting a fruitful and effective home-school relationship.

First, students have suggested that despite the "open door policy" emphasized by the school's administration, the relationship between teachers and parents is not indicative of this policy. In other words, the teacher-parent relationship was not nurturing or facilitating a healthy home-school partnership. Parents and teachers don't seem to see eye to eye on a number of issues, especially discipline. Teachers mostly blame parents for the lack of discipline being exhibited by the students, and it consequently impacts on the decline of the school's standards. Parents, in turn, are resentful that they are being solely held responsible for their child's misbehaviour, especially when they are trying their best to meet the demands of home, school and work in these unpredictable socio-economic times. The built-up frustration often explodes at the P.T.A meetings. According to one student participant: "my mother tells me that the P.T.A is sometimes a waste of time because it usually ends up in a shouting match between parents or teachers and parents" (personal communication, May 21, 2000). Consequently, this resentment has made parents defensive and unsupportive of any potential parent-teacher initiative.
Needless to say, these kinds of behaviours do not encourage or strengthen an effective home-school relationship, but rather does the reverse. Parents and teachers need to recognize that they are under the watchful eyes of the students who are able to detect the animosity between teachers and parents. This, unfortunately, creates a negative environment, which impacts, parents, teachers, and most of all students. A possible step for the school community to address some of the discipline issues is to provide parenting skill workshops and assistance with students at risk.

Second, as stated earlier, the declining socio-economic conditions have had adverse effects on the ability of parents to effectively participate in the educative process of their children. A significant number of students, almost 85 per cent, commented that competing home demands and responsibilities and the work situations of their parents are among the major factors preventing the effective involvement and participation of their parents in the schooling experience.

I stay at home with my ailing grandmother, while my mother goes out of town for work. Because of this my mother cannot come to school to see my subject teachers, neither can she attend the P.T.A meetings. I know if she could she would come, but the reality is she can not.

(Students Questionnaire).

While a number of students were understanding of their parents inability to effectively participate in their schooling, they were also very disappointed and concerned at the lack of their parents involvement and its impact on their academic progress and development. Roughly 45 per cent of the students sampled emphasized that they wished that at least one of their parents could come to school at least once a month to speak with their subject teachers or to attend the P.T.A meetings. But for the students with single parents, parental involvement of their parents with their work situation is understandably a challenge.

An interesting indication of how these students are being negatively affected by the lack of their parent's involvement, is that these students feel isolated and unwanted. One particular student has commented that seeing the parents of the other students come and interact with the teachers and take part in some of the school activities, makes her feel “left out” and as though her parents do not care for her. It must be noted that there is a danger in these feelings being experienced by these students, which may lead
to undesirable attitudes and behaviours. According to Lee, Smith and Byrk (1993), Epstein, J.L. (1990), and Hester (1989) the lack of parental involvement in this scenario results in negative implications on the academic progress and development of the student. In particular, Lee, Smith and Byrk (1993) speak of the concept of negative student outcomes which are recognized by students becoming withdrawn and disengaged from the schooling experience and learning process. In addition, there is a decline in academic performance and behaviour.

On the other hand, there is a significant number of students who are experiencing the same situation as was previously described. The only major difference is these students have not been negatively affected by their parent's lack of involvement; rather, they have excelled in their academic endeavours. One particular student has commented that while she is sometimes disappointed about not having her mother, a single-parent, actively involved in her school life, she has recognized that her mother's work situation is the cause for her absence; and that the efforts of her mother are being made on her behalf, so that they can have their basic needs met.

My mother is a single-parent. I have to depend on her to provide my basic needs and also my books, lunch money and bus fare. I am sad, at times, when I see the other parents come out to see their children and the teachers. But I know that if my mother could come she would. My mother is working to support me and to provide the things I need to do well in school. My mother may not be able to come to school, but she encourages me and tells me she is proud of my achievements.  

(Student Questionnaire).

From the student perspective, we have observed two different responses to the lack of parental involvement and participation caused by the declining socio-economic conditions. It is evident that from the situations described that communication between parent and student is key. Parents, if they are unable to actively participate in the schooling experience of their children, need to let their children know this and the cause for their lack of active participation. Parents should also endeavour to show interest in their children. They can do this by putting some quality time aside to do home work activities with their children. This will give parents the "rare" opportunity to get to know their children, with the hope of encouraging their dreams and aspirations. In other words, partake in school activities at home with their children. It must be noted that while this endeavour is better than not showing any interest at all in their children, nothing can take
the place of active parental involvement and participation at school and the home-school partnership. It is therefore suggested that parents who are experiencing difficulty taking active part in their child's schooling, make the school aware of this so that alternative measures can be taken to address the issue.

Finally, as stated earlier, students overwhelmingly agreed that parental involvement and participation is an essential component of their academic progress and development. But while this is so, an important emerging theme from a small, yet significant number of students, was the need to be "independent", while being surrounded by parental support and encouragement. Furthermore, students expressed the desire to be more involved in the development of the home-school partnership. In other words, many of the students believed that having them or a student representative on the P.T.A board would give them the opportunity to contribute to the parent-teacher relationship and the effective management of the school.
There is growing acceptance among parents, teachers and students that parental involvement and participation in the educative and socializing task of schooling is an essential component in the creation of an effective home-school relationship and school system. However, while this is so, there is general consensus among the participants that there are a number of significant factors affecting the home-school relationship, which are limiting the development of an effective school system, and the educational change process. These barriers include:

1. Declining socio-economic conditions;
2. Misperceptions of the Parent-teacher Relationship;
3. Dysfunctional Nature of the Parent Teacher’s Association.

**Economic Recession and Educational Development**

In order to fully understand the impact of the economic recession on the development of education in Jamaica, a critical analysis is warranted. This analysis is framed in Lee, Bryk and Smith’s argument that school systems do not originate and develop in vacuums. Rather, school systems are determined and influenced by external forces, such as socio-political and socio-economic forces and structures that directly influence and determine the structure, organization and the internal operations of a school, and the school’s effectiveness. It is in this context that the external factor of the economic recession and its impact on the development of the Jamaican system of education will be examined.

**Educational Development in the Caribbean: The Post-war Period.**

Any examination of educational developments in the Caribbean, or the lack thereof, must include a candid discussion of the impact of the economic recession on the educational change process. Against the backdrop of considerable and significant political change, a nationalist consciousness emerged in the social psyche of the newly independent Caribbean states to aggressively pursue the route to social and economic development. Recognizing that a development and modernization strategy was necessary to bring about social and economic change, the political nationalists established education as an essential component of the development process. Education was explicitly enunciated as the “promise and premise of nationalist
movements; and towards this end, a national commitment to large-scale educational expansion was implemented, especially at the secondary level.

...Jamaica, along with other Commonwealth Caribbean territories, experienced a surge of interest in secondary education— an interest which has been reflected in a fairly consistent policy of expansion in that field. This expansion has for the most part taken the form of an increase in the visible facilities of secondary schooling...these changes have been related to and influenced by the growth of nationalist feelings associated with the achievement of political independence, the growth in understanding and consciousness of national needs and problems, and the growing acceptance of responsibility for meeting these needs and finding solutions to problems identified.... (King 1983:51).

Large-scale educational expansion is a capital-intensive endeavour; and therefore, requires a certain level of economic development. During the 1970s the uninterrupted economic growth of the major local industries- sugar, bauxite, and tourism— in Jamaica facilitated the economic feasibility by which the educational expansion efforts were realized. In addition, external funding was made available by bi-lateral and multi-lateral agencies, such as the World Bank. Consequently, government expenditure on education on an average increased significantly resulting in quantitative and qualitative educational reform and expansion. Hallack (1990) confirms, “such rapid expansion required considerable increase in expenditure. Unesco figures show that total public expenditure for education increased in developing countries from US$8 billion in 1965 to about US$40 billion in the mid-1970s and to more than US$93 billion by 1980” (34).

Generally speaking, the quantitative and qualitative indicators reflect impressive improvements in a number of areas. According to Miller (1992), some of the improvements include:

- Mass early childhood education was created. Several Commonwealth countries had established infant education programmes during colonial period. The age of entry to primary school was five. However, in several other nations where children had entered primary school at seven, the age of entry was lowered to six. Throughout the region, early childhood programmes that enrolled toddlers from three on were established. The programmes focused on poor and rural children. By the late 1960s, more than half the children of primary age were enrolled in some learning institution in nearly all Caribbean countries...Current enrolment levels are at 75 to 80 percent.

- The mass elementary school system was transformed to provide universal primary education. The curriculum was reformed to shift educational content away from the imperialist ideology of the former colonial power and focus it instead on national ideology and local and indigenous illustrations and materials. Steps were taken to improve the quality of primary education. Adult literacy and skills training
programmes were provided to reclaim those whom the colonial system had bypassed.

- The small and restricted secondary school systems were reformed to provide mass secondary education, with more than 50 percent of the 12-17 age cohort given access to secondary education in most countries, and universal secondary education in a few.

- University education was firmly established as a feature of Caribbean education. While restricted to an intellectual and social elite, it was an integral part of education in the region.

- Primary, secondary, and university (tertiary) education were articulated into a single education system. While the dual system was not eliminated, notice was served as to its elimination.

- International assistance and external borrowing became a feature of educational development. During the colonial period, educational development and recurrent operations were financed almost totally from local revenue. While some external assistance was provided during specific periods, education was seldom the beneficiary of direct financial assistance from the colonial powers. External borrowing to support educational development is an entirely recent phenomenon in Caribbean educational history. (Miller 1992: 226-27)

In addition to the preceding list of educational achievements, Hallack (1990) adds:

- An enormous effort has been made to recruit and train teaching staff at all levels to meet the challenges of enrolment growth between 1960-1980. The statistical data below for this period indicates that the rapid growth in primary enrolment was matched by an equivalent increase in primary level teachers, but at the secondary level, the number of pupils rose faster than teachers in Africa and Latin America, and student enrolment grew faster than teacher numbers in all geographic regions at the tertiary level. This means that student-teacher ratios increased at the secondary and higher education levels as enrolment expanded...

- Increase in enrolment has necessitated huge investments be made in new school buildings and facilities. Between 1950-1985, more than 1.3 million new primary schools were built (throughout the developing countries combined), representing an increase of 280 per cent...Also advancements were made in the management of book production programmes.

- Improvements in educational provisions resulted in the development of new methods of teaching and learning through new delivery systems based on televisions and radios.

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6 Hallack's observation is a general overview of educational development in developing countries.
Increased reliance on non-formal and informal education to increase learning opportunities for adults and children. This resulted in impressive and favourable increases in literacy rates.

(Hallack 1990: 18-19).

It is without a doubt that the post-war period witnessed dramatic and unprecedented developments in the field of education. But while these developments were underway, new crises simultaneously emerged in this sector. Hallack (1990) states:

...the signs of an emerging or potential crisis including escalation of costs and expenditures, declining quality, doubts about the relevance of the curriculum for emerging social and economic needs, imbalances between supply and demand for educational manpower leading to further imbalances between educational aspirations and employment opportunities, a growing problem of educated unemployed in many countries and continuing widening between standards and participation in rural and urban areas. It required time and social stability to solve these problems, and in many developing countries, it was impossible to achieve social stability. The problems were thus not overcome, but continued throughout the decade of the 1970s and into the 1980s... (35).

In other words, the two decades 1960 to 1980 ushered in a wave of quantitative and qualitative educational developments. However, the following decades brought a halt to the transformation, expansion, and qualitative improvements in education in the Caribbean, as regional economies experienced deep economic recession. Ultimately, this created a hostile environment for the educational change process, which in turn, impacted access, quality and efficiency, and equality in educational provisions and opportunities. The deep economic recession would prove a severe impediment to the educational change process.

**Jamaica**

As previously stated, the economic recession in the industrialized nations had a devastating impact on the social and economic growth of the Caribbean. Jamaica was no exception. According to the World Bank, the Jamaican economy from 1973 to 1980 experienced a severe contraction due to negative external shocks and inappropriate domestic policies. In the first half of the 1980s, reforms began slowly and were delayed by excessive opportunities for external borrowing. Reform efforts were inadequate to...

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restore sustained growth. The overall public deficit remained excessively high at 16 percent of GDP; inflation ran at 15 per cent, and the external current deficit also remained high at 14 percent of the GDP. Total external debt per capita rose from $1,904 in 1980 to $4,724 million in 1987. This led to a negative balance of payments and a spiraling deficit. External funding was mobilized from the World Bank and the IMF. The remedial measures stipulated by the IMF and World Bank resulted in: (a) devaluation of the local currency, (b) reduction in government expenditures, and (c) the increase of exports. These reforms were limited in their efforts to restore the economy. Instead, the social and economic disparities were escalated and are still being experienced today.

After 15 years of discontinuous and incomplete efforts, Jamaica saw low GDP growth of about 1 per cent over 1990-1995, a high incidence of poverty (32 per cent of the population lives in poverty) and violence (777 murders in 1995 alone), and frequent industrial strikes (averaging one per day and resulting in work stoppages leading to an estimated loss of GDP of 1 per cent per year) and deeper structural problems in the financial sector and the labour market, and crises in the water supply and public transport system. The macro-economic policies introduced over the 1990-95 period were aimed at, among other things, the attainment of a viable Balance of Payments (BOP) position, the lowering of domestic inflation, and of an economic base conducive to the long-term growth and development. These objectives were sought through a programme of tight demand management coupled with a comprehensive structural adjustment programme. After all this effort, the stringent structural adjustment policy failed to produce the anticipated result of developmental bliss.

According to the World Bank data, over the past years (1990-1995) population growth rates have been relatively low but have exceeded those of GDP resulting in the persistence of high levels of poverty, environmental degradation, underdevelopment and unsustainable development. The incidence of poverty, although falling, has remained relatively high. The Survey of Living Conditions 1990 reported that 25 percent of the population fell below the poverty line. This figure rose to 37.7 percent in 1992, however, it was reduced in 1993 to 28 percent. Poverty in Jamaica continues to be less a problem of unemployment but more an issue of the “working poor”. The dilemma of poverty is all the more intense because breaking its cycle is so difficult: the children of poor families have a high probability of becoming poor themselves because of lack of adequate
nutrition, education and health services, especially in their early years. Jamaica's women have been the ones most affected by these changes. The economic condition in poor households headed by women (44%, 1992) remained precarious and their income is the lowest level among the poor.

Children account for approximately one-third of the Jamaican population and some 40 percent of the childhood population exists in extreme poverty. Many of these children reside in poor urban communities characterized by low levels of employment, inadequate housing and related facilities, overcrowding, inadequate health services, high incidence of violence and a large number of single-headed family households. These conditions coupled with the decline in family values and the deficiencies in parenting skills have resulted in an increasing incidence of child abuse, abandonment and neglect. They have given rise to the phenomenon of street children as more children are forced into earning a living or to living on the streets. This group of the population was of grave concern to the government. In 1994, there were an estimated 2500 street children. To address this, the government has formulated a National Youth Policy aimed at creating an environment in which young people will be encouraged to develop their full mental, social, spiritual and physical potential through the provisions of economic and training opportunities.

The government has introduced a programme aimed at correcting the socio-economic imbalances. During the plan review period, the government continued its Human Resources Development Programme (HRDP) with its main objectives being to restore the flow of funds to core social sectors, with particular emphasis on the poor, while improving the efficiency and equity of these expenditures. The major policy measures included: (i) an increased share of the Ministry of Education and Culture-MOEC recurrent expenditures devoted to primary health care and basic education (grades 1-9); (ii) improved targeting of nutrition aid; (iii) increased cost recovery in public hospitals and secondary and tertiary institutions; and (iv) institutional strengthening and impact monitoring. The government is now developing a comprehensive programme of poverty eradication, which will supersede its poverty alleviation programme of the past years.
Education and training are two of the most important elements for the development of human capital, and thus poverty reduction. The education sector, however, has suffered spending cuts during the recent years, evidenced by the gradual decline in recurrent expenditures as a percentage of the National Budget. Similarly, there was a slight reduction in the education expenditure as a percentage of the GDP. Only in 1993/94 was there an increase in the Ministry of Education and Culture's budget as the percentage of the GDP; one contributing factor was a substantial increase in teachers' salaries. The Government recognized, however, that the quality of education goes well beyond the level of teachers' salaries, and relates to other issues. As a result, the Government implemented a number of social development projects. Many of which are financed through aid from international agencies.

According to Samoff (1999),

...given the economic crises that succeeded earlier development optimism and structural adjustment replaced rapid development as the realistic, short-term objective in Third World countries, there was a strong pressure to assign the highest priority of available funds to directly productive activities, which often did not include education. How then to educate teachers, develop the textbooks, or equip the science laboratories? Or more commonly, how to fix the leaking roof (65).

For many countries, like Jamaica, the availability of external funding has become the "center of gravity" for education and development initiatives. Consequently new development and reforms initiatives are highly dependent on external funding and technical support, and therefore responsive to agency stipulation and guidelines.

...by the 1990's the World Bank allocation of nearly US$ 1.5 billion made it the largest single source of external financing for education in developing countries. But while it remains substantial, its influence far exceeds it volume. The dependence on external funding has lead to both explicit conditions imposed by the funding agencies and more subtle influences. Sometimes the relationship is aggressively manipulative. . (Samoff 1999:67).

The reality of these stringent neo-liberal fiscal stabilization and economic adjustment policies has had obvious socio-economic and educational consequences. The prescribed conditionalities were aimed at strict control of fiscal budget, particularly, current accounts, restrictions on the central bank's lending to public sector, restrictions on the expansion of credits by the banking and financial systems, exchange rate
devaluation, increases in real interest rates, control in the rate of wages; removal of subsidies, price control and the deregulation of imports (Miller 1989:214). While the World Bank has not prescribed any specific educational measures, the conditions outlined have been used as a justification of numerous indiscriminate and severe cutbacks to the educational sector and to other sectoral provisions.

The ripple effect of the imposed conditionalities has severely limited the capacity of developing nations to further the educational change process. As stated before, “the educational reforms efforts under these conditions, ebb and flow with the global market forces. Under these precarious circumstances, there are no guarantees that the reforms will hold. On the contrary, all reforms can be easily reversed depending on the priority of the day” (Lawson 1998: 70). Seeing that education is a vital and dynamic component of social and economic development, the cuts to the education sector have limited the capacity of the development process. Consequently, this circumstance has frustrated the educational change process and the human development initiative, and has negatively impacted access, equality, efficiency and quality of educational provisions and opportunities. Furthermore, the capacity of the government to determine and implement specific educational choices has been severely restricted. The impacts of these “remedial” measures were real and negative, impacting the social, economic and political spheres of the developing societies, while creating a cycle of indebtedness.

The educational imbalances of the 1970s and 1980s, the impact of the World Bank and IMF conditionalities, the ensuing debt crisis and the escalating socio-economic disparities have had a negative effect on the socio-economic development of developing nations. At the socio-economic level, the high rate of borrowing, compounded by the fragile dependent socio-economic structures of these societies have severely weakened the ability of the developing countries to service their debt. Moreover, this has also weakened the bargaining power of these developing societies, putting these developing nations in a fragile and vulnerable position. In addition, these economic imbalances resulted in the retrogression of the real GDP per capita, which has in turn, contributed to further social, economic and political disparities.
Table 1
Caribbean – External Debt Indicators of Caribbean States as Percentage of GDP During the Period, 1986-1990.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
<th>DEBT LEVEL/US$m</th>
<th>DEBT as % of GDP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antigua</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominica</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grenada</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St.Kitts</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St.Lucia</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahamas*</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbados**</td>
<td>506</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belize</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guyana***</td>
<td>1864</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>4367</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinidad</td>
<td>1808</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>4408</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>844</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suriname****</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 1988
** 1989- Medium and Long Term Debt
*** Medium and Long Term Debt

Source: World Bank (1990c); Commonwealth Secretariat (1990a), plus World Bank estimates for Haiti, Suriname and Dominican Republic.

Another dimension of the economic imbalance and deficit has resulted in what Miller describes as state of economic retrogression. Miller (1992) emphasizes:

...the real GDP per capita in 1987 fell to the level comparable to that of 1979 for the region on a whole. However, the average masked wide disparities in the degree of the decline in the different countries. Caribbean member countries of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) retrogressed to 8 years in the case of Barbados, to 27 years in the case of Haiti and Guyana. The 1980s witnessed the worst decline in the economic development in the region since the 1930s... . (p.198).

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Bringing to light the fact that the economic retrogression has had a negative impact on the economic performance and social well being of the Caribbean economies.

**Table 2**

**Retrogression in Real GDP per Capita: 1987**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Years Retrogressed</th>
<th>Comparable Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guyana, Haiti, Nicaragua</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador, Venezuela</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bahamas</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile, Guatemala</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honduras</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costa Rica, Peru</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecuador, Suriname, Trinidad</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbados, Mexico, Uruguay</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominican Republic, Paraguay</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panama</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil, Colombia</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America and Caribbean</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1979</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


As stated earlier, in order to address the economic imbalances, the Caribbean states sought financial assistance from the World Bank and the IMF. However, the economic deficit is being resonated at the social, political and educational levels, resulting in serious repercussions and limitation on the process of social and economic development. While the economic prescriptions, outlined by the World Bank and the IMF, do not have specific educational measures, the policies stipulated have been used as justification for numerous cutbacks in the educational sector. The specific areas being affected include: (a) public expenditure on education; (b) enrollment rates; (c) training and retention of qualified teaching personnel; teacher’s salaries, and the overall (d) quality and efficiency of the delivery of educational provisions. Therefore, the economic deficit has negatively affected the access, quality and efficiency, and equality in educational opportunities and provisions. Finally, the capacity of the government to continue financing large-scale educational expansion and development has been restricted, adding a new dimension to the educational problems and imbalances. A number of developing countries, including Jamaica, have not recovered from these severe conditionalities.
**Trends in Educational Financing**

The economic performance of a nation affects its educational provisions in two principal ways: it influences the availability of both public and private resources to finance education and training; and together with the structure of growth it determines the level and mix of demand and growth (World Bank 1993: xv). In light of this fact and the socio-economic conditions of Jamaican economy, it is reasonable to conclude that the ability of the government to finance educational development is severely limited; and in addition to this, the process of social and economic development is compromised. The decline in educational financing has had an adverse impact on teachers, and the quality and efficiency of educational provisions.

The trends in education indicate that by the 1970s, education was the largest single recipient of public expenditure. However, the drastic reduction of in the public expenditure on education has had direct implications and consequences for education, especially where the "cost of goods and services important to education are concerned". For example Miller (1990) describes, "in 1983 the government’s expenditure on education stood at 19.8 per cent of the recurrent budget. In 1985-86, the percentage of the public expenditure on education declined to 15 per cent..."(151). By 1995, educational statistics indicated that the total educational expenditure as per cent of the government expenditure had fallen to 10.6 per cent. Therefore suggesting that over the past decade investments in the education sector as overall capital expenditure have also declined significantly. This is regardless of the education sector’s strong dependency on aid flows, particularly concessionary financing, which the World Bank data (1993) has indicated “has been increased in Jamaica in recent years (representing 20 per cent of the education budget in 1990), 80 per cent of these outlays have been funded via foreign loans and grants” (xvii). For example, within more than a decade, there has been an increase in educational development initiatives, which has been furnished by an increase in external funding. Between 1988 and 1998, Jamaica has mobilized grants and loans in excess of $US 119.28 million.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Funding Agency</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Loan</th>
<th>Grants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational Programme</td>
<td>World Bank</td>
<td>1988-1994</td>
<td>US$8.3 million</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation and Student Loan Project</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sector Development Project</td>
<td>World Bank</td>
<td>1989-1996</td>
<td>US$33.44 million</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Education Improvement Programme II</td>
<td>IDB Nordic Development Fund OPEC</td>
<td>1993-1999</td>
<td>US$34.3</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Schools Textbook Project</td>
<td>ODA, UK</td>
<td>1987-1997</td>
<td>J$5.133 million</td>
<td>J$0.58 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reform of Secondary Education Project</td>
<td>World Bank</td>
<td>1992-2000</td>
<td>US$43.24 million</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Education Assistance Project II</td>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>1990-1995</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>US$9.2 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Planning Initiatives Project</td>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>1996-1998</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>US$170,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Education and Culture, 1997; (US$1 = J$34.8).
Table 4\textsuperscript{10}

**Actual Educational Expenditure in Jamaica: 1980-87**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Recurrent</th>
<th>Capital</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Share of GNP (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Jamaica's Presentation at the Caribbean Consultation. (Miller 1992: 29)

However, despite significant resource flows to the education sector, there has been a decline in government expenditure on education. This would indicate or suggest that educational funding does not always go towards education but to finance more "immediate" sectoral deficits. Under these circumstances, the educational change process is uncertain and compromised.

\textsuperscript{10} Please note that the data provided shows slight variations from that described by Miller (1990). However, the idea of the decline in educational expenditure is emphasized.
Table 5

Actual Education Expenditure in Jamaica: 1990-1995

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total educational expenditure</th>
<th>Current educational expenditure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>as % of GNP as % of total government expenditure.</td>
<td>as % of the total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>3.9 11.6</td>
<td>92.2 3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>4.5 12.4</td>
<td>92.1 4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>3.8 9.9</td>
<td>95.2 3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>3.6 10.1</td>
<td>96.3 3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>3.8 10.1</td>
<td>90.6 3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>4.0 13.3</td>
<td>87.3 3.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Education, Planning Unit 1995/96

From the data available one could easily conclude that the Jamaican government has abandoned their objective of educational expansion and development. The fact is from closer analysis, it is revealed that while the public expenditure on education declined significantly, the debt-servicing share of the GDP rose by 42 per cent. In other words, budget previously allocated for educational expansion and development was now being used to service the debt load and other sectoral demands. Overall, these cutbacks in educational expenditure have impacted the education sector severely, thereby compromising the issues of access, equity and quality of educational provisions and opportunities. As Lawson (1998) has already indicated, in such as a case where educational reforms are [explicitly tied to external funding means that they are] linked to the global markets which means that under these circumstances educational reforms are not guaranteed. What implication will this have for sustained educational development, that is the efficiency and quality of the education system, and the socio-economic well-being of Jamaica?
**Educational Cutbacks and Impact on Teachers, Parents and the Quality and Efficiency of Educational Provisions**

**Impact on Teachers**

The foregone conclusion can be reached: the educational change process in Jamaica has been seriously impacted and frustrated by internal and external forces. The cutbacks to the education sector have been severe to the profession of teaching and to teachers as individuals within the profession and apart of the wider society. In other words, teachers were doubly affected by the socio-economic and educational cutbacks. The cutbacks and reversals in teacher training and development, the ineffective management and supervision of the education system and process, the lack of adequate teaching and learning materials, such as books and textbooks, and the closure of school buildings and facilities have resulted critical deficiencies in the net internal quality and efficiency of the educational system, which now lingers at unacceptable levels. But also adding to the decline in quality and efficiency of educational provisions and opportunities is the impact of declining socio-economic conditions on the process of effective and representative school systems. In other words, teachers and parents who are critical and essential participants in the process of building effective school systems are limited in their efforts to effect sustainable educational changes. This, in turn, has contributed to the gross inequalities and inefficiencies that continue to be perpetuated throughout the educational system. First we will focus on the impact of the socio-economic conditions on the profession of teaching and teachers as representative households.

Miller (1992) provides us with a compelling insight into the nature and extent of the educational cutbacks and reversals to the teaching profession. They are summarized as follows:

- The closure of two teacher training institutes and the reduction in the number of students admitted by the remaining colleges, along with the discontinuation of the In-Service Teacher Education Programmes and In-Service Diploma Programmers for training teachers at the secondary schools. The result of these measures has been a shortage of professionally trained teachers and a concomitant increase in the number of unqualified teachers employed in primary and secondary schools.

- A decline in teachers' salaries in real terms, leading to bitter disputes between the teaching organizations and the government that lasted for more than a year and disrupted the social system in a variety of ways.
• By 1984, the government was taking action to increase the teacher-student ratio of primary schools to 1:55... The government's intention was to return to colonial standards.

• Significant cutbacks in the staff at the Ministry of Education, effectively reducing its ability to manage and supervise the educational system.

• The closing of four regional offices of the Ministry, thereby reducing the decentralization of educational administration.

• A lack of furniture and equipment in many schools.

• The poor state of disrepair of many schools. The School Mapping Exercise conducted in 1981-85, found 40 per cent of the school places in primary schools were in "bad" or "very bad" conditions. This was with enrollment at 30 per cent above capacity.

• Reduction in the book stock of the school Library Service to unacceptable levels.

• Inadequate teaching and learning materials in the schools. Surveys revealed that 30 per cent of the children in Grades 1 and 2 lacked writing implements and exercise books, while 40 per cent lacked textbooks.

(pp. 219)

The list provides a daunting look at the devastating impact of the debt crisis on the education system. In addition, it illustrates the tensions between educational and economic development and the government's reluctant response to address the economic imbalances, which have resulted in cutbacks to educational provisions. The reality is educational development is occurring in a hostile economic climate. Education is being held hostage by declining socio-economic conditions; therefore, it is apparent that any new reform initiative, within this economic climate, is aggravated and is almost sure to fail.

The devaluation of the Jamaican dollar, and the increase in cost of living is affecting the quality of life for all, and teachers are no exception. Miller (1992) has already stated that the decline in the value of the Jamaican dollar and the rise in cost of living have not only had negative socio-economic implications, that is limiting the amount of resources available for quality living, but these conditions have also adversely affected the provision of educational goods and services. Unfortunately, this has resulted in the exodus of highly qualified teachers from the teaching profession to higher paying and more secure jobs, leaving vacancies open to teachers who are lacking in adequate training, knowledge and skills. Moreover, those teachers who are unable to leave the
profession are forced to find other means of supplementing their income, which adds another dimension to their demanding school schedule. Unfortunately, it impedes their abilities to perform efficiently.

To reiterate, the declining socio-economic conditions have had an adverse effect on the teaching profession and teachers. In response to these ailing conditions, and in my opinion to maintain their sanity, teachers have gone into a "self-preservation" mode. In such a case, with the declining socio-economic conditions and its impact on the school system (i.e., negative student and teacher outcomes), teachers are limited in their efforts to respond and affect change because their energies are already spent trying to find creative ways to survive. Teachers are de-motivated and at their physical and psychological limits.

In light of Lee, Bryk, and Smith's analysis, the external conditions of the economic recession are negatively impacting the internal operations of the school system, especially in the area of teacher outcomes, which are characterized by a decline in teacher efficacy and commitment. It must be stressed that this is not an indictment of the teaching profession and the dedication of teachers. From my own experience, there are dedicated and committed teachers at the research site and within the Jamaican system of education. They have over the years, despite crisis in the education system and the limited resources at their disposal, been able to nurture change and innovation within the system of education. But the fact still remains that change and innovation needs to come to the education system. This is a call for those in authority to draw attention to the economic recession and its related impact on the educational change process. The paradox of the educational development experience is that while there are significant quantitative expansions, qualitative development and improvements linger at unacceptable levels. There must be a realization on behalf of all the stakeholders involved in the process of educational change that there is a crisis in the educational system, which is having far-reaching implications on teachers and the quality and efficiency of the education system. But equally important to this discussion is the impact of the economic recession on parents and their ability to effectively participate in schooling experience of their children. It has been noted to also have negative implications on the quality and efficiency of the system of education.
**Impact on Parents**

As stated earlier, parents responded that one of the barriers to their participation and involvement in the schooling process of their children is the competing home responsibilities and their job situations. The declining socio-economic conditions have had an indiscriminate adverse impact on the educational change process and all those involved, especially teachers, parents and students. According to Miller (1992):

...households were affected by the devaluation of the Jamaican dollar, inflation, wage guidelines that held down salary increases, the withdrawal of basic food subsidies, higher taxes, and the rise in unemployment to rates in excess of 20 per cent. All of these have reduced disposable incomes and the resources available to parents for educating their children.... (p. 32).

There have been drastic cuts to and reversal of welfare programmes and financial assistance for needy students. As a result, parents are faced with a number of challenges as they attempt to provide the basic necessities needed to survive, and to send their children to school. These responsibilities have become a difficult balancing act. The unfortunate decision for many parents, especially single parents, is that they have had to stop sending their children to school. This then contributes to increased drop-out rates and street kid population particularly in the poorer, rural areas.

The truth is that the socio-economic conditions are preventing parents, teachers and student from participating in the educative and socializing task of schooling, and in the building an effective and democratic school system. Educational development is being held hostage by the declining economic conditions, and is expected to produce anticipated social and economic development results in this hostile economic environment. In such a case, the educational change process is limited. The quality and efficiency of educational provisions and opportunities are compromised. And above all, this deficiency is contributing to the educational crisis already being experienced, thereby arresting the social and economic development processes.
Efficiency of the Education System

The efficiency of an educational system is determined by the quality in the management and supervision of the system and the delivery of educational provisions and opportunities. It is in this context that the Jamaican system of education must be examined. The quantitative indicators of the internal efficiency to be explored are: attendance, completion, repetition and drop-out rates.

Internal Indicators

Attendance

With the increased social demand of educational provision and opportunities, there has been a concomitant increase in the enrolment and attendance rates. In the 1980s, regional education statistics indicated that regular attendance in Jamaica was relatively low, around 70 per cent, while in other islands it was above 90 per cent. However, the 1994/95 statistics revealed significant improvements. But while enrolment rates have been high-104.4% gross and 93.8% net enrolment rates (UNESCO, International Bureau of Education 1999)—irregular attendance plagues the system, especially at the primary levels. Absenteeism is higher among boys than girls and in rural areas than in urban. Statistics show that attendance peaks on Tuesdays and Wednesday and is lowest on Fridays because the children are most often involved in economic activities, such as preparing provisions for market on Saturdays or they have to tend to the home while their parents prepare for the market. The table below indicates the attendance rates for boys and girls for rural and urban population.

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Table 6

Attendance Rates in Rural and Urban Areas among Male and Female Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRIMARY</th>
<th>RURAL URBAN</th>
<th>RURAL URBAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MALE</td>
<td>74.1</td>
<td>80.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEMALE</td>
<td>77.3</td>
<td>82.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Education and Culture, 1997

Drop-out, Repetition and Promotion Rates

Primary Education

Primary level education is compulsory from grades 1 through 6. Studies have confirmed a high rate of completion at this level of education, fluctuating between high 80 and 90 per cent. Drop-out and repetition rates have decreased, while promotion rates have increased at every grade. Below the educational statistics for 1990/91 and 1994/95 illustrate drop-out, repetition and promotion rates in public primary education. The negative drop-out rates indicate an inflow of children into the public system.

Table 7

Drop-out Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADES</th>
<th>1st</th>
<th>2nd</th>
<th>3rd</th>
<th>4th</th>
<th>5th</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990/91</td>
<td>-1.3</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994/95</td>
<td>-3.8</td>
<td>-1.4</td>
<td>-1.9</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Education and Culture, 1997

Table 8

Repetition Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADES</th>
<th>1st</th>
<th>2nd</th>
<th>3rd</th>
<th>4th</th>
<th>5th</th>
<th>6th</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990/91</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994/95</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Education and Culture, 1997
Educational administrators have cautioned that despite the high promotion rates, a considerable number of the students complete the primary level without achieving adequate levels of literacy and numeracy. Understandably, educational administrators have attributed this issue to the shortage of professionally trained teachers at the primary level. Educational statistics within the past decade continue to indicate that this problem is most evident in the rural areas where the majority of teachers are untrained. This raises grave concern regarding the quality of students being promoted and leaving the education system.

**Secondary Education**

While the primary level boasts high enrolment rates, the higher levels of education reflect lower completion, higher drop-out and repetition rates. In 1994, the transition rate from primary to first-cycle secondary school was 98 per cent. However, for the same period, transition to second and third cycle secondary school fell to 71 per cent, with a gross enrolment rate of 63 per cent. According to the International Bureau of Education (1999) data, the output from secondary schools is calculated from the enrolment in the terminal grades 9, 11 and 13. It was estimated that 46,220 students would have left the secondary level at the end of the 95/96 academic years. A small percentage of these students furthered their secondary education. For example of this number, 1721 entered Secondary High and Comprehensive High by way of the Grade 9 Achievement Test (GNAT) and Junior High School Certificate. This translates into a 26.9 per cent transition rate. Although the majority of students complete secondary education at the end of Grade 11, 27 per cent left the system after completing Grade 9 in the All-Age schools. The Secondary school leavers either move directly to the labour force or

**Table 9**

**Promotion Rates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADES</th>
<th>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990/91</td>
<td>95.7</td>
<td>96.9</td>
<td>95.8</td>
<td>94.3</td>
<td>90.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994/95</td>
<td>97.6</td>
<td>98.3</td>
<td>99.2</td>
<td>96.2</td>
<td>91.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Education and Culture, 1997
progress to the tertiary levels. Most students, especially those in All-Age schools enter the labour force.

But while this is so, teachers, educational administrators, and employers have charged that the quality of academic standards of secondary school graduates is below acceptable standards (UNESCO, International Bureau of Education, 1999). Based on the promotion indicators and examination results at this level, it has been revealed that graduates fail miserably in Mathematics, English and Integrated Sciences. They lack cognitive and a demonstrable competence in social development and life skills. Furthermore, the participatory indicators, previously described, convey the general impression that the education system, especially at the secondary level, is failing in its attempt to meet its educational objectives. This failure has resulted in gross inefficiencies in the education system in the form of the “bottleneck” phenomenon. Two distinctive features of the “bottleneck” effect are high drop-out and repetition rates, which have caused critical problems and tensions within the education process. The far-reaching implications on the education system are: (a) longer school cycle for repeaters which increases the cost per unit per student. This becomes taxing on the public expenditure on education, which is not cost effective; (b) Over-crowding in classes, which increases the teacher/pupil ratio and prevents quality teacher/student interactions; (c) Over-crowding also puts stress on the limited infrastructure and school facilities. The net results are that the quality of the education process and the delivery of the education system are seriously compromised, therefore, having socio-economic implications. The following diagram illustrates the “bottleneck” effect and also indicates the small percentage of students who progress to higher-level education.
At the societal level, the “bottle-neck” effect has resulted in serious socio-economic ramifications. According to the 1995 census, ages 15 and over accounted for 62 per cent of the general population with an illiteracy rate of 25 per cent. Of that age category, 20 percent, representing ages 15-24, had an illiteracy rate of 15 per cent. In other words, the majority of the illiterate population in the 15 and over age category belongs to the 15-24 age cohort. This has contributed to the educational attainment of the labour force with post-primary education being a meager 24 per cent. What does this illustrate? At first, the statistics may not look startling, however, masked in these categories are a considerable number of post-primary graduates who either complete secondary school without becoming functionally literate; and consequently, they are not prepared to move on to higher levels of education. Or on the other hand, there are those
who drop-out of school because of a variety of social and economic reasons. Regardless, this situation has grave consequences on the social and economic development process of the Jamaican society.

Among the consequent results is the creation of a poorly educated underclass, of a productive age, who are disenfranchised and de-motivated because of the lack of a quality education, and marginalized because of the lack of social mobility. They find “escape” in self-destructive activities, such as crime and violence; and at too early an age, many of our young women become single parent mothers, the obvious signs of “disillusionment and disaffection” with themselves and society. We are losing a fast growing number of our young people today and the future leaders of tomorrow to present day social perils. Ultimately, their chances and opportunities to participate in the development of the Jamaican society are limited. This, in turn, restricts Jamaica’s capacity and ability to compete in the global market.

Moreover, establishing education as a major component of the national development project has serious socio-economic implications. Banya and Elu (1994) have illustrated this from their observations of the failed reform efforts in Sierra Leone and its effect on the well-being of the wider society. The authors draw our attention to several critical issues that are relevant and consequential to the Jamaican experience and context.

...The educational explosion had led to major societal inequilibrium, i.e. rural/urban imbalance, the educated unemployed, and brain drain. It seems that the principal objective of most students is to move up the educational ladder, but the curricula of primary and secondary schools have not been structured to assist drop-outs and completers to adjust to local environments...the internal orientation of rural curriculum has helped speed up the migration of the better educated to the cities... (84).

Furthermore, in addition to the “rural/urban imbalance”, another consequential impact of failed educational reform is the creation of the educated unemployed. This has been a direct result of the migration of the better educated to the cities, where there is limited employment. This problem, in turn, promotes brain drain of highly educated individuals. This fact bears critical socio-economic ramifications for the present and prospective social and economic growth and development.
...The increased output of higher education particularly in advanced and technological occupations, which is now in excess of acceptable career opportunities, has caused a brain drain. Since many of the migrants move on a permanent basis, this represents not only a loss of vulnerable resources, but also a serious constraint on future economic progress.

(Banya & Elu 1997:485).

In the final analysis, educational development in Jamaica has come in the wake of a crippling economic recession, which has resulted in socio-economic and educational imbalances in the form of major reversals and cutbacks in the education sector. As a result, the process of educational expansion and development has been curtailed, frustrating the needed educational change process and the national development endeavour. The most tragic consequence of the economic recession on education has been the severe limitation of the Jamaican government's abilities to determine specific educational choices and to adequately finance the educational change process and provide the basic needs - qualified teachers, effective management and supervision of the education system, school buildings and facilities, and teaching and learning materials - required for an effective education process and system. The lack of these amenities has obviously contributed to the decline in the quality and efficiency of the education systems, which has to a large extent, given way to gross inefficiencies and inequalities along the line of access, equity and quality in the delivery of the educational provisions. I believe that the most frightening realization from this circumstance, especially because I am a young person, is the inability of students, young people, to achieve satisfactory levels of educational attainment that will give them the opportunity to realize their full potential and to live enriching lives. The question must then be asked: how can we expect our students to participate in the social development of their respective societies and to compete at a global level, when they are disadvantaged by the lack of educational provisions and opportunities?
Misperception of the Parent-teacher Relationship

The research data further indicates that another critical factor impeding the home-school partnership is the misperception of the parent-teacher relationship. Overwhelmingly, more than 90 per cent of the parents and teachers agreed that the parent-teacher relationship was not all it could be. The participants—parents and teachers—described their relationships in terms such as "enemies", "not seeing eye to eye", "adversarial" and "antagonistic", to name a few. The parents and teachers believe that in order for an effective parent-teacher relationship to be established, first the underlining issues must be addressed.

It has been emphasized that parents and teachers are the two most influential figures in the lives of our children. Kelly (1974) has established:

...a child's basic education took place in the home. Their values, their perceptions of self and others are formed primarily at home. Without parental involvement, their values and their behavioural expressions can only be slightly modified, for what is taught in schools only become meaningful when parents are interested and involved in the child's school learning... (p. 14).

Moreover, it is further argued that three primary reasons supporting the parent/teacher collaboration are: (a) parents want more responsible roles in the education of their children; (b) education is a shared responsibility and the school must reach out to parents to establish partnerships; and (c) the full potential of our children will not be realized unless parents are actively involved (Hester 1989:23). This therefore indicates that if there is to be a sustaining and effective home-school relationship, a partnership between the parents and teacher/home and school must be developed and maintained; and especially for the creation of a total learning environment for the student.

There's growing acceptance of the fact that parents can play a positive role in the educational process of their children by acting as resourceful, primary partners with the school. There is also awareness of the influence of the home as an important part of a child's total learning environment. It is also believed that the parent and the school, working together can provide continuity in the child's life as he/she progresses throughout the different grades and programmes (Gordon-Muir 1985:15)

Other positive benefits associated with the parent-teacher relationship are:

• Improvement of academic achievement and behaviour
Student motivation increases
Attendance becomes more regular
Student drop-out rates are lower
Students have a more positive attitude towards schools, teachers and homework
Parents and community support increases.

(Hester 1989:23).

Finally educational research continues to support the argument that the parent-teacher relationship has significant implications and benefits for the establishment of an effective and representative school and education system. This educational relationship must be encouraged, supported and strengthened in order to ensure its educational benefits.

However, while it has been relatively easy to argue the benefits of the parent-teacher relationship, there have been great difficulties implementing and maintaining this relationship. In this case study, it was indicated that three main issues were contributing factors to the limited and unanticipated results of the parent-teacher relationship. These barriers include a) the declining socio-economic conditions; b) lack of communication; c) lack of adequate parental skills.

As discussed earlier, the declining socio-economic conditions continue to contribute to educational imbalances throughout the education sector and society at large. Teachers and parents have been mostly affected by these events, mainly because of a lack of resources and disposable income. Teachers and parents are finding it difficult to function adequately under these circumstances, therefore, limiting their abilities to participate effectively in the educative and socializing experience of schooling. Consequently, due to the lack of a parent-teacher support network, there has been a decline in student performance, and especially behaviour. Teachers have commented that the behavioral standard now being exhibited within the school has been the worst in many years. Most of the teachers pointed to the lack of parental support and parenting skills as the root cause of the decline in the behavioural standards. Parents, on the other hand, commented that teachers are too harsh and sometimes disrespectful to their children: calling the students inappropriate names and thereby, not providing a positive learning environment. This particular issue of discipline in the school has resulted in an ensuing conflict between parents and teachers. Parents and teachers have become
reactive and defensive, each blaming the other for the negative student outcomes; consequently, this hostile environment has polarized both parties. The overall result of this situation is that it has and continues to contribute to negative teacher and student outcomes, therefore limiting the opportunities for effective parent-teacher partnership. Under these circumstances, it remains that the parent-teacher relationship will be dysfunctional, precarious and contentious.

Another dimension of the parent-teacher relationship that must be emphasized is the reactionary measures taken by teachers. While speaking with members of staff, I could not help but notice that in response to the on-going repercussion teachers had retreated into “self-preservation mode” as a defence mechanism. In discussion of this behaviour and the general framework by which the home-school relationship functions, Swap (1993) highlights “the dominant model for the home-school partnership from which most school operate is that of the “Protective Model. It is an attempt to protect schools from the interference from parents” (15). The parent-teacher relationship rather than building an effective home-school partnership, has perpetuated the “protective model” which continues to marginalize parent involvement and participation, therefore, limiting the building of an effective school system and a total learning environment.

Second, as a result of the “hostile” home-school relationship, there has been a lack of communication between parents and teachers. More often than not, contact is initiated with parents only when there are problems with the students. Parents have commented that this has added to their de-motivation because they know that they are solely being blamed for the behavioural problems of their children. The main way of communication is via students. Students, unfortunately, can not be depended upon to be the bearers of bad news. Unfortunately, most parents do not respond when they are asked to visit the school, because of various reasons. Or when they do visit, they are often defensive and unsupportive of the school’s decision. Consequently, this issue, like the one previously discussed, has aggravated the parent-teacher relationship.

Finally, a number of teachers and school administrators have pointed out that another issue negatively impacting the parent-teacher relationship has been the lack of parent skills and support. As noted by one administrator:
...we are now in the business of teaching the children of children. Most of the teachers and parents are the same age. We don't find much support from them. These parents tend to be very defensive and contentious. This tends to add to the breakdown of the school system...(Audio-taped conversation)

In addressing these issues, it becomes apparent that before an effective parent-teacher relationship can be established, parents and teachers need to honestly address these concerns and the negative impact on teacher and student outcomes. And recognizing the critical importance of the home-school relationship, rather than being reactive, parents and teachers need to be more respectful and understanding of their mutual needs. Parents and teachers must be proactive and explore creative ways to address the issues and concerns affecting the parent-teacher relationship in order to build an inclusive school community.

**Dysfunctional Nature of the Parent Teacher Relationship**

In addition to parents and teachers, another important component in developing an effective and sustaining, parent-teacher relationship is the Parent/Teacher Association. In the process of building a healthy home-school partnership the P.T.A is considered an important and essential institutional support mechanism. Unfortunately, in this case study, teachers and parents described the P.T.A as “dormant” and Ineffective”.

A number of reasons were cited for this characterization. First, parents and teachers commented that because of the antagonistic parent-teacher relationship, the P.T.A became the arena where these contestations were played out.

There were just too many shouting matches. Everyone was so defensive. Nobody listened to each other (Parent Questionnaire)

Once again almost 90 per cent of parents and teachers commented that a common response to this hostile environment was to avoid going to P.T.A meetings because in their estimation it was unproductive and a waste of time.

Second, a significant number of parents complained that they often felt “left-out”. They did not feel a part of the schooling process, especially where decision-making was concerned. Moreover, parents highlighted that there wasn’t any opportunity for open
dialogue, but felt “lectured to”. This has created a sense of alienation and marginalizing for parents.

Finally, parents and teachers emphasized that the P.T.A lacked initiative and creativity.

The same old format over and over. There needs to be a change in the way the P.T.A is organized and programs planned.

(Teacher Questionnaire).

Summary

The research results obtained suggest that the participants have a general understanding and acknowledge the vital importance of parental involvement and participation and its role in effective school management. They have also emphasized that, while they recognize the importance of the issue being discussed, there are three main factors that are limiting their full and effective participation in the educational change process.

It is important to emphasize that the factors outlined: the declining socio-economic conditions; the misperceptions of the parent-teacher relationship; and the dysfunctional nature of Parent-Teacher Association must not be viewed independent of each other, but as pathological symptoms of the inappropriate nature of the conventional development approach. The trickle-down effect of these inappropriate development strategies has negatively affected the ability of teachers, parents, and students to participate effectively in the learning process. Moreover, on one hand, these external and internal factors have created a crisis within the educational change process now underway, and have also seriously compromised the efforts of the Jamaican government to quantitatively and qualitatively improve the Jamaican system of education. On the other hand, they are contributing to the peripheral, dependent development of the Jamaican society.

The social context in which the educational change process is occurring, to say the least, is a hostile and precarious environment. The declining socio-economic conditions have had a domino effect on all levels of the social and economic development process, especially where in the educational sectors. The consequent
results of these conditions are making way for a structural crisis that will, without a doubt, have far reaching implications with possible irreversible effects on the development of Jamaica, and once again, on the system of education, particularly where the quality and efficiency of the delivery of educational provisions and opportunities are concerned. Given this reality, the question begs to be asked: will the prevailing socio-economic conditions result in the regression of the Jamaican system of education to standards that characterized the system in the 1970’s and 1980’s, the period of reversals and retrenchment? With this pending catastrophe, that will not only affect the system of education but the other sectors that depend on it, the government of Jamaica must take the necessary steps to ensure that the development strategies established to stimulate the development of the Jamaican society speak to and articulate the needs and aspirations of the Jamaican people.

Given this situation, it would be natural to conclude that the challenges described facing the educational change process, and the development thrust of the Jamaican society is mitigating against the possibility of any proposed endeavour to improve the Jamaican system of education and the society. But to leave the discussion at this point would be fatalistic. In my view, being cautiously optimistic, I believe that this crisis is an opportunity for the advisors of development and the Jamaican government to interrogate the process of development and explore alternate, appropriate and sustainable development approaches. But before we explore these alternate options, two basic issues must be addressed.

First with all things considered, it is recognized that the nature and practice of development is problematic and is being met with limited success. Therefore, it becomes absolutely imperative that there be a transformation in the way that development is carried out, especially, seeing that the stability and continued growth and development of the Jamaican economy is a necessary pre-condition for sustaining the educational change process. In other words, the IMF and World Bank must see themselves implicated as apart of the problem of development being experienced in Jamaica, and reposition themselves as apart of the solution. Unfortunately, any further in-depth discussion of the economic development and its impact on educational development is beyond the purview of this research. But one fact that cannot be over
emphasized is that the economic development of a nation is a necessary and vital component needed to sustain educational change.

Second, the government of Jamaica must acknowledge that there are a number of critical problems inherent to the system of education, which have continued to perpetuate qualitative deficiencies in the system. As Miller (1992) and King (1989) have noted that historically the education reform initiatives aimed at improving the system have been less than dramatic, but have be “piecemeal remedies and short-term palliative” endeavours. As a result, the issues of access, quality and efficiency of the system of education are still limiting the educational change process. It is now apparent that in order for the Reform of Secondary Education (R.O.S.E) to be effective and sustaining, there must be a dramatic transformation in the nature and structure of the system of education. One of the first steps, other than infrastructural changes, is to create a supportive environment within the school and the education system for parents, students and teachers to effectively participate.

A model of school based management is emerging in response to indiscriminate educational cutbacks and the decline in school effectiveness. This model of quality management of the school system is supporting and recognizing the involvement and participation of parents as key stakeholders in the educative and socializing task of schooling. Based on the results obtained from this research, and which is supported by a large body of other educational research in the area of home-school relationship, suggest that parents want to become more involved in the learning and teaching process. And while schools are re-organizing themselves around this issue, it is important that parental involvement and participation be acknowledged as a potential model for improving school effectiveness from the grass-root’s perspective. Parents and teachers must be given the opportunity to establish their respective roles and responsibilities within the parent-teacher relationship, and re-assert control over the schooling process. Moreover, parents and teachers must be provided with the institutional support necessary to establish an effective home-school relationship. In essence, there is an underlying will among parents and teachers to assist students to become the best possible individuals and outstanding contributing members of the Jamaican society. This will must be supported and encouraged every step of the way. The fact that interest is being shown and a collaborative effort is being made by parents
and teachers to address some of the issues in their schools should be an indication to the educational administrators that parents and teachers are a neglected resource that must be mobilized in order to affect qualitative improvements to the development of the Jamaican system of education and society. This ought to be a foundation for school improvement and further discussions.
Chapter 9

Conclusion

The development of the Jamaican system of education has come a long way and continues to struggle with establishing a democratic system of education. Its history is punctuated by, on one hand, significant quantitative and qualitative improvements and expansions. However on the other hand, critical retrenchments and reversals have overshadowed the needed educational change process, limiting access, quality and efficiency to educational opportunities and provisions. High illiteracy, increasing drop-out and repetition rates, and declining educational standards have become the characteristic features of the system of education. They have given rise to grave social maladies. As we have observed these conditions have been a direct result of inappropriate development conditionalities, which have not functioned in the best interest of the Jamaican society. What is apparent is that there needs to be a critical perspective taken to deconstruct the development process, and its negative implications on the social well-being of developing nations. With the renewed development thrust of the Jamaican government, if they expect that the Reform of Secondary Education is to be effective, it will be necessary that they explore alternate means to educational development that functions in the best interest of its people.

The research findings obtained suggest that the home-school relationship is a valued and effective educational resource, a possible avenue to facilitate local involvement and participation and for the qualitative improvements to educational and development process. Parents, teachers and students overwhelmingly agreed that the home-school relationship is vital in linking the home and school in the educative and socializing task of schooling, and for establishing a total learning environment necessary for the nurturing and fostering of an academic, social and spiritual well being. At another level the home-school relationship is important for sustaining the educational change process. It is my opinion that the beliefs and assumptions from this case-study are indicative of the general school community and the wider Jamaican society. It is, therefore, suggested that the home-school partnership holds promise, as a critical factor, in establishing an effective and sustainable educational change process.
Some of these implications include:

1. Parent involvement programs are effective and necessary at both primary and secondary levels of education. Consequently, there is a growing need and awareness for institutional support in developing comprehensive parents-teacher programs that are effective and representative of the needs and aspiration of the school community.

2. Administrators, teachers and parents need to be educated about the advantages and benefits of the home school relationship. In order for this to be realized, the collection and dissemination of information and resources necessary for the development of a comprehensive home-school partnership needs to be put in place. Furthermore, home-school partnership specialists need to be trained in the theory and practice of the home-school partnership initiative so as to provide assistance to schools which are in need of help in developing their home-school development initiatives.

3. Each school will need to develop a home-school initiative that reflects and addresses their particular beliefs, needs and aspirations.

4. A comprehensive home-school partnership can most definitely contribute to growth and development of the school. It also provides parents and teachers with a sense of ownership and license. This will, therefore, give rise to a potential educational change process that is participatory, and based on local will and initiative.

It cannot be over-emphasized that educating our nation’s children is an important and critical personal and social investment that requires the partnership of both teachers and parents-school and home. We can all agree that in order for this process to be effective and sustaining, teachers and parents must commit themselves to be active participants in the educative and socializing process of schooling. The destiny of our nation depends on it.
As stated earlier, the project proposes that an alternate avenue to the conventional development approach is through local involvement and participation. The proceeding chapter focuses on a number of recommendations, which are based on the research findings. Furthermore, the recommendations are also building on the proposed alternative perspective of local involvement and participation in the educational and development process.
Chapter 10

Recommendations

The Caribbean region has high expectations regarding education standards, long exposure to and traditional participation in mass education, as well as the use of education as a major avenue of social mobility, have conditioned demands for the best education possible (Miller 1992:78)

While the renewed efforts in educational expansion and development are admirable and well overdue, as we have observed, there are serious implications to this undertaking. In order not to repeat past trends in the current educational endeavours, it would be prudent for Jamaica to learn from what has happened in the past in this sector and explore alternative avenues that will enhance, rather than contribute to the demise of these respective educational systems. With a growing population and the changing socio-political context of the Jamaican society, there is a growing demand on the education system to articulate these changes while meeting the needs of the population. Consequently, there is an urgency to explore alternatives that will effectively address the negative outcomes of the current educational change process. In order for the educational change process to be sustained, effective and representative, community participation is essential. With this in mind, and based on the suggestions of the research, the respective government must assess their development strategies by re-defining:

a) Educational financing and management;
b) Improving the home-school relationship;
c) And implementing an effective home/school development initiative.

Some Preliminary Considerations

Recognizing that educational change is country-specific, it therefore necessitates that the educational reform efforts be defined in consultation with the local authorities and stakeholders (Dei, 1998; Farrell 1994; Samoff, 1999). In addition, any proposed recommendations must be tailored to the socio-economic and socio-political context and experience of the country in question. It is with this in mind that I emphasize that any recommendations made here are proposal.
According to Dei (1998) it is imperative that the community of appropriate personnel, at local and national levels, is an active participant in defining and articulating the specific educational objectives and the relevant route of attaining these objectives. Furthermore, the research agenda, methodologies, and conclusions must be under the control of the local community. In addition, where necessary, local personnel should form partnerships with other overseas organizations that specialize in new approaches and methods that can be of relevance to their needs.

Furthermore, Dauber and Epstein (1989) make an important point emphasizing that regardless, of parental backgrounds, education, family size and student ability, parents are more likely to want to develop a partnership with the school only when they perceive that the school is making a concerted effort to involve them, that is the school's commitment must go beyond policy and lip-service and must be translated into creative, effective and realistic school practices. In other words, the school's practices, and not just family characteristics are critical influencing factors in determining an effective home-school partnership. But in addition to local school commitment and support for the development of an effective and representative home-school relationship, there also needs to be the same from an institutional level, that is support and commitment from the Ministry of Education that is concrete and long-term.

Since the implementation of the Reform of Secondary Education (R.O.S.E.) project, the government has committed itself to strengthening the home-school relationship. One such example is the commitment to "resuscitate and rejuvenate" the Parent-Teachers' Associations. Moreover, there are a number of other initiatives that can be taken by the Ministry of Education to help local schools encourage, support and strengthen their commitment to a home-school partnership. Four main initial initiatives can and should include:

1. The Ministry of Education can establish and extend their support for the home-school partnership through the Guidance Department. This will therefore necessitate that additional persons be hired in this capacity as Home-school partnership Specialists.

2. Establishment of local and regional resource centres, in schools and at Regional Offices for teachers and parents, so they can be provided with information on how to best use their resources to develop an effective home-school partnership.
3. Establish a position such as a Home-school partnership specialist whose main responsibilities will include working with local schools in developing the home/school initiatives. In addition, address the particular needs and concerns of schools, and provide schools with direction, and resources to develop their initiatives.

4. Provide pre-service and in-service staff development regarding the home-school partnership.

   Firstly, the external dependence of the Jamaican society on the donor agencies and the debt crisis has seriously impacted the ability to finance the educational change process. The imposed conditionalities prescribed by the IMF and the World Bank have resulted in numerous cutbacks in the educational provisions. And as Lawson (1998) has already illustrated "the educational reforms under these conditions, ebb and flow with the global market forces. And under these precarious circumstances, there are no guarantees that the reforms will hold. On the contrary, all reforms can be easily reversed depending on the priorities of the day" (70). The structural adjustment programs prescribed by the IMF and the World Bank are aimed at curing the ailing economies of the south. But paradoxically, these initiatives have contributed to severe social, political, and economic deterioration of these societies and consummately, the further underdevelopment of these economies. This therefore necessitates and warrants the need for change to the development agenda.

   Miller (1989) has emphasized that the crisis facing the financing of educational reform requires that alternate resources be found to improve the quality of education to acceptable levels and provide equal opportunities for all. He asks a very pertinent question and one we must explore to find suitable answers: "If emancipation of the mind is a necessary precondition of further liberation from the colonial past, should the Jamaican state not pay for the education of its nationals?" (121)

**Financing the Education System**

   In response to the crisis, Jamaica has taken the initiative to explore local sustainable alternatives for the financing of the education system. But given the economic constraints, it will be important that the Ministry of Education to establish a resource management system that, in consultation with schools, can oversee the fund-raising and allocation of extra financial assistance. And in addition, the Ministry must
recognize that any initiative for financial support can not be imposed or legislated. There must be a local will and commitment by stakeholders towards the common goal and interest. They must be empowered and held to believe that the local capacity is equipped for change and innovation. It will be necessary that the stakeholders-parents, teachers and students-be recognized as integral and contributing partners in this local initiative. Otherwise, any imposed or legislated initiative is a formula for disaster.

Generally speaking, the case study highlights that some of the main needs of the school include: (a) the provision of subsidy for needy parents; (b) scholarships for needy students; and (c) financial assistance to support their building fund. Some of the proposed cost-sharing initiatives include:

1. joint partnership of the public and private sectors that will see to the adoption of schools by private firms and the granting of student loans and scholarships for needy students. The adoption of the school should also extend towards the financial assistance with any school building or improvement ventures. In return, the government should explore opportunities of providing private firms with tax credits and other financial incentives.

2. The distribution of costs in such a way that the State pays the salaries of the staff, while the students (or their families) cover all other expenses. The students' contribution-registration and monthly tuition- would go into a fund to be administered by the State.

3. Schools, through their Parent Teacher's Association, should explore the options of school/community collaboration with their local community businesses. Through this avenue schools can establish scholarship and school building and improvement funds and have the local businesses provide other financial types of support.

4. School groups can collaborate with philanthropic community groups, such as the Kiwanis and Lions clubs. Once again, support and assistance can be gained for school improvement ventures.

5. Voluntary contributions from other businesses and community members.

6. Other fund-raising events should be explored by the school's administration.

7. Many schools have started to develop their Alumnae Association to assist with the school's development.

8. The continued mobilization of the expatriate communities in UK, Canada, and USA to assist with schools, especially in the poorer areas. This endeavour has enabled many schools to continue operating.
9. Finally, from a comparative perspective, the Ministry of Education should employ its abilities to exploring other financing opportunities being practised by other educational systems abroad.

It is well noted that these suggested proposals lack detail and structure; however, they do provide some alternative avenues for local sustainable financing options. Unfortunately, the details regarding the systemic approach to the management of these financing options are beyond the general scope of this paper. This therefore necessitates future studies in this area.

**Management of the Education Change Process**

The research findings points to the idea that a part and parcel of the qualitative improvement of the education system requires that an effective management structure be put in place. As we have already established, educational reform has been met with limited success because of a number of reasons. Another inhibiting factor has been the top-down approach associated with educational change, which has successfully limited the participation of local actors and stakeholders. Therefore, to ensure the effectiveness and success of educational change, it has been made evident that the management of change must be in place. In addition, the meaning and objective of educational change must be shared, feasible and concrete. Murray (1979) criticizes that educational change in many developing nations lacks the basic components needed to facilitate successful and effective educational change. He states:

In many developing countries, responsibility for education is shared among more than one Ministry, and each Ministry nourishes its own priority to the extent it is able. But when priorities are brought together, they do not always add up to a significant development thrust. This is why in several countries of the English-speaking Caribbean, for example, there is little visible relationship between national goals and the more salient development features in the system of education (184).

Therefore, it becomes apparent that the need for a shared meaning and understanding of educational change among the local school community-teachers, students, parents-and the regional and national authorities, is imperative to the effective management of educational change.

Another important and integral component of successful management of educational change is the need for "horizontal intellectual cooperation" at the local and
national levels and the redefinition of the roles of public and private sectors. According to Healey (1997):

Accompanying institution building and the creation of a reform support infrastructure is a re-definition of both public and private constituents. That is the a central tenet of Education Reform Support (ERS) is to help public sectors entities (department of education) redefine their roles away from the top-down, command-style, hyper-regulatory, supply-mode that currently predominates in many education systems to one that is more open, outwardly accountable, and responsive; and that collaborates with clients in providing education services...The case for working with these institutions has been made both from the perspective of developing democratic institutions and practices and of supporting sustainable reform that benefits the traditionally marginalized segments of the population (e.g. the inner cities and the rural areas) (20).

Farrell (1994) further argues that despite the prominent role of international cooperation in large-scale educational expansion efforts, the reform initiatives have failed miserably or have been limited in their efforts to affect substantive change in the educational system. He suggests:

...an alternate model of international cooperation labeled "horizontal intellectual cooperation" [is needed]....[And further suggests] “a useful role of international cooperation would be to assist in learning from many small scale successful changes and to stimulate local capacity to innovate.... (p. 67).

It is important to note that the concept of local community participation is designed to include the cooperation among local and regional communities of the Caribbean. For too long, despite our common histories and social problems, the islands of the Caribbean region have been left to combat their crises in a vacuum. For this main reason, "horizontal intellectual cooperation should be encouraged at the Caribbean regional levels, because it provides an effective way by which these islands can assess reliably the re-occurring issues affecting their systems, and in turn, find plausible solutions to common problems.

This alternate approach, unlike conventional development projects, argue that the development strategy must, first, draw upon the active participation of local communities to define and determine local solutions to development issues that are appropriate and sustainable. Dei (1998) emphasizes that “the critical perspective on development necessitates that local communities should own and control the solutions to their own problems...local input must be from the grassroots, and should tap into the
diverse ideas, opinions, and interests manifested in the community” (144). This is not to say that overseas expertise is not welcomed and utilized, but it should be in cooperation with local interests and expertise. But, the development agencies should take the role to encourage and facilitate the “local capacity to innovate”. The participatory development project would include overseas expertise involved with local researchers, community workers, field practitioners, students of development and grassroots participants engaged in exploring alternate development strategies.

Second, the educational change process is country-specific. Therefore, it necessitates that the educational reform efforts be defined in consultation with local authorities, so that the strategies outlined are sustainable and appropriate to context and experience of the Jamaican society. According to Dei (1998) it is imperative that the community of appropriate personnel, at local and national levels, is an active participant in defining and articulating the specific educational objectives and the relevant route of attaining these objectives. Furthermore, the research agenda, methodologies, and conclusions must under the control of the local community. Quintessentially, an important and significant result of this kind of alternative development approach is that local communities are given ownership and a sense of license over these development projects, which are aimed at assisting them. Furthermore, this approach loosens the grip of dependency and external reliance on foreign assistance and expertise that has, historically, not encouraged intellectual or developmental autonomy, consequently, stimulating the state of arrested development evident throughout the Caribbean.

**Improving the Home-School Relationship**

As the research has indicated, parents and teachers are aware that the parent-teacher relationship is imperative to the development of a healthy home-school partnership and the development of an effective and representative school system. Furthermore, the participants have also emphasized their critical role and responsibilities to this enterprise. Consequently, giving weight to the argument that parental involvement is important at both the elementary and the high school levels. As already established by Hester (1989), the myth that parental involvement can’t be achieved at the high school level is misguided for the following reasons:
1. Parents want more responsible roles in the education of their children.

2. Education is a shared responsibility and the schools must reach out to parents to establish partnership.

3. The full potential of our children will not realized unless parents become actively involved. (23).

For this reason, it is evident that improving the parent-teacher relationship and its various components are of educational benefit to all. As a result, there must be a joint effort on behalf of the school’s administration, members of staff, parent/teacher’s association, guidance departments and parents to explore creative and realistic ways to address the relevant issues and concerns affecting the home-school relationship. The suggested strategies to improve the parent-teacher relationship require a philosophical and systemic approach, and can only be effective when there is direct personal contact between parents and teachers. The principal can and should be instrumental in this regard by creating a vision and a culture conducive to home/school collaboration. Some suggestions of what principals can do include:

- Bring staff and parents together to brainstorm what they feel home-school collaboration can and should be. Use information from home-school partnership handbooks, which may suggest ideas and strategies.

- Identify strengths and gaps in current home-school partnership efforts.

- Create a vision based on the Epstein’s six types of home/school collaboration.

- Make the vision real by taking actions based on the vision.

As a result as an outgrowth of the research findings, the areas associated with improving the home-school relationship that are to be addressed are:

(a). steps to improve parent-teacher relationship;

(b) establishing better communication between home and school;

(c) strengthening the Parent-Teacher Association.

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12 Goal 8 Handbook. Goal 8 provides a excellent handbook with creative ideas and activities. See Appendix.
Steps to improve the Parent-Teacher Partnership

School Administration

- Establish a friendly, and open climate for parental involvement. This should be reflected in the policies and practices of the school's philosophy. Members of staff (administrators, teachers, secretaries and custodians) must make a genuine effort to make parents feel welcome.

- Provide every opportunity for one-on-one interaction between parents and teachers that is outside of the parent-teacher conference environment. For example, there should be a specific time set aside each week for parents to meet with teachers and/or principal, if necessary.

- Provide orientation programmes for parents where they can be introduced to the school and the members of staff. Furthermore they can be made aware of the school's philosophy, expectations.

- This will also give parents an opportunity to feel that they are apart of the educative and socializing task of schooling, and provide a means whereby they can discuss their role in this learning process.

- Whenever possible, visits should be made by teachers or school representatives to the homes of students. Such visits would allow parents to remain on familiar territory where they don't feel threatened or intimidated. This would indicate to parents that teachers or the school are genuinely concerned and interested in the well-being of the child.

- Schedule parent-teacher lunches on a regular basis.

- Conduct special evening meetings for parents of children “at risk” academically. Employ teachers to participate in small group discussion.

- Teachers may consider learning contracts to be used to enlist the support and co-operation of parents. Learning contracts can be devised to help plan and communicate instructional requirements. These contracts can also be used to clarify roles and responsibilities, while creating a positive teamwork approach to the educational growth of each student. This clarification and formalization of the communication strategy is vital to positive parent-teacher co-operation. For an example of a learning contract (see Appendix).

Where problems exist, these should be reported to parents immediately. By sharing the problem, the teacher is implying shared educational responsibilities in the

13 Suggestions taken from:


learning process of the student. This rids the burden of the failure resting solely resting on teachers, who must begin to think of ways to include, rather than exclude, the parents in the educational learning process (Long 1982: 35).

**Parents: Basic Obligations:**

- Provide the basic necessities such as food, clothes, and shelter.
- Assure a healthy and safety environment.
- Provide child rearing and home training.
- Provide school supplies, place for school work
- Build a positive home condition for learning.

**Parents Involvement in School:**

- Assist teachers and students with lessons, on class trips, at class parties or other class activities, if appropriate.
- Assist organized parent groups in fund-raising, community relations, political awareness and program development.
- Attend students’ assemblies, sport events, and special events.
- Attend workshops, discussion sessions, and training sessions for parents.

**Parental Involvement in Learning at Home**

- Develop child’s social and personal skills.
- Contribute to basic skills education.
- Contribute to advanced skills and enrichment education.

**Communication with School**

- Drop in at school
- If possible volunteer their time and expertise
- Support students and school through participation in school activities

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Establishing Better Communication Between Home-School Relationship

Communication is vital to establishing and maintaining an effective home-school relationship. Here are a few suggestions for consideration.

Teachers:

Initiate contact with parents via letter/phone early in the term as a way of introduction and to establish direct communication. This may be difficult given student work load and other tasks, but usually doing this pays rich dividends on improved communication and co-operation.

- Use multiple means to contact parents: handbooks, newsletters, notes, telephone calls, and parent-teacher conferences.
- Send important messages by letter with reply forms for parents response or tear off sections for initial to ensure safe arrival.
- Use standardized information forms with spaces that can be filled in with conduct reports, request for information or homework assignments as appropriate.
- Develop semester long or monthly planning calendars for each class highlighting special events, re-occurring due dates (tests, reports, etc) and special class events.
- Initiate a program of frequent questionnaires to parents to give them an opportunity to evaluate their child's progress and provide feedback to teaching staff.
- Conduct a joint parent-teacher conference annually to further promote better communication.
- Don't preach to parents. Speak to them with respect and as equals. Provide an opportunity for open dialogue emphasizing how the student can improve rather than on your analysis of the problem. Instead of evaluating the student's poor character, intellectual deficiencies, and personal defects, describe specific steps the student and parents can take to improve.

Suggestions taken from:
**Strengthening and Enhancing the Parent-Teacher’s Association**\(^\text{16}\).

The participants agreed that the improvement of the Parent-teacher’s Association is important in creating an effective and representative school system. It is important that the school’s administration and teachers create a welcoming and friendly environment that is sensitive to feeling of guilt, anger or defensiveness that parents frequently bring with them to conferences (McDaniel 1982: 101). Some of the following suggestions may be of benefit to the improvement of the parent-teacher’s association. In the meantime it is important to gain support and commitment, whether financial or technical, from the Ministry level, school’s administration, teacher and parents. Also developing a realistic vision for the program that can be used as a yardstick to evaluate current efforts and develop needed strategies.

The direct involvement of teachers and parents in the planning stages of the PTA is imperative. It suggested that parent contract or “commitment contracts” be enlisted to get parents and teachers involved in establishing a cooperative environment for educational development. (For an example of the “commitment contract, see appendix).

The development of an action plan will be important to direct the efforts of the association. Formal presentation and progress reports to the parent-teacher group will be effective in fostering further support and enhance success of the group. In addition, establish relevant and interesting activities that will get parents and teachers involved.

There are a number of steps the school’s administration, teachers and parents can do to realize their goals of improving the Parent Teacher’s Association. Here are a few suggestions:

**School’s Administration and Teachers:**

- Tell parents from the outset with whom, if any, the conference conversation will be shared. Respect the rights of parents who ask you to keep certain information confidential.

\(^{16}\) Suggestion taken from:

- Listen. Give parents openings to ask questions, add information, make suggestions, provide alternative solutions. Parents, after all know far more about their youngsters than teachers ever can. If teachers are willing to learn from parents in the conference, the possibilities for open-communication and mutual problem solving are improved.

- Conclude each conference by reviewing (or asking the parent to review) what has been decided. Because of the emotional intensity and the different perceptions brought to the conference by parents and teachers, there is likelihood that different interpretations will result.

- If needed provide programs and workshops on parenting skills. This is of particular benefit to single parents, two-working-parents families and all other parents.

Parents

- Make a list of questions and concerns that need to be discussed with the teacher.

- Tell the teacher ahead of time if you have specific concerns regarding your child so that the teacher can be prepared with the necessary information and records.

- Offer the teacher the benefit of his/her knowledge. Avoid being defensive and disrespectful. It helps to also to avoid coming to PTA with preconceived notions about the teacher’s inadequacies.

- Deal directly with the teacher or school’s administration if questions arise regarding a teacher’s assignment, policies or teaching methods.

- It is important that an evaluation process be put in place to assess the progress, or the lack thereof, of the PTA. It is also necessary to make teachers, parents and students accountable to each other and for the growth and development of a healthy and sustainable school community.

Implications for Staff Development

Finally, the establishment of the home-school relationship is essential in building an effective school and education system. It therefore suggests that in order for an educational change process to be effective and sustained, the participation and involvement of parents, teachers and students is imperative. It is also suggests that “pre-service” and “in-service” teacher development is necessary so that teachers can be

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aware of the benefits of this educational relationship. The steps to establishing an effective teacher development strategy are:

Assess Needs and Interests

Teachers and other staff members can identify areas in which they would like to have training or help. Some of the topics might include training in conferencing skills, conducting home visits, designing effective homework, or home learning activities, develop written communications, understanding the culture of families from diverse backgrounds. In addition, how to address the weaknesses of the current parent-teacher relationship and find solutions that can better utilize home-school relationship for the sake of all involved.

Develop Goals and Objectives

Enable teachers to best use their abilities to practise “parent appropriate actions” and nurture the parent-teacher relationship.

Identify Resources: People, Materials, Time, Space, and Money

Seek out the technical and financial support, if needed. A Resource Handbook for Improving the Home-School Partnership is excellent for providing ideas, guidelines and suggested activities for parent-teacher activities and staff development. (See Appendix for a number of resources centres that specialize in parent-teacher partnership).

Design and Implement Activities

Make sure that activities are varied, interesting, appropriate to the type of learning and goals of the training. Incorporate the principles of adult education and effective staff development. For example, there should be effective and efficient use of time, clear directions, provision for individual differences in completion times and prior knowledge, and a chance for guided practice and application.
Evaluate

Evaluate the success of the teacher training and development in terms of the stated goals and objectives. How well did the participants actually learn and do whatever was stated as the objectives? Was the information and activity useful and relevant? What improvement could be made?

Follow-up to determine which of the ideas or skills were actually used, and if people's perception of usefulness changed or stayed the same.
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Appendix 1

Administrative Consent for Interviews

Date:

Dear:

There is growing acceptance that the home/school relationship is a critical and integral factor in the effective management of schools, and the overall education system. As a graduate student at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto, where I am pursuing my Master of Arts degree in Education, I am committed to studying this significant educational relationship. I am conducting research on the above topic, which will be analyzed and compiled into a thesis to fulfill the requirements for my Master’s of Arts degree in Education.

This evaluative research will examine the value and effectiveness of the Parent/Teacher’s Association and other strategies aimed at encouraging the home/school relationship at your institution. The intention of this evaluation is to provide practical recommendations to parents and teachers as to how to improve and strengthen this significant relationship. This research focuses on program performance and evaluation, and not on the individual performance of teachers and students. I am seeking your consent to participate in interviews, questionnaire and observation of classroom sessions. Your participation in this endeavour is paramount and highly appreciated.

Through the process of observing parent/teachers’ meetings and classroom sessions, interviews, and the use of questionnaires, I hope to gain insight and a better understanding of the subject matter from you and other members of staff. Regarding the duration of the interviews, questionnaire and observation sessions: the estimated length of the interview session will last roughly 30 minutes to an hour; there will be about 6-8 observation sessions, lasting 20-30 minutes; the approximate completion time for the questionnaires is 15-20 minutes. I am requesting access to any relevant school data that will provide me with sufficient knowledge of the management of the school system. Please note that this project is in no way a performance evaluation of teachers and students as individuals. However, as stated earlier, the project seeks to evaluate the current home/school relationship and provide practical recommendations to improve it. Your participation will be kept in the strictest of confidence. In the thesis or any articles that may result, pseudonyms will be used to protect your identity and privacy. The access to field-notes and transcripts will be exclusive to the researcher and the research supervisor and will be kept in a secure data archive. It is my intention to continue this research topic at the doctoral level. Consequently, the data, including tapes, will be retained until my Ph.D. defence. After which, the tapes will be erased.

The risk associated with doing this research project is minimal. The benefits, on the other hand, outweigh the risks. Through this method of inquiry, you will be engaged in a process of evaluating the current strategies being employed by your institution to enhance the home/school relationship. Your participation in this project will be of significant educational benefit to the effective management of your institution, and
hopefully influence policies that will implement measures aimed at strengthening parental and community involvement in schooling.

You have the right not to answer any questions and/or withdraw your participation from the project if you consider any question inappropriate and a contravention of the integrity of your institution.

With your request, upon completing the research project, you will be provided with a summary of the research and a copy of the completed thesis will be presented to your institution. If you have any questions or comments, please refer them to my supervisor, Dr. David Wilson, at the Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Department at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto at (416) 923-6641 ext.2312 or me at (416) 265-0568.

If you agree to participate in this project, you must sign below after reading the following statement:

I have read the above letter and agree to participate in an interview that will audio-taped.

____________________________________  ______________________
Signature of Principal                      Date

____________________________________  ______________________
Signature of Researcher                     Date
Appendix 2

Student Consent Form

Date:

Dear:

There is growing acceptance that the home/school relationship is a critical and integral factor in the effective management of schools, and the overall education system. As a graduate student at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto, I am committed to studying the benefits of this significant educational relationship. I am in the process of conducting research on the above topic, which will be analyzed and compiled into a thesis to fulfill the requirements for my Master's of Arts degree in Education.

This evaluative research will examine the value and effectiveness of the Parent/Teacher's Association and other strategies aimed at encouraging the home/school relationship at selected institution. The intention of this evaluation is to provide practical recommendation to parents and teachers as how to improve and strengthen this significant relationship. This research focuses on program performance and evaluation, and not on the individual performance of teachers and students. I am seeking your consent to answer a questionnaire and/or participate in an interview session. Your participation in this endeavour is paramount and highly appreciated.

Through the process of observing parent-teachers' meetings and classroom sessions, interviews, and the use of questionnaires, I hope to gain insight and a better understanding of the subject matter from you and other members of staff. Regarding the duration of the questionnaire and/or interview sessions: the estimated length of the interview will last roughly 30 minutes to an hour; and the approximate completion time for the questionnaires is 15-20 minutes. Please note that this project is in no way a performance evaluation of teachers and students as individuals. However, as stated earlier, the project seeks to evaluate the current home/school relationship and provide practical recommendations to improve it.

Your participation will be kept in the strictest of confidence. In the thesis or any articles that may result, pseudonyms will be used to protect your identity and privacy. The access to field-notes and transcripts will be exclusive to the researcher and the research supervisor and will be kept in a secure data archive. It is my intention to continue this research topic at the doctoral level. Consequently, the data, including tapes, will be retained until my Ph.D. defence. After which, the tapes will be erased.

The risk associated with doing this research project is minimal. The benefits, on the other hand, outweigh the risks. Through this method of inquiry, you will be engaged in a process of evaluating the current strategies being employed by your school to enhance the home/school relationship. Your participation in this project will be of significant educational benefit to the effective management of your school, and hopefully influence policies that will implement measures aimed at strengthening parental and community involvement in schooling.
Your participation in this research project is voluntary. You have the right at any time not to answer any questions and/or withdraw your participation from the project if you consider any question inappropriate.

At your request, upon the completion of the research project, you will be provided with a summary of the research. If you have any questions or comments, please refer them to my supervisor, Dr. David Wilson, at the Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Department at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto at (416) 923-6641 ext.2312 or me at (416) 265-0568.

If you agree to participate in this project, you must sign below after reading the following statement:

I have read the above letter and agree to participate in a questionnaire or interview sessions. Please note that interviews will be audio-taped.

____________________________________  __________________________
Signature of Participant                  Date

____________________________________  __________________________
Signature of Researcher                   Date
Appendix 3

Parent Consent Form

Date:

Dear:

There is growing acceptance that the home/school relationship is a critical and integral factor in the effective management of schools, and the overall education system. As a graduate student at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto, I am committed to studying the benefits of this significant educational relationship. I am in the process of conducting research on the above topic, which will be analyzed and compiled into a thesis to fulfill the requirements for my Master's of Arts degree in Education.

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Your participation in this research project is voluntary. You have the right at any time not to answer any questions and/or withdraw your participation from the project if you consider any question inappropriate.

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If you agree to participate in this project, you must sign below after reading the following statement:

I have read the above letter and agree to participate in a questionnaire or interview session. Please note that interviews will be audio-taped.

__________________________  ________________________
Signature of Participant      Date

__________________________  ________________________
Signature of Researcher       Date
Appendix 4
Teacher Consent Form

Date:

Dear:

There is growing acceptance that the home/school relationship is a critical and integral factor in the effective management of schools, and the overall education system. As a graduate student at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto, I am committed to studying the benefits of this significant educational relationship. I am in the process of conducting research on the above topic, which will be analyzed and compiled into a thesis to fulfill the requirements for my Master's of Arts degree in Education.

This evaluative research will examine the value and effectiveness of the Parent/Teacher's Association and other strategies aimed at encouraging the home/school relationship at selected institution. The intention of this evaluation is to provide practical recommendation to parents and teachers as how to improve and strengthen this significant relationship. This research focuses on program performance and evaluation, and not on the individual performance of teachers and students. I am seeking your consent to answer a questionnaire and/or participate in an interview session. Your participation in this endeavour is paramount and highly appreciated.

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Your participation will be kept in the strictest of confidence. In the thesis or any articles that may result, pseudonyms will be used to protect your identity and privacy. The access to field-notes and transcripts will be exclusive to the researcher and the research supervisor and will be kept in a secure data archive. It is my intention to continue this research topic at the doctoral level. Consequently, the data, including tapes, will be retained until my Ph.D. defence. After which, the tapes will be erased.

The risk associated with doing this research project is minimal. The benefits, on the other hand, outweigh the risks. Through this method of inquiry, you will be engaged in a process of evaluating the current strategies being employed by your school to enhance the home/school relationship. Your participation in this project will be of significant educational benefit to the effective management of your school, and hopefully influence policies that will implement measures aimed at strengthening parental and community involvement in schooling.
Your participation in this research project is voluntary. You have the right at any time not to answer any questions and/or withdraw your participation from the project if you consider any question inappropriate.

At your request, upon the completion of the research project, you will be provided with a summary of the research. If you have any questions or comments, please refer them to my supervisor, Dr. David Wilson, at the Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Department at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto at (416) 923-6641 ext.2312 or me at (416) 265-0568.

If you agree to participate in this project, you must sign below after reading the following statement:

I have read the above letter and agree to participate in a questionnaire or interview session. Please note that interviews will be audio-taped.

_________________________________________  _________________________
Signature of Participant                      Date

_________________________________________
Signature of Researcher                      Date
Appendix 5

Parent Questionnaire

Please answer the following important information by checking ( ) the correct or completing the spaces.

Sex  Female  _______  Male  _______.

Marital Status  Single  _______  Married  _______.

Age  18-30  _______  31-40  ___  41-50  _____  51 and over  _______.

The last grade I completed in school was:

Elementary  ___  Secondary  ____  High school graduate  ____

College  _____  University graduate  _____  University in complete  _______.

Please answer the following questions:

What is your understanding of the term “parental involvement and participation” in school life?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Do you think parental involvement and participation is an integral factor in the effective management of your child' school and their academic progress and development?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Does your school have a Parent/Teachers' Association (P.T.A) or other formal parent association?

Yes____ No_____.

If yes, do you attend P.T.A meetings? Yes ____ No _____.

How often do you attend? Very regular ( ), Occasionally ( ), Never ( )

The aims and objectives of the P.T.A should be:

(a). To provide a close link between home and school. ( )

(b). To give parents and teachers a better understanding of each other's problem(s). ( )

(c). To raise funds for use by the P.T.A or by the school or by both. ( )

(d). To inform parents of the school's curriculum and educational philosophy. ( )

(e). To help the school enforce rules and discipline ( )

(f). To alert the school of the needs and expectations of the community. ( )

(g). Aims and objectives not covered by above. (Please specify)

________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________

Do you think you are adequately involved in your child's academic progress and development? If yes, how are you involved? If no, what are some of the barriers preventing you from getting involved?

________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________
Answer Yes or No.

Parents of children attending school for the first time should be invited to visit the school?
Yes _____ No _____

7. Are you invited to any of the following important school events? (Check the appropriate letters) (a) Sports days _____, (b) Open days _____, (c) Prize-giving _______, (d) Others _______.

How often do you attend: (a) regularly _______, (b) occasionally _______, (c) Not at all _______.

8. Every opportunity should be provided for parents to discuss their children's work or problems with the teacher. Yes _____ No _______.

If such opportunities were made available would you visit the school: regularly _______, (b) occasionally _______, (c) Never _______.

Schools should require assistance and cooperation from parents in maintaining school discipline.
Yes _____ No _______.

Much of what students are to do depend on what their parents expect of them.
Yes _____ No _______.

Parents should have the right to keep their child out of school for any reason other than illnesses.
Yes_____ No _______.

Parents should have a voice in choosing what teachers their child will have.
Yes _____ No _____ (Please explain your answer).

____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

Do the written reports concerning your child's/children's academic work and behaviour adequately describe their progress in school. Yes _____ No _____.
a. There is already sufficient involvement between parents and the school.
Yes _____ No _____. (Please explain your answer).

(b) There is no room for parental involvement with the school? Yes ____ No _____.
(Please explain your answer).

Do you think there is a place for parental involvement and participation in your school?
Yes _____ No _____. (Please explain your answer).

15. If your answer to question 11 is YES, please check ( ) all areas where you as a parent would be willing to help.

Help on school visits and on outings.

Help with craft, needlework, home economics, under teacher’s supervision.
Help generally in the classroom, handing out books, making charts, cleaning up.

Listen to children read under supervision of the teacher.

16. Would working in a classroom under a teacher's supervision make you feel nervous, insecure?
Yes ____ No ____.

17. Please show by ranking 1-6 (1 being the most important and 6 being the least important) which of the following methods of contact with parents you think are most important:

(a) Opportunities for individual interviews of class teachers with parents. ( )
(b) Opportunities for individual interviews of principal. ( )
(c) Written reports. ( )
(d) Frequent letters to parents regarding child's academic progress and behaviour ( )
(e) Meetings to explain educational policies and school philosophy. ( )
(f) Special occasions- sports-days, open days etc.

18. Do you think such parental involvement in the school would help to improve your child's achievements? Yes ____ No ____.

If yes, how would your involvement in your child's school improve your child's academic potential?

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

Would you be willing to have a teacher visit your home to discuss any school-related problems affecting your child in the class? Yes ____ No ____.

If the opportunity was available to provide you with information on how to help your child make better progress in the school, would you make use of the opportunity? Yes ____ No ____.

Parents should fully support the school in whatever steps are taken to help your child.

Yes ____ No ____.
Finally, I would appreciate any further details you would care to give concerning the involvement and participation of parents in the learning process of their child/children, and the overall management of the school system.
Appendix 6

Student Questionnaire

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS TO THE BEST OF YOUR ABILITY.

Age ______.

Grade ______.

1. What is your perception of parental involvement in school life? Do you think it is important? Why?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Do you have a Parent/Teacher’s Association (P.T.A) or any other formal activities that support and encourage parental involvement in school life and a parent/teacher relationship?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

What do you think are the objectives of the P.T.A?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
4. Do you think that parental involvement is an important factor in your academic progress and development?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

5. Does any of your parent participate in your school life? What role do they play? Are you satisfied with their involvement in your school life? If not, what kind of effective role would you like to see your parent take?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

6. Does your parent attend P.T.A or any meetings to discuss your academic progress and development? How often do they attend?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
7. Has your parent's involvement in your school life made any significant difference in your academic progress and overall development?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

8. If you were a parent, what kind of role would you play in your child's life?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

9. Do you have any further information to add that would be of significance to this study?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Appendix 7

Teacher Questionnaire

Please answer the following important information by checking ( ) the correct line.

Sex
Male _____ Female _____

Marital Status
Single _____ Married _____

Age 20-30 _____ 31-40 _____ 41-50 _____ 51 & over _____

I have been teaching in this school for ______ years.

Types of Parental Involvement:

4. Does your school have a Parent/Teachers’ Association (P.T.A) or other formal parent-teachers’ If no, does your school have a less formal parents’ committee or ‘Friends of the School’? If your answer to either of the above questions is ‘yes’ would you please indicate below the basic aims and objectives of the association/committee. Please circle as many letters as are appropriate:

(a). To provide a close link between home and school.
(b). To give parents and teachers a better understanding of each other’s problems
(c). To improve the home-school-community relationship.
(d). To raise funds for use by the association/committee or by the school or both.
(e). To inform parents of the school’s curriculum and educational philosophy.
(f). Personalizing the school and making it more community conscious.
(g). To help the school enforce rules and regulation.
(h). To alert the school of the needs and expectations of the community.
(i). Aims and objectives not covered by the above. (Please specify)

(j). Is your parent/teacher’s association satisfactory at the present time?  
Yes____ No____

(k). The P.T.A could be improved by:

Are the parents of children attending school for the first time invited to visit the school?  
Yes____ No____

6. Are parents of new students sent any written information about the school before their start school?  
Yes____ No____

18 Questionnaires for parents, teachers, and students were developed with the assistance of an interview protocol developed by the National Research Foundation, 1979. In addition, interview questions were designed based on issues and concerns that emerged during the literature review process.
7. (i) Are parents invited to attend open days or evening programs?
   Yes_____ No _____.

   If yes, how often do these take place?
   (a) Once or twice per year. (b) Once per term (c) Twice per term. (d) More often.

   (ii) Roughly what percentage of your children have parents or guardians attending on these occasions?
   Under 20% ____  20-50% ____  51-75% ____  76% and over _____.

   (iii) Which of the following form does your open day take? Circle the letter that best corresponds with your answer.

   • Exhibition of projects completed by one or two classes or the entire school.
   • Displays of general work undertaken by students.
   • Opportunity for parents and teachers to hold discussion concerning the work of their children.
   • Parents invited into the classroom to see their children at work.

   (iv) Are parents invited to school prize giving. Yes_____ No_____

   (vi) Other activities. (please specify) _

8. (i) In addition to Open Days, are provisions made for parents to discuss their children’s work or problems, by appointment with the teachers or the principal?
   Yes _____ No _____.

   (ii) If yes, how often do most parents come? Regular ____ Irregular ____. Not at all _____.

   (iii) What percentage of parents would you estimate have discussed their children with the heads or his/her teacher either formally or informally or by appointment within the last year?
   Under 20% ____  20-50% ____  51-80% ____  81% and over _____.
Instead or in addition to the above, please list the nature of any informal contact with parents:

9. (a) Are written reports concerning children's work and/or behaviour sent to parents.
   Yes _____ No _____.
   (b) If yes, how often are they sent? Please choose one of the following:
   Once per year ____ Twice per year _____ Once per term ____ More often ______.

Attitudes of Teachers to Parental Involvement:

10. Do you think there is a place for non-qualified assistants in the schools: (Check).
    (a) For activities outside the classroom. ( )
    (b) For helping in the classroom under the supervision of a qualified teacher. ( )

11. In which of the following activities would you most likely want to use parental help? (Rate in order of importance. Rating scale: 1-6. One (1) being the most important and six (6) being the least.
    (a) Help on school visits and on excursions. _____
    (b) Parents help with craft, needlework, and home economics, under teacher's supervision. _____
    (c) Parents hear children read under supervision of teacher. _____
    (d) Parents help generally in the classroom—handing out books, making charts, cleaning-up etc. _____
    (e) Help students at home with their homework and class projects. _____
    (f) Parents help with general school repairs. _____
    (g) Parents help with fundraising activities. _____.

12. (a) What do you think would be the major advantages or reasons for involving parents in the classroom?
    (b) What disadvantages do you foresee in such a school program that allows parents to be in the classroom?

13. Would a parent in the classroom make you feel nervous and insecure?
    Yes_____ No____

Please show by ranking 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, (1 being the most important and 6 being the least important), which of the following methods of contact with parents are most important.
(a). Opportunities for individual interviews of heads with parents. ( )

(b). Opportunities for individual interviews of class teacher with parents. ( )

(c). Written reports. ( )

(d). Frequent letters to parents to keep them informed about children’s performance and behaviour.

(e). Meeting to explain educational policies.

(f). Special occasions- sport-days, open days. ( )

14 Would you be willing to visit a parent’s home to discuss any school-related problems affecting a student in your class? Yes____ No____. Please explain your answer.

15 Parents assistance and cooperation should be required by the schools in maintaining school discipline. Yes____ No____. Please explain your answer.

16 Much of what the students are able to do depend on what the parents expect them to do?
   Yes____ No____. Please explain your answer.

17. (a). What would you consider to be an ideal role for the parent in the school, assuming that parents would be willing to assist in the school?

   (b). How do you think parents and school can best cooperate to help the child?

18. Finally, I would be grateful for any further details you would care to give concerning the involvement and participation of parents in your school and its educational benefits to effective management of the school system.
Appendix 8

Pattern of Roles Stressed by Respondents

The Basic Obligations of Parents (Type I) Parents Students Admin. Teachers

Parents should:

Know what is going on in teen's life
Provide physical support
Encourage independence, maturity, self reliance
Encourage academic effort
Provide a stable home life
Learn how to parent teens

The Basic Obligation of Schools, Communication (Type II)

The School should:

Let parents know if there is a problem
Send out report cards, progress reports
Send out newsletters
Have parent-teacher conferences

Parental Involvement at the School (Type III)

Parents should:
Drop in at the school
Do volunteer work for the school
Support teen participation in activities through attendance

Parental Involvement in Learning Activities at Home (Type IV)

Parental should help with homework

Parental Involvement in Governance and Advocacy (V)

Parents should:
Advocate for their child with the school

Parents Students Admin. Teachers
Take part in decision-making

Parents should attend PTA
Parents are not interested in PTA

Collaboration and Exchanges with the Community (Type VI)

Parents and schools should:
Establish community liaison to support school and provide services for students and families in need
Appendix 9

Scale of Involvement

Student's Level of Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories of Involvement</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The Basic Obligations of Parents (Type I)

As a parent I:
Know what is going on in teen's life
Provide physical support
Encourage independence, maturity, self reliance
Encourage academic effort
Provide a stable home life
Learn how parent teens

Parental Involvement at the School (Type III)
Parents should:
Drop in at the school
Do volunteer work for the school
Support teen participation in activities through attendance

Parental Involvement in Learning Activities at Home (Type IV)
Parental should help with homework

Parental Involvement in Governance and Advocacy (V)
Parents should:
Advocate for their child with the school
Take part in decision-making

Parents should attend PTA
Parents are not interested in PTA

Collaboration and Exchanges with the Community (Type VI)
Parents and schools should:
Establish community liaison to support school and provide services for students and families in need
Appendix 10

Correlation of the Level of Parental Involvement and Academic Progress and Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Parent Involvement</th>
<th>Academic Progress/ Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Names of Students

**Form III**

Names of Students

Form IV

Names of Students

Form V

Names of Students
Learning contracts are ideal to enlist the support of school administrators, parents, teachers and students in the learning process, while outlining the specific roles and responsibilities of the parties involved. In addition, “learning contracts may be devised to help plan and communicate instructional requirements and commitment of students. But some secondary schools-often through PTA channels- develop more generalized “commitment contracts” “… (McDaniel 1992: 102) to be used once again by the stakeholders. Here are a few examples that can be adopted to particular needs and context of the schools involved in the home-school partnership initiative taken from McDaniel (1992) Bridging the Home-School Gap (p. 102)

**Administrator:**
I will strive:  
... to provide the encouragement and support necessary to achieve a common goal; 
... to foster an atmosphere that is healthy and conducive to growth;  
... to assist in all possible ways to help children directly and through parents and teachers.

**Students:**
I know that:  
... what I do is a part of me;  
... while I cannot do everything, I can do something;  
... what I can do, I will try to do as well as I can.

**Parents:**
I will continue my efforts:  
... to see that my child goes to school on time every day;  
... to encourage and listen to an account of child’s day at school;  
... to make sure that my child has some quite time for homework each evening with the TV turned off;  
... to urge my child to respect himself or herself and to respect the rights and property of others;
... to take notice by positive action of any achievement or gain my child may attain;
... to meet and speak the child’s teacher as many times as possible;
... to reply to all messages, letters, notes or telephone calls from the school.

**Teacher**

We will continue our efforts:

... to maintain the highest possible standards for ourselves and our students;
... to evaluate student progress, report to students and parents at regular intervals, and to reward efforts through positive action;
... to demonstrate our belief in the students’ ability to learn;
... to raise the students’ level of achievement;
... to notify parents and students of grading and homework policies;
... to maintain communication with parents.
Appendix 12
Information and Resource Centres for Home and School Partnership

Useful Publications

Creating Learning Communities: An Introduction to Community Education

This resource discusses strategies for linking families, schools, and community groups. Contact the National Community Education Association, 3929 Old Lee Highway, Suite 91A, Fairfax, VA 22030. Phone: (703) 359-0972.

Grassroots Success! Preparing Schools and Families for Each Other

This resource guide offers tips for effective family-school collaboration. Contact the National Association for Education of Young Children, 1509 Sixteenth Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036-1426. The fee is $8.00 post paid.

Parental Involvement Handbook

Written by Education Today magazine, offers numerous tips on how parents can meet the learning needs of children from birth through college. The guide was produced with the support of Southern California Edison, John Hancock and Merick Institute for Education, J.C. Penny, and TRW. To order a copy, write the Educational Publishing Group, 20 Park Plaza, Suite 1215, Boston, MA 02116. Phone: (617)542-6500. The book’s cost is $7.95 plus $3.00 shipping and handling.

Teacher’s Manual for Parent and Community Involvement

This book summarizes research and provides tips for family involvement in children’s learning. Contact the National Community Education Association, 3929 Old Lee Highway, Suite 91A, Fairfax, VA 22030. Phone: (703) 359-0972. Cost is $17.95.

A Pocket Guide to Building Partnership for Student Learning

Get suggestions for schools and local education associations who want to promote better community relations and see samples of practices that lead these to improved relations. For further information see National Education Association web site and their links to related web sites.

For further ordering and other information on the following publication visit the United States Department of Education web site at http://www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/pfie.html:

America Goes Back to School: Partners’ Activity Kit 1998

This Partners’ Activity Guide can help stimulate thinking and discussion about how we can all work together to improve our schools.

Building Business & Community Partnership for Learning
This brochure provides concrete areas of focus for businesses and communities working to improve education. Whether focusing on the classroom, school, district, or policy arena, businesses and community organizations can look to this publication for unique needs, resources, and goals of each community.


This brochure can help teams of school staff, teachers, parents and others develop and use a compact that outlines the shared responsibilities of school partners for children’s learning. The guide book and its activity sheets engage partners in a continuous development process to build and strengthen partnerships for learning.

**Conference Highlights—A New Understanding of Parent Involvement: Family/Work/School.**

**Family Involvement in Children’s Education: Success Local Approaches (October, 1997)**

This book is intended to assist educators, parents, and policy makers as they develop and nurture school-family partnership, this idea book identifies and describes successful strategies used by twenty local Title I programs that have overcome barriers to parent involvement.

**Family Involvement in Education: A National Portrait**

Showcasing finds from a new analysis of data, this publication provides parents with a checklist to assist their own issues of family involvement. This is a great resource for both families and educators interested in bridging the gap between home and school.

**Get Involved! How Parent and Families Can Help their Children Do Better In School**

Outlines the steps you can take to improve your children’s education—steps such as reading together, using television wisely, scheduling homework time, using community resources, and many others.

**Investing in Partnerships For Student Successes: A Basic Tool for Community Stakeholders to Guide Educational Partnership Development and Management.**

A guide designed for collaborative use by a broad range of community stakeholder groups to support a continuous improvement process for partnership planning, development, and implementation of local educational partnerships.

**Join Together for Kids: How Communities Can Support Family Involvement in Education**
This guide lists a number of options for supporting family involvement in education, such as teaching parenting skills, providing mentoring programs, offer summer learning programs and much!

**Reaching All Families and Creating Family-Friendly Schools (August 1996)**

Learning about school outreach strategies to get all families involved in their children’s education.

**Strong Families, Strong Schools**

This report summarizes thirty years of research showing that greater family involvement in children’s learning is crucial to student’s achievement in school and in life.

**CHILDREN FIRST: The Web site of the National PTA.**

**New Skills For New Schools (1997)**

This 65 page report examines reasons for — and the status of — teacher preparation in family involvement. It also provides a framework that illustrates various kinds of teacher training for family involvement. Unlike other family involvement typologies, this framework focuses not on actual family involvement activities carried out in schools, but on the attitudes, skills and knowledge teachers need to work effectively with parents.

**The Partnership for Family Involvement in Education: Who We Are and What We Do (2000)**

Partner organizations, alliances, and individuals are implementing effective family involvement practices in education. They are encouraging mutual responsibilities at home and at school and throughout the community to give students a better education and start in life. Examples of partners’ efforts, resources and information are included in this publication.
Appendix 13

Related Web Sites

http://pta.org (highly recommended)

Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed At Risk
http://www.csos.jhu.edu/crespar/

Center for Social Organization of Schools
http://www.csos.jhu.edu/default/

Center on School, Family and Community Partnerships
http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/

Disney Learning Partnership
http://disney.go.com/DisneyLearning

Empowered Learning Inc
http://pages.prodigy.com/empower.com

National Network of Partnership Schools (highly recommended)
http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/

Family Education Network
http://www.familyeducation.com/home

Hand in Hand: Parents Schools Communities United for Kids
http://www.handinhand.org

Institute for Responsive Education: Reconnecting School and Community.
http://resp–ed.org

National Association of Partners in Education
http://www.napehq.org

National Parent Information Network
http://npin.org

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
http://www.nwrel.org

Pathways to School Improvement/North Central Regional Educational Laboratory
http://www.ncrel.org/pathways.htm

United States Department of Education
http://www.ed.gov

Family Involvement Partnership for Learning
http://www.pfie.ed.gov
The National School-to-Work Learning and Information Center
http://www.stw.ed.gov

National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education
http://www.ncpie.org

National Education Association
http://nea.org
Appendix 14

National Educational Research and Development Centre

Centre for Research on the Education of Student Placed at Risk

John's Hopkins University, CSOS
3505 North Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21218
(410) 516-8800

Enhancing Young Children's Development and Learning

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Frank Porter Graham Child Development Centre
CB #4100 Chapel Hill,
NC 27599-4100
(919) 966-4250

Improving Postsecondary Education

National Centre for Postsecondary Improvement
Stanford Institute for Higher Education Research
508 Cerros Building
Stanford University
Stanford, CA 94305-4125
(415) 723-7727

Increasing the Effectiveness of State and Local Education Reform Efforts

National Research and Development Centre on Increasing the Effectiveness of State
and Local Educational Reform Efforts
Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE)
Graduate School of Education
University of Pennsylvania
3440 Market Street, Suite 560
Philadelphia, PA 19104-3325
(215) 573-0700, ext.224
Appendix 15

Regional Education Laboratories

Regional laboratories help schools and districts in their region find solutions to problems. They also offer technical assistance and are a resource of information, particularly in their specialty areas. Indicated below are family involvement resources and publications available from individual labs.

Mid-Atlantic Laboratory for Student Success (LSS)
Margaret Wang, Director
Temple University, 933 Ritter Annex
13th Street and Cecil B. Moore Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19122
Phone: (212) 204-3030
Fax: (215) 204-5130
e-mail: lss@vm.temple.edu/departments/LSS
Specialty: Families and Communities in Education

Southeastern Regional Vision for Education (SERVE)
Roy H. Forbes
Post Office Box 5367
Greebsboro, NC 27435
Phone (910) 334-3211
Toll free (800) 755-3277
Fax: (910) 334-3268
e-mail: info@SERVE.org
url: http://www.serve.org
Specialty: Early Childhood Education

North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL)
Jeri Nowakowski, Director
1900 Spring Road, Suite 300
Oak Brook, IL 60521-1480
Phone: (630) 571-4700
Fax: (630) 571-4716
e-mail: info@ncrel.org
url: http://www.ncrel.org
Specialty: Parental Involvement in Education

Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL)
Wesley Hoover, Director
211 East seventh Street
Austin Texas 78701-3281
Phone: (512) 476-2286
e-mail: jpollard@sedl.org
Specialty: Parental Participation in Education; Language and Cultural Diversity