

An Investigation into the Factors that Influence Students' Academic Performance in the Caribbean: **Home and School Factors**



COUNTRY REPORT **St. Lucia**

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Caribbean Educational Research Centre

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An Investigation into the Factors that Influence Students'
Academic Performance: Home and School Factors

ST. LUCIA COUNTRY REPORT

Caribbean Educational Research Centre

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview

Educational practices that originated during the colonial era, when Caribbean nations were under European rule, persist today despite their misalignment with the modern Caribbean context. Recently, there has been a movement towards evidence-informed policymaking to address these outdated practices. An evidence-based approach is crucial for small island developing states with limited resources, such as St. Lucia. This study is a partial response to the growing demand for empirical data to support policymaking. This report aims to provide insights into the home and school factors influencing students' academic progress in St. Lucia. The study was conducted in 2022 and was funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Objectives

This report aims to describe the data collected in St. Lucia in 2022 on:

1. Primary and secondary school students' home environment.
2. Primary and secondary school students' attitudes towards learning and perceptions of school climate.
3. Primary and secondary school teachers' classroom practices.
4. Primary and secondary teachers' and principals' perceptions of school leadership practices.
5. Primary and secondary school characteristics.
6. Primary and secondary teachers' and principals' views on common educational practices, including using the Caribbean Primary Exit Assessment (CPEA) examination for secondary school placement, grade retention and ability-based streaming.
7. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on primary and secondary school students' attitudes towards learning and teachers' attitudes towards teaching.

This report is Report 1a, the first in a two-part report on the home and school factors influencing student academic achievement. Report 1b will explore the potential of these factors to predict student achievement at the primary and secondary levels.

Methodology

Surveys were used to collect quantitative data from students, teachers, and principals in primary and secondary schools in St. Lucia. The study targeted key factors affecting academic achievement, including school, personal, and home influences. Given the number of schools in St. Lucia and resource constraints, including all schools in the study was impractical. Therefore, a sampling plan was developed to select a representative sample of schools.

Participants

Primary

- 129 primary students, 33 teachers, and five principals from five schools across the island were surveyed.

Secondary

- 124 secondary students, 18 teachers, and one principal from five schools across the island were surveyed.

Key Findings: Participant Profiles

The collected data were compiled and analysed using descriptive statistics to create a profile of the primary and secondary students, teachers, and principals in 2022.

Students

- About 13% of primary students did not attend nursery prior to primary school. This could indicate potential barriers to accessing early childhood education, parental preference, or availability of nursery programmes. Early childhood education is critical for cognitive, social and emotional development. The factors contributing to enrolment in nursery schools could be examined further, and the importance of early childhood education through policies that promote and support access to nursery programmes could be reinforced for new parents.
- Significantly more female students participated in this study than males. Most participants were at the Form 4 level (ages 14-15, approximately 60%). The modal age for the respondents was 15.

Teachers

- In 2022, primary school teachers were predominantly female. This highlights a potential gender imbalance, which could limit diverse teaching perspectives and male role models for students. Addressing gender imbalance at the primary level through targeted recruitment and support initiatives for male teachers is essential.
- A significant proportion of primary teachers held associate and/or bachelor's degrees, with 48% in education-related areas. However, some teachers had non-educational qualifications such as counselling, social work, hospitality studies and management, which may affect teaching quality and commitment.
- Approximately 58% of the primary school teachers in 2022 had the professional status of trained graduate teachers. Teacher training programmes are required to reduce the presence of untrained or minimally trained educators.
- In 2022, like the primary school teachers, there were significantly more female teachers than male teachers who participated in this research.
- The mean number of years for secondary teachers in the teaching profession was 11 years. Additionally, the mean number of years that a teacher was at their current school was approximately seven years.
- Most secondary teachers who participated in this research had a bachelor's degree, approximately 83%. Many teachers had non-education-related degrees. Teachers with qualifications in non-education-related areas held their degrees in areas such as natural sciences (biology, chemistry), economics, management, music, law and mass communication, and computer science.
- Interestingly, the percentage of trained and untrained graduates was the same, at approximately 40% each.
- It is evident that more secondary teachers need to access teacher training courses/certification, as less than half of the teachers reported that they are trained.

Principals

- Five primary school principals took part in this study, and they were all female, reflecting strong female leadership but also indicating a possibility of gender imbalance in primary school administration. Efforts must be made to ensure this imbalance does not mirror the

predominantly female teaching workforce since it can limit diverse perspectives in leadership and decision-making. Promoting initiatives encouraging more male candidates to pursue leadership roles in primary education is crucial for enhancing gender diversity in school administration.

- All primary school principals had acquired school leadership or management training, and 60% had associate, bachelor's and master's degrees.
- To maintain and improve school leadership effectiveness, it is essential to encourage ongoing professional development and advanced degree programmes for both primary and secondary principals. Expanding leadership and management training programmes will ensure that principals are well-equipped to handle the complex demands of their roles.
- One female principal took part in this research. The principal had been in the teaching profession for 30 years and had been a principal for the past eight years.
- The principal's highest academic qualification was a master's degree, and reported training in educational management, administration, and leadership and learning.

Key Findings: Home and School Factors Affecting Academic Achievement

Students' Home Environment

The home environment is critical in shaping students' educational experiences and overall development. This section presents findings on parental employment, access to resources at home, leisure activities, and participation in extra-curricular activities, which affect the well-being and academic success of both primary and secondary school students.

Primary School Students

- Most primary students reported having parents who work either full or part-time. Many working parents may limit their ability to engage with their children's education, potentially impacting students' academic performance and well-being. Support programmes that provide resources for working parents and promote family involvement in education are essential.
- While 86% of primary school students reported having internet access, unequal access to technology and educational resources may create disparities in students' ability to complete schoolwork, conduct research online and participate in digital learning. Ensuring equitable access to technology and implementing digital literacy programmes for students and parents is critical.

- It was found that only 45% of primary students reported having a computer to use for schoolwork, although 75% reported having electronic tablets. Nearly 70% of the students reported living in homes with book collections to help with their schoolwork, they had less access to books such as classic literature and poetry, and only 57% indicated reading for leisure. Some of these findings may threaten literacy development. Initiatives that promote library use, book donation programmes, and encouraging reading in both traditional and digital formats may help address these challenges.
- About one-quarter of primary students reported not participating in extra-curricular activities, which limits opportunities for personal growth and social engagement. Expanding extra-curricular offerings and addressing barriers to participation through financial support, safe environments, and scheduling activities during school hours may enhance student involvement.

Secondary School Students

- Parental employment trends for secondary students mirror those in primary education, with most parents working full or part-time. This may limit parental involvement in children's education, impacting student well-being and achievement. Developing support programmes that provide resources for working parents and promote family involvement is crucial to accommodate home dynamics.
- Almost all the sample students, approximately 97%, indicated they have internet access at home. Among the various electronic devices identified, most students indicated they had access to smartphones; this represented about 82% of the students. The other three top devices used by secondary students were smart TVs (58%), laptop computers (57%), and electronic tablets (47%).
- Over 60% of students indicated that they had access to other resources at home, such as computers, internet access, a room of their own, washing machines/dishwashers, books to help with homework, and a dictionary. Less than 50% of the students indicated that they had access to a desk to study, a quiet place to study, and musical instruments.
- Most secondary students use public transportation to get to their school.
- The top four leisure activities that secondary school students indicated that they take part in are listening to music, using social media, watching videos/movies on a device and watching television.

- It should be noted that only 50% of students indicated that they read during their leisure time. Moreover, only 33% of students indicated engaging in sporting activities.
- The secondary students also indicated that comics in both paper and electronic form were the most popular reading material and format.
- In 2022, secondary students reported engaging in a range of activities, including sports (football, basketball), music (choir, orchestra), and clubs (environmental).
- Students who reported not participating in extracurricular activities in 2017 gave various reasons, including health reasons and the fact that the extracurricular activities offered by the school did not interest them. Some indicated that they had to use the time to work on school-based assessments.

Students' Perceptions of School and Learning

Students' perceptions of their school environment and of learning significantly influence their academic motivation and overall school experience. This section explores how students viewed school and learning in 2022, highlighting trends in engagement, discipline, school climate, and community involvement.

Primary School Students

- Students' responses portrayed a high percentage of positive attitudes towards school and learning. Sixty-nine percent of the students indicated that school was fun, and 79% felt that learning new things in school was fun. Nearly three-quarters of the students reported that they liked all the different things done at school, and 84% felt that school was good for the brain and essential for everyone. Schools should continue emphasising interactive and diverse teaching methods to maintain interest and deepen learning.
- It was also reported by 57% of the students that their teachers spent time with other teachers planning, talking and teaching together. Fifty-two percent of the students felt they were part of a family, including their teachers and classmates. Forty-one percent of the students reported that everyone got along despite their looks and origin, and 34% felt that popular students were friendly to other students.
- Approximately half of the students reported that many people usually attended school activities such as meetings and performances and indicated they felt safe everywhere in the school. The

latter highlights the need to foster a more inclusive and supportive school environment, encouraging community engagement and mentorship.

Secondary School Students

- Generally, secondary school students had a positive attitude and perception of their schools regarding physical appearance, the nature of students' interaction, discipline, learning and assessment, and attitude and culture.
- Most students agreed with most of the positive statements about school. For example, 87% of the students indicated that “going to school will help me get a good job when I am older”. Also, 79% indicated that “school is important for everyone” and “school will prepare me for the future”.
- Interestingly, although about 77% of students indicated that learning new things at school is fun, only about 52% indicated school is fun.
- It should be noted that the lack of enjoyment may affect their engagement, motivation, and overall well-being. This, therefore, highlights the need for strategies to make school more enjoyable, such as integrating interactive learning activities, creative use of technology, and balancing workloads to prevent burnout.
- Additionally, in relation to a disciplined environment, it is important to highlight that a little more than half of the students indicated that the rules are clear and keep the students from misbehaving, while about 44% indicated that the teachers sometimes give consequences when the rules are broken.
- Concerning learning and assessment, only 39% of students indicated that getting the correct answers and good grades is important in their class. Forty-four percent of the students describe the work in their class as active, hands-on, and interesting; about one-third of the students indicate that the work in the class is mostly about remembering what the teacher or textbook says. Furthermore, about one-third of the students indicated that the work in class makes them think and challenges them.
- The findings concerning assessment, learning and discipline highlight the need for teachers to improve assessment and instructional practices.

Teachers' Classroom Practices

Effective classroom practices are essential for enhancing student learning and engagement. This section explores the key trends and developments in primary teachers' technology use, student engagement and democratic teaching practices.

Primary Teachers

- A significant percentage of the primary school teachers reported that students often worked individually, answering questions in textbooks or on worksheets. Less than one-quarter of the teachers reported that students often gave presentations, and 21% said students often led discussions, engaged in writing activities in which they were expected to explain their thinking or reasoning, or worked on projects with durations exceeding one week. The individualistic approach was magnified, with nearly three-quarters of the teachers reporting that students often worked on their own assignments at their own desks. While almost all the teachers indicated that students engaged in whole class discussions, a mere 15% reported that students often worked in small groups to develop solutions or approaches to problems.
- Despite an individualistic approach regarding students' engagement, most teachers reported using democratic instructional practices such as demonstrations, guided methods, differentiated instruction, reflective discussions and role-playing. Problem-solving approaches and cooperative and collaborative learning were also reported as being implemented by the primary school teachers. A balance between collaborative and individual learning supports active engagement and personalised skill development. Encouraging a blend of whole class and individual activities, supported by diverse instructional strategies, is essential for addressing different learning preferences.
- Half of the teachers frequently accessed online lessons, and two-thirds frequently created instructional materials using the technology. Approximately half of the teachers reported using technology to design presentations sometimes, and one-third of the teachers never engaged students in online discussions such as blogs. Fifty-eight percent of the teachers reported using technology to formulate tests for students, but a whopping 91% got information from the internet for lessons. However, one-third of the teachers seldom used projectors, software for remediation of basic skills or software to teach concepts. Ongoing support and professional development for interactive teaching methods are crucial to enhance student engagement and academic success.

Secondary Teachers

- In 2022, concerning secondary teachers' frequency of using technology for various purposes, many secondary teachers indicated that they used technology in their classroom for various purposes. The most popular uses ranked in order were: using technology to get information for the lesson; using technology to prepare homework assignments, produce handouts, and record students' grades; and using technology to post homework activities online.
- Interestingly, approximately one-third of the teachers indicated that they never use software to remediate basic skills or teach concepts.
- Additionally, about 39% of teachers never used technology to formulate tests for students or engage their students in online discussions in blogs and chat rooms.
- Although it was evident that secondary teachers used technology, barriers such as insufficient computers and limited internet access still need to be addressed to maximise the benefits of technology in enhancing instructional methods and student engagement.
- Additionally, the teachers reported that a lack of good instructional software, inadequate training opportunities, technical support, and knowledge of integrating technology to enhance the curriculum moderately influenced their use of technology.
- Therefore, continued investment in technological infrastructure and ongoing professional development are crucial for effective technology integration in teaching.
- In relation to student engagement and the use of democratic teaching practices in the secondary classroom, it should be noted that secondary teachers generally reported using a wide range of democratic teaching practices.
- Approximately 89% of teachers reported using didactic questions and demonstrations in their classes. Additionally, 83% reported using peer partner learning, encouraging students to read for information, and informing students of the assessment activity's objectives.
- Over 70% of teachers indicated that they use differentiated instruction and guided methods, reward positive behaviour with incentives, call parents about students' misbehaviour and work with students to establish a code of classroom behaviour and consequences for infractions.

School Leadership

Effective school leadership is a cornerstone of successful educational environments, directly influencing teacher performance, student outcomes, and overall school culture. This section

examines the perspectives of primary and secondary principals and teachers on leadership practices in 2022.

Primary Teacher and Principal Perspectives

- Approximately half of the primary teachers reported consistency in their principal's engagement in critical areas such as goal setting, using student performance data, and communicating clear objectives. More than two-thirds of the teachers noted that these goals and objectives were used frequently, potentially contributing to curricular decisions and alignment of school efforts and student outcomes. This alignment underscores the importance of ensuring that all staff members work towards common objectives, with continued support and training in effective goal-setting and communication being essential.
- All the principals indicated that they almost always discussed the school's goals with teachers at faculty meetings, and 20% of them seldom communicated the school's missions effectively to school community members. Twenty percent of the principals further reported that they seldom ensured that the school's academic goals were positioned in highly visible places in the school. Eighty percent of the principals almost always ensured that the classroom priorities of teachers were consistent with the goals. These activities are vital for identifying instructional gaps and supporting the effects of teaching practices. Encouraging regular reviews of classroom practices coupled with professional development may help address any instructional gaps.
- In terms of monitoring students' progress, 80% of the principals reported that they almost always met with teachers individually to discuss students' progress, and all the principals claimed to have discussions about academic performance results with faculty to identify weaknesses and strengths almost all the time. While 20% of the principals indicated that they seldomly informed teachers about the school's performance results in written form, 40% reported that they did so sometimes, 20% reported they frequently did and 20% almost always. All principals reported encouraging teachers to use instructional time to teach and practice new skills and concepts almost always.
- While all principals reported that they complimented teachers privately for their efforts or performances, the incentives they provided to teachers were not quite frequent. Twenty percent of the principals reported that they seldom acknowledged teachers' exceptional performances by writing memos for their personnel files, and 20% of the principals rarely rewarded teachers

for their extraordinary efforts with opportunities for professional recognition. Enhancing efforts to recognise teacher achievements formally should be encouraged to boost motivation and professional growth.

- Professional development was, however, promoted significantly, with all principals almost always obtaining the participation of the whole staff in in-service activities and 80% supporting the use of skills acquired in in-service activities in the classroom. Primary principal responses indicate a solid commitment to crucial leadership practices, with primary teachers' reports supporting this.

Secondary Teacher and Principal Perspectives

- In 2022, generally, teachers reported that their principals sometimes displayed some behaviours associated with school leadership.
- Approximately 39% of teachers expressed that their principal sometimes develops a focused set of annual school-wide goals. However, it is essential to note that only 33% of teachers indicated that the goals developed by their principals are frequently easily understood.
- Moreover, only about 22% of teachers reported that their principals frequently communicate the school's mission effectively to the members of the school community.
- About 50% of teachers surveyed indicated that their principals sometimes use data on student performance when developing the school's academic goals.
- Also, 50% of teachers indicated that their principals sometimes lead or attend teacher in-service activities concerned with instruction.
- Additionally, 33% of teachers indicated that their principals almost always compliment teachers privately for their efforts; however, only about 17% indicated that their principals almost always acknowledge teachers' exceptional performance by writing memos for their personnel files.
- It should be noted that only about 17% of teachers reported that their principals almost always use tests and other performance measures to assess progress towards school goals. In contrast, only approximately 22% reported that their principals frequently contact parents to communicate improved or exemplary student performance or contributions.

School Characteristics

- While 40% of the primary school principals reported that teacher absenteeism was a moderate challenge, 60% indicated that student absenteeism was a moderate challenge. Both teachers'

and students' absenteeism disrupt learning and teaching continuity, affecting overall school performance and student outcomes. Comprehensive strategies to reduce student and teacher absenteeism should be implemented, such as early intervention programmes, regular monitoring, and fostering a positive school culture that encourages attendance. Schools could also introduce attendance incentives and support students and teachers who are managing underlying issues that may contribute to absenteeism.

- All primary school principals reported the presence of libraries and sickbays and their active use at their schools. While all principals reported the absence of rooms such as art rooms, 80% reported that their schools did not have music rooms, while 20% indicated the presence and use of the music room at their school. Eighty percent reported that the schools had science labs and hard courts, but they were not in use. This underutilisation of school resources may limit experiential learning and physical activity opportunities. Schools must revisit how resources such as libraries, computer labs, and specialised rooms are utilised, integrating them more fully into the curriculum to enhance learning experiences.
- Mixed-ability grouping remained predominant in primary schools, supporting diverse learning experiences. Teachers will require professional development and resources to manage mixed-ability classrooms effectively, including strategies for differentiation and support to meet diverse student needs.
- Sixty percent of the primary school principals reported that their school did not have reading policies, and 40% reported that they did not timetable reading for leisure at their school. While 60% of the principals reported that their school did not have a policy for extra- and/or co-curricular activities, 8% reported that such activities were timetabled. The importance of reading and extra-curricular activities must be reinforced by reinstating timetabled reading for leisure and developing extra-curricular programmes that cater to a wide range of student interests. Schools may consider integrating reading into daily timetables and actively promote extra-curricular participation to encourage literacy, personal growth, and a well-rounded education.
- The one secondary principal surveyed indicated that teacher and student absenteeism posed a moderate challenge.
- This principal indicated that the school had the following specialised rooms: computer labs, science labs, art room, canteen, playing field, sickbay, music room, and hard courts, and they were being used. She did indicate that the school did not have a library or special subject room.

- This principal indicated that her school used mixed-ability grouping.
- This principal indicated that her school had no reading policy and reading was not timetabled for leisure.
- Although the principal indicated that there was a policy on extra-curricular and/or co-curricular activities, the school did not incorporate this into the timetable.
- Most secondary students indicated that they chose their current academic track. The students' data indicated that less than 10% of students indicated that someone other than themselves chose their academic track.
- Several students reported multiple academic tracks, including arts and business, arts and science, arts and visual arts, business and science, business and TVET, and arts, business, and science.
- It is essential to note that secondary students must be provided with comprehensive career guidance, ensuring they have access to information and opportunities aligned with their varied interests. Career guidance programmes should be updated to reflect the changing landscape of career aspirations and academic tracks, offering students tailored advice and support.

Teacher and Principal Views on Common Educational Practices

- Approximately 80% of primary school teachers largely maintained their enjoyment of teaching. Seventy-three percent of the teachers reported that they always liked teaching at their current school.
- The practice of providing extra lessons outside of regular school hours had the support of many parents, with 55% of the primary school teachers providing lessons and 70% reporting that parents were willing to pay. The standardisation of extra lessons policies could be considered to ensure equity, especially for students from lower-income families, while ensuring that teachers are fairly compensated for their time. All the primary school principals supported teachers being compensated for extra lessons.
- While 24% of the primary school teachers reported that they did not support using CPEA for secondary school placement, nearly 60% of the primary teachers reported their support. This trend suggests a division in views on standardised testing and its role in education, and a thorough review of the CPEA's impact on secondary school placement is required. In addition, alternative or supplementary assessment methods should also be considered.

- Sixty four percent of the primary school teachers reported their support for streaming classes according to ability practices and 39% supported having students repeat grades until they pass. While these practices are often seen as means to tailor education to students' needs, they may also limit the opportunities for students from disadvantaged backgrounds or those with learning difficulties.
- Approximately 56% of teachers reported that they like teaching in general, while approximately 56% indicated that they sometimes like teaching at their school.
- All teachers indicated that they believed they should be paid for extra lessons. Approximately 56% indicated that they sometimes provide extra lessons to students outside of school hours. About 78% of teachers reported that parents are sometimes willing to pay for extra lessons for their children.
- Most teachers indicated that they support the Common Entrance/CPEA for secondary placement and grade retention for secondary students, with about 61% of participants indicating this.
- Additionally, most teachers indicated that they support streaming according to ability, with about 78% of participants indicating this.

The Impact of COVID-19 on Teaching and Learning

- During the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, most primary and secondary students accessed online lessons. Many students faced technological challenges, such as log-in issues and inconsistent internet access, highlighting the need for better infrastructure to support future digital learning models. In addition, access to devices for online schooling was a reported issue, potentially contributing to inequities in access to education. Schools must ensure that technology plays an integral role in education, bridging gaps in access to technology and fostering digital literacy across student bodies.
- Challenges faced by primary school students during online schooling included their internet constantly dropping out (31%), trouble logging into meeting spaces such as Zoom (39.5%), difficulty keeping up with schoolwork (46.5%) and time management issues (33%). This emphasises the importance of building stronger independent learning skills, which is crucial for success in higher education and self-directed learning environments such as online learning. Time management and self-organisation skills may be integrated into the curriculum by

offering workshops and lessons that provide strategies and tools students can apply to their schoolwork.

- Despite these challenges, many primary school students reported the benefits of online schooling, including increased family time (57.4%), extra rest (41.9%), and not having to travel to school (31.8%). The COVID-19 pandemic's impact on students' attitudes towards school varied, with some reporting positive, negative or neutral effects, underscoring the need for educational systems to address individual experiences and support students who need it. Further, schools may implement programmes focusing on student well-being, such as counselling and peer support groups.
- Primary school teachers primarily engaged students online during the COVID-19 pandemic. Key challenges reported included creating appropriate assessment activities, devices not working, not knowing how to use the learning platforms and dealing with parents in online settings. These challenges underscore the growing importance of developing solid skills in blended teaching methods, as unaddressed skill gaps may continue to challenge teachers when meeting evolving technological demands in education. The preference for teaching modality for primary teachers was face-to-face, and most teachers reported that they used Google Suite/Classroom, while approximately one-quarter used Edmodo. Ongoing professional development programmes that focus on using digital tools for assessments and innovative lesson design may be established and will ensure that teachers can easily transition between in-person and digital modalities if needed.
- Primary school teachers provided extra support, mainly offering one-on-one sessions and guiding students towards online resources. Despite moderate challenges, most teachers rated their students' learning, attendance, and participation as good and were generally satisfied with their online teaching experiences.
- The primary school teachers' reports on their home environments being conducive to online instruction were scattered between the five scales, ranging from 'not at all' to 'very conducive'. Nearly half of the primary school teachers reported that their work-life balance was moderately managed.
- During the lockdown, 71% of secondary students reported attending classes online. Also, about 40% of students indicated that their teachers sent them worksheets to complete.
- Most secondary students indicated that they experienced challenges in online schooling. The top three challenges reported by the students with online schooling were trouble logging in to

meeting spaces (e.g., Zoom), the internet constantly dropping out, and the device not always working.

- Additionally, secondary students expressed some challenges adjusting to online schooling. These challenges included difficulty organising their time (54%), keeping up with their schoolwork (54%), and not feeling like doing schoolwork (49%).
- Regardless of the challenges, secondary students highlighted some positive experiences in attending school online, as approximately 61% indicated that they had positive experiences attending school online.
- Secondary students further reported the three top positive experiences in online schooling, which were more rest time (49%), staying in bed longer in the morning before having to get up for school (41%), and not having to travel to school (37%).
- Most secondary students indicated that they were moderately satisfied with the support they received from the school for online schooling, with 36% indicating this. About 40% of the secondary students indicated that they received additional support from home in the form of getting an appropriate device.
- Half of the secondary students indicated they always had the technology needed for online schoolwork. However, about one-quarter of students indicated that changing from face-to-face to online school was very hard for them or changing from face-to-face school to online school was somewhat challenging for them.
- Approximately 37% of secondary students indicated that it was sometimes hard to follow the safety rules.
- Interestingly, about 20% of the secondary students indicated that the COVID-19 pandemic had had a very bad effect on their feelings about school, while about 20% of the students indicated that the COVID-19 pandemic had a fairly good effect on their feelings about school.
- About half of the students, 52%, preferred only face-to-face teaching.

Conclusion

St. Lucia's education system, as of 2022, calls for a more inclusive approach that fosters gender balance among educators and ensures that all students, regardless of background, can engage fully in academic and extra-curricular activities. Furthermore, aligning educational practices with modern career demands, integrating critical thinking, and strengthening reading policies are essential for preparing students for the workforce. Expanding technology use in schools and

adopting appropriate post-pandemic teaching models will be crucial for building a resilient, modern education system. By addressing these challenges, St. Lucia has the potential to elevate student achievement and create a sustainable foundation for ongoing development.

What's Next...

In the pre-COVID-19 (2017) and post-COVID-19 (2022/2024) periods, data were collected from primary and secondary students, teachers and school principals from Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean to investigate certain home and school factors that are known to influence academic achievement, both at the individual level and school level. This report focused on the data collected in St Lucia. It provides a descriptive summary of the responses from the various participant groups in this country that shed light on the home and school factors investigated and, in some cases, discusses implications.

A follow-up to this report is imminent. The follow-up report will examine the relationship between home and school factors summarised in this current report and academic achievement at the school level. Using primarily correlational analysis, we will explore, for example, the link between:

- school leadership and students' attitudes to school and learning
- school leadership and teachers' instructional practices
- students' home literacy behaviour and school achievement
- students' attitudes to school and learning and school achievement
- students' perceptions of their school and school achievement

Such issues will be explored for the pre- and post-COVID-19 periods.

INTRODUCTION

Over the years, education in the region has been a topic of extensive discussion and debate, with numerous contentious issues stemming from practices established during the colonial period. Debates have revolved around curriculum content and methods, transition practices from primary to secondary education, hierarchical arrangement of schools, and teacher recruitment processes, among others. These discussions, held in the media, parliamentary debates, and in various forums across the region, often lead to the formulation and implementation of policies. However, policymaking in the Caribbean frequently relies on “policymakers, who implement policies based on ideas, as well as ad hoc or outdated data” (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2012). Nevertheless, there have been recent calls for evidence-based policymaking and practices. Recognising the constraints of limited financial resources, stakeholders in the region understand the importance of basing decisions about education, which remains highly valued, on rigorously gathered and analysed empirical evidence.

To this end, this study aligns with the current focus on seeking evidence to inform practice. It aims to contribute to our understanding of the factors that either promote or hinder students’ academic progress in the region. This report, which is part of a more extensive study that investigates the home and school factors that influence student academic achievement in the Eastern Caribbean and Barbados, seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. Develop demographic profiles of primary and secondary students, teachers and principals in St Lucia.
2. Provide descriptions of several factors that influence St Lucian students’ academic achievement, including:
 - a. Primary and secondary students’ reported home environment.
 - b. Primary and secondary students’ perception of school and learning.
 - c. Primary and secondary teachers’ reported classroom practices.
 - d. Primary and secondary teachers’ and principals’ perspectives on school leadership.
 - e. Primary and secondary school characteristics.
 - f. Indirect factors such as primary and secondary teachers’ and principals’ views on school and other education-related issues

The second phase of the study, conducted in 2022 in the OECS and 2024 in Barbados, aimed to achieve the same objectives as the first phase to enable pre- and post-COVID-19 comparisons. Additionally, the second phase aimed to:

3. Explore the experiences of students and teachers regarding schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This report is Report 1a, the first in a two-part report on the home and school factors influencing student academic achievement. Report 1b will explore the potential of these factors to predict student achievement at the primary and secondary levels.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This literature review examines various factors influencing student academic achievement, focusing on Caribbean and international perspectives. The discussion spans key areas such as the definition of academic achievement, the legacy of colonialism in Caribbean education, and evidence-based education reform. Additional sections explore specific influences on academic outcomes, including home environments, absenteeism, student attitudes, school climate, and leadership. The review also highlights the impact of post-colonial practices, such as academic tracking, and the role of technology in education, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic on student achievement.

Student Academic Achievement Defined

Steinmayr et al. (2014) define academic achievement as a representation of the outcomes that reflect how individuals have met specific educational goals within instructional settings, including schools, colleges and universities. These goals often centre on cognitive development, either spanning multiple disciplines (e.g., critical thinking) or focusing on the mastery of specific content areas such as literacy, numeracy, science or history. Steinmayr et al. (2014) state that it is a multifaceted construct that is context-dependent and shaped by the indicators used to measure it. These indicators range from general markers, such as procedural (knowledge of a process, skill, or procedure, e.g., conducting a science experiment) and declarative (knowledge of a concept or idea, e.g., knowing what a noun is) knowledge gained through education, to curriculum-based measures, such as grades and performance on achievement tests. Other indicators include cumulative outcomes such as degrees and certifications.

In modern societies, academic achievement is critical in determining a person's opportunities for further education and professional success. For example, performance measured by Grade Point Average (GPA) or other measures often dictates whether a student will succeed at college or university (Kobrin & Michel, 2006). This can be extended to the Caribbean, where admission to community colleges and universities relies on the results of the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) and the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Exam (CAPE). Beyond individual implications, academic achievement has national significance, influencing a country's economic

prosperity and social well-being. International assessments, such as the Programme for International Assessment (PISA), assess academic achievement across nations, offering insight into the strengths and weaknesses of educational systems. The results of these studies are used to inform policy decisions aimed at improving educational outcomes (OECD, 2023).

Education in Post-Colonial Caribbean Contexts

The legacy of colonialism continues to shape education systems in the Caribbean, and inequities continue to be perpetuated by educational structures that are in place today (Brissett, 2021; Bristol, 2012; Thompson et al., 2011; Warrican, 2005, 2020; Williams, 2016). Brissett (2021) emphasises that these inequities are a direct result of colonial-era education systems that served a small elite, leaving marginalised populations, particularly those of African descent, with limited access to quality education. Similarly, Williams (2016) describes the persistence of hierarchical systems in Trinidad's education, where students from lower socio-economic backgrounds are marginalised through outdated curricula and disciplinary practices. When viewed through a postcolonial lens, we can thoroughly investigate the relationship between culture, education and research (Bristol, 2012).

While education reforms have aimed to address these inequities, Jules (2010) argues that global pressure to conform to Western educational norms often hinders truly localised efforts. The challenge, therefore, is not just one of access but of ensuring the relevance of education to local socio-economic contexts. Sappleton and Adams (2022) add an international perspective, comparing efforts to decolonise education in the Caribbean and South Africa with the ongoing challenges of racial inequalities in United States (U.S.) education. They point out that while diversity initiatives in the United States are gaining traction, they often fail to address the deep Eurocentrism embedded in the system, a challenge similarly faced in the Caribbean.

Warrican (2015) is aligned with these ideas, highlighting how the divide between home and school cultures affects literacy development in the Commonwealth Caribbean. He argues that many students, particularly those from working-class backgrounds, are disengaged from literacy instruction that prioritises Standard English (SE) and ignores the Creole languages spoken at home. The persistence of colonial education practices devaluing local languages and cultures results in poor literacy outcomes and broader educational disengagement. Warrican calls for reforms integrating students' home languages into the classroom, fostering a more inclusive learning

environment, and redefining literacy to include critical thinking and multiliteracies, which are necessary for success in modern society.

Progress has been made in certain realms, such as providing Universal Secondary Education throughout the Eastern Caribbean. Still, challenges remain in how children are placed into secondary school, with students who are more academically able being placed in prestigious schools that were historically grammar schools (Leacock, 2009; Thompson et al., 2011). Further, special and inclusive education in Barbados has transitioned from charity-based models to more inclusive practices; however, resource challenges and societal attitudes remain (Blackman, 2017).

This literature suggests that education in the Caribbean is at a crossroads. While efforts to decolonise and reform systems have made great strides, significant colonial legacies remain. Without addressing the inequities that persist in regional systems, especially those rooted in our shared colonial past, educational outcomes in the region will remain uneven, with marginalised groups continuing to face barriers to achievement.

Importance of Evidence-Based Education Reform

The impact of the Caribbean's colonial legacy on equitable access to quality education and increased globalisation necessitates ongoing educational reform in the Caribbean, and this reform is a focus of governments in the region (Jules & Williams, 2016). However, educational reform must be grounded in evidence-based research (Slavin, 2020). Further, evidence-based approaches can transform education systems by fostering continuous cycles of innovation, evaluation and improvement (Slavin et al., 2021).

The origins of evidence-based practice and policymaking trace back to the early 1990s in the medical field (Sackett & Rosenberg, 1995) and have since expanded to healthcare (Hoffmann et al., 2023), business (Luthans et al., 2021) and psychology (APA Presidential Task Force on Evidence-Based Practice, 2006). In education, it now plays a crucial role in areas such as higher education (Diery et al., 2020), remote (online) education (Greenhow & Galvin, 2020), and special and inclusive education (Mitchell & Sutherland, 2020).

Although evidence-based policymaking has gained global acceptance, many educational policies, both internationally (Gorard et al., 2020) and in the Caribbean, are often developed without sufficient evidence (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2012). The

United Nations (2024) highlights the unique challenges faced by small island developing states (SIDS) in implementing evidence-based policymaking, noting that:

Small island developing states face significant challenges in data collection, analysis, technical and institutional capacity, which hinders evidence-informed policymaking, monitoring progress and accessing development financing; and we emphasise that capacity-building for stronger data governance and management will allow SIDS to support better data collection, protection, transparency and data sharing (pp. 4-5).

Shah and Kelman (2024) similarly emphasise the need for evidence-based policymaking in SIDS using both “big” data (e.g., extensive datasets) and “small” data (e.g., case studies) integrated with local expertise and extensive Indigenous datasets. Moreover, “small” data (e.g., case studies) should be integrated with local expertise and indigenous knowledge.

Researchers in the Caribbean face challenges related to the dominance of Western paradigms in educational research. Warrican (2020) critiques the imposition of Western research frameworks on Caribbean education, stating that this practice leads to the misinterpretation of local realities. For instance, educational behaviours, such as students’ language use, are often misinterpreted when analysed through a Western lens. Warrican (2020) advocates for a shift towards more contextualised research methodologies that reflect the Caribbean region's socio-cultural history and educational needs.

The uncritical adoption of international education policies facilitates practices of policy transfer that overlook the unique social, cultural and economic realities of small island developing states, leading to ineffective reform (Crossley, 2019). Crossley emphasises the need for context-sensitive approaches to education reform, particularly in the Caribbean, where global benchmarks and policies, such as those from PISA, may not be appropriate. He further discusses the importance of equitable partnerships between global and local stakeholders to ensure policies are adapted to fit the local context rather than imposed without regard for local needs. Crossley advocates for a greater focus on qualitative research and Indigenous knowledge systems to support sustainable development goals, moving beyond the often quantitative-driven global governance models that dominate educational policymaking. This focus on Indigenous knowledge further contributes to the efforts to decolonise education by including the voices of those who both create and are impacted by policy.

Evidence-based education reform can transform governance and educational practices by enabling more effective resource allocation, fostering accountability, and ensuring policies address Caribbean education systems' unique sociocultural and historical context (Shah & Kelman, 2024; Slavin, 2020). Integrating “big” and “small” data with local expertise bridges gaps in equity and access while promoting sustainable development through continuous cycles of innovation, evaluation, and improvement (Crossley, 2019; Slavin et al., 2021). This approach empowers educators and institutions to enhance teaching practices, improve student outcomes, and align reforms with the region's developmental goals.

Academic Achievement Indicators in the Caribbean

The Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) and Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) are widely regarded as key achievement indicators in the region. They provide measurable benchmarks for assessing student performance and the effectiveness of secondary education systems (Caribbean Examinations Council, 2022). These standardised exams are often used by policymakers, educators, and researchers to evaluate trends in academic achievement, identify areas requiring intervention, and inform curriculum development.

To date, achievement indicators from the Caribbean region show significant improvement in specific curriculum areas. In contrast, other areas have stagnated or declined, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic remains to be fully understood. In 2019, just before the pandemic and subsequent lockdown, the overall CSEC pass rate was 75%, marking a 5% increase from the 70% pass rate in 2018 and up from 67% in 2017 (Press Release, 2019). Notably, there was a significant increase in performance in English A, with the pass rate rising from 67% in 2018 to 79% in 2019. However, in a more recent report from the Caribbean Examinations Council (2022), there has been a further decline in passing grades in most subjects since the first phase of this study was conducted in 2017, and this could be due to several factors, including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The number of students obtaining passing grades in the core compulsory subjects of English A and Mathematics is of particular concern. In English A, the pass rate fell in 2022 to 71%, compared with 74% in 2021, 83% in 2020 and 79% in 2019. Similarly, a decline was noted in Mathematics, with a 37% pass rate in 2022, compared to 41% in 2021, 53% in 2020, and 46% in 2019.

Significant declines in passing grades since 2019 have been noted for most other subjects, including Social Studies (52% in 2022, 65% in 2019), Geography (62% in 2022, 75% in 2019), Spanish (55% in 2022, 70% in 2019), Information Technology (80% in 2022, 92% in 2019), Technical Drawing (75% in 2022, 87% in 2019), Textiles, Clothing and Fashion (71% in 2022, 83% in 2019), Religious Education (59% in 2022, 75% in 2019), Physics (64% in 2022, 73% in 2019), Chemistry (60% in 2022, 68% in 2019), Additional Mathematics (63% in 2022, 71% in 2019), Principles of Business (80% in 2022, 87% in 2019), Principles of Accounts (69% in 2022, 75% in 2019), Music (69% in 2022, 75% in 2019), Electronic Document Preparation and Management (EDPM) (88% in 2022, 94% in 2019), IT (Mechanical) (80% in 2022, 86% in 2019). Slight declines in passing grades between 1% and 5% were observed between 2019 and 2022 in Economics, Portuguese, French, Information Technology (Building and Electrical), Physical Education and Sport, Food and Nutrition, and Office Administration.

The most significant increases in passing grades since 2019 are in Human and Social Biology (67% in 2022, 52% in 2019) and English B (71% in 2022, 65% in 2019). Increases in passing grades between 1% and 5% are noted in Caribbean History, Integrated Science, Family and Resource Management, Biology and Theatre Arts. Agricultural Science and Visual Arts passing grades remain the same in 2022 as in 2019. These trends suggest a need to reconsider traditional measures of academic achievement, such as standardised exam pass rates, and explore alternative assessment methods that capture a broader range of student competencies.

This study aims to examine a range of factors that may influence students' academic achievement, including those that may be contributing to the decline in passing grades observed across most subjects at the CSEC level in secondary schools and the large percentage of children who do not achieve high marks on the Common Entrance Examination at the end of primary school (Leacock et al., 2007).

Factors Affecting Academic Achievement: International and Caribbean Perspectives

Academic achievement is influenced by many factors, many of which vary across educational and cultural contexts. International research provides valuable insights into these influences, while regional studies offer a more localised understanding of Caribbean education systems' unique challenges and opportunities. By examining international and Caribbean perspectives, we can better understand the complex interplay of psychological, social, and instructional factors that

shape student outcomes. This offers a comprehensive view of the variables affecting academic success in this region.

In a systematic review of 169 studies using meta-analysis, which included over 250 variables, Kocak et al. (2021) used effect sizes to determine the strength of each variable on academic performance across education levels. The study categorises these variables into nine domains: psychological characteristics, teaching and learning strategies, socio-economic and socio-demographic characteristics, family, teacher, school, educational technology, special education and violence-related factors. They found that psychological factors such as self-efficacy and academic emotions (feelings about learning and school) had the largest positive effect sizes, indicating that psychological traits such as motivation and emotional regulation play a significant role in academic success. Concerning teaching and learning strategies, creative drama, constructivist and collaborative learning, and learning strategy instruction had substantial positive impacts on academic achievement. Higher socioeconomic status was consistently associated with better academic performance. Family variables included parental expectations, attitudes and involvement as critical predictors of academic success, with large effect sizes, especially when parents were actively involved in their children's education. Teachers' judgement of students' abilities and academic performance had significant effects, as well as the quality of teacher-student relationships. In schools, the incorporation of physical activities also positively impacts student achievement. The presence of reading disabilities and behavioural disorders impacted academic achievement negatively. Finally, tools such as computer-aided instruction and one-to-one laptop programmes positively impacted academic outcomes.

These findings are echoed in research that has been conducted in developing nations. For example, Farooq et al. (2011) found that higher socioeconomic status and higher levels of parental education predicted higher levels of academic achievement in a sample of secondary school students in Pakistan. In the Caribbean, a study conducted with middle-school students in Jamaica found that behavioural engagement, specifically participation in class activities and homework completion, positively predicted academic achievement (Martin et al., 2016). Another study in Barbados and Trinidad found that secondary school students' academic achievement improved after teachers trained in and used relational group work in their classes (Layne et al., 2008). Further, in a study conducted with primary school children in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, difficulties with attention were linked to lower academic achievement (Jimerson, 2006), which may connect with

the findings on behavioural disorders in the “special education” domain in Kocak et al.’s (2021) review. Other Caribbean studies related to various factors contributing to student academic achievement are presented in the sections below.

Home Environment and Academic Achievement

Nursery-Enrolment and Early-Childhood Education

Research on early childhood education (ECE) consistently shows its significant role in improving long-term academic outcomes. For example, Haslip (2018) found that public Pre-K attendance in the U.S. significantly improved first-grade literacy, particularly for economically disadvantaged children. However, socio-economic status (SES) is not the sole determinant of early educational outcomes. Other factors, such as programme quality, teacher training, and culturally relevant curricula, also play critical roles in shaping the effectiveness of ECE programs (Escayg & Kinkead-Clarke, 2018; Hoglebe & Strietholt, 2016). Moreover, early development of skills such as attention regulation and social competence – identified by Rabiner et al. (2016) as critical predictors of academic success – can amplify the benefits of high-quality ECE programmes across all socio-economic groups.

On an international scale, Hoglebe and Strietholt (2016) used data from nine countries to explore preschool’s effects on reading achievement and concluded that programme quality plays a crucial role in outcomes. Similarly, Eshetu (2015) in Ethiopia and Agirdag et al. (2015) in Turkey highlighted how socio-economic disparities affect access to preschool, with wealthier students benefiting more from early education. These studies highlight the importance of targeting intervention to close achievement gaps between SES groups and socio-economically disadvantaged populations by addressing variability in programme quality and access.

Escayg and Kinkead-Clarke (2018) call for integrating culturally relevant, decolonised curricula, shifting away from Eurocentric teaching models in the Caribbean. They argue that Caribbean ECE can foster positive racial identities and create more relatable and practical learning environments for children by incorporating local traditions such as storytelling and music.

These studies suggest that while SES is an important factor, it must be considered alongside programme quality, accessibility, and cultural relevance when designing and implementing ECE programmes. Moreover, fostering foundational skills like attention regulation and social

competence can enhance the effectiveness of these interventions. To close achievement gaps, a concerted effort must be made to target socio-economically disadvantaged children while ensuring that these programmes promote academic and social development to support local cultural identities.

Parental Involvement & Home Literacy Environment

Parental involvement is a widely recognised determinant of student academic achievement, with its effects varying based on the type of involvement, socioeconomic status and regional context. Research demonstrates that parental engagement, such as setting high academic expectations and providing home-based support, is associated with improved academic outcomes (Boonk et al., 2018; Wilder, 2014). However, direct involvement in homework can yield mixed results, especially as students advance through grade levels, highlighting the importance of the quality of engagement over its frequency (Boonk et al., 2018). Socioeconomic factors also significantly influence parental involvement, as families from higher socioeconomic backgrounds generally have greater access to resources that support their children's education. In contrast, parents in lower socioeconomic settings often face financial difficulties and work-related constraints that limit their ability to engage fully (Marshall et al., 2014).

In the Caribbean, these socioeconomic disparities are pronounced, and strong school leadership and community support play a pivotal role in fostering parental involvement, particularly in under-resourced areas (Edgerton et al., 2023; Marshall & Jackman, 2015). School leaders act as intermediaries, bridging the gap between families and schools to enhance student outcomes. Furthermore, addressing the “secondary slump”, or the decline in parental involvement as students progress through secondary education, is critical for sustaining academic motivation and performance (Marshall et al., 2014; Marshall & Jackman, 2015). Therefore, policies that provide resources and opportunities for sustained parental engagement, particularly in marginalised communities, are essential for improving student achievement in the Caribbean.

Research also consistently emphasises the importance of the home literacy environment (HLE) in shaping children's academic success. Schlee et al. (2009) found that parental resource capital – such as education level, income, and home literacy practices – strongly predicts early academic performance in reading and mathematics, highlighting the importance of a well-resourced home environment. This finding aligns with Heppt et al. (2022), who concluded that physical books,

especially children's books, are key predictors of academic success. Neuman and Moland (2016) introduced the concept of “book deserts”, showing that income segregation limits book access in disadvantaged U.S. neighbourhoods, exacerbating literacy gaps. Neuman (2017) further demonstrated that access to books alone is insufficient; meaningful interaction between children and caregivers, such as reading together, is crucial for developing literacy skills.

Studies in other contexts reinforce these findings. In the UK, Hartas (2012) demonstrated that while socioeconomic status (SES) plays a significant role in literacy development, simple home learning activities like reading cannot entirely close the achievement gap for lower SES families. van Bergen et al. (2017) explored the interaction between genetic and environmental factors, concluding that while parental reading skills can be hereditary, environmental factors such as access to books independently improve literacy outcomes. Similarly, Lesemen and De Jong (1998) highlight the multifaceted nature of the HLE, where opportunities for reading, parent-child interactions and instructional quality collectively predict early reading success. This view is supported by Darling and Westberg (2004), who found that structured parental involvement – where parents are trained in reading activities – significantly impacts children’s literacy outcomes. In the United States, Albee et al. (2019) tackled summer reading loss by distributing culturally relevant books and involving parents in literacy activities, reducing reading loss among disadvantaged students. Sammons et al. (2015) extended this to the long term, showing that early HLE strongly predicts later academic success, particularly for low-income students.

Similar patterns emerge regarding the influence of the HLE in the Caribbean. Martin et al. (2016) studied middle school students in Jamaica and found that parental engagement and motivation were critical for academic success, though socioeconomic limitations often hinder access to literacy resources. This reflects broader international findings, where socioeconomic factors limit the availability of literacy materials, contributing to persistent achievement gaps (Neuman & Moland, 2016; Schlee et al., 2009).

Student and Teacher Absenteeism

The literature consistently demonstrates that student absenteeism negatively impacts academic performance, with various causes producing different effects. Klein et al. (2023) found that truancy and sickness-related absences are particularly harmful; Jamil & Khalid (2016) found student delinquency to be a predictor of low academic achievement, while Keppens (2023) highlighted

that unexcused absences, especially during critical periods like exams, have the most detrimental effects. Allen et al. (2018) focused on health-related absenteeism, emphasising the role of chronic illness and mental health issues. The authors advocate for early interventions involving healthcare professionals, families and schools to prevent long-term academic decline due to absenteeism. These findings suggest the need for targeted interventions considering the reasons for and timing of absences.

Further, Hancock et al. (2016) investigated socioeconomic factors and absenteeism, finding that absenteeism negatively affects academic performance across all demographics. In the Caribbean, absenteeism is also tied to socioeconomic challenges. Cook and Ezenne (2010) found that factors such as financial difficulties, family responsibilities, and poor infrastructure contribute to absenteeism in Jamaica. Also, in Jamaica, Jennings et al. (2017) found financial difficulties experienced by parents as the leading cause of absenteeism. In Guyana, Bristol (2017) noted that teacher absenteeism contributes to student absenteeism, as students perceive little value in attending school when teachers are absent. Similarly, in Barbados, Lewis (2020) found negative correlations between teacher absences and student performance in core subjects such as science and math, though a positive effect was seen in English. This research in the Caribbean suggests that absenteeism is one of several factors influencing student outcomes and calls for solutions involving school, community and government intervention.

Students' Perceptions of Learning and School Climate

Student Attitudes Toward Learning and School

The influence of students' attitudes towards school and learning (ATSL) on motivation and achievement has long been acknowledged (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Recent research by Veresová & Malá (2016) demonstrates a strong correlation between ATSL and academic achievement. Slovak secondary school students who displayed positive attitudes toward learning achieved higher Grade Point Averages (GPAs), with a cognitive component (beliefs about their ability to succeed) being the strongest predictor. The study also uncovered gender differences, with girls having more positive attitudes than boys, though this did not translate into a significant GPA difference.

Similarly, a study in Nigeria, Kpolovie et al. (2014) found that both interest in learning and attitude towards school were significant predictors of academic performance in secondary school students. This study suggests that these factors collectively account for over 20% of the variance in academic achievement, with interest in learning being slightly more influential. This reinforces the importance of student engagement and a positive learning attitude in driving academic success. Knight and Obidah (2014) explored student perceptions of secondary education under the Universal Secondary Education (USE) policy in the Caribbean context. Students from low-performing schools expressed dissatisfaction with teaching methods and student-teacher relationships, negatively impacting their attitudes towards learning. This demonstrates that the relationship between attitudes toward learning and academic achievement is not unidirectional. Additionally, Bowe (2012) conducted research with Caribbean students in the UK and noted that negative attitudes towards school and risky behaviour were prevalent among boys and contributed to an academic achievement gap between boys and girls.

These findings suggest that fostering positive attitudes towards school and learning can significantly contribute to better academic outcomes. Gender differences in ATSL, particularly favouring girls, indicate a need for targeted interventions aimed at enhancing boys' attitudes where significant differences exist. Additionally, as highlighted by several studies, the importance of cognitive beliefs about academic success suggests that building students' confidence in their academics is crucial.

School Climate and Academic Achievement

Research consistently highlights the critical role of school climate in shaping student well-being and academic achievement across various international and Caribbean contexts. Akey (2006), in a study of U.S. urban high schools, found that supportive teacher-student relationships and clear behavioural expectations positively influenced student engagement and perceived competence, which enhanced academic achievement. Similarly, Steinmayr et al. (2018) emphasised that a positive school climate significantly predicted student well-being, although its direct effect on academic achievement was weaker. Instead, self-efficacy emerged as the strongest predictor of academic performance, indirectly supporting school climate through enhanced student well-being.

In Australia, Maxwell et al. (2017) demonstrated that student perceptions of a positive school climate, mainly through a sense of school identification, were associated with better performance

in literacy and numeracy. Staff perceptions of school climate also positively influenced academic outcomes, underscoring the importance of a supportive environment for students and teachers. In their meta-analysis, Dulay and Karadağ (2017) further reinforced the importance of school climate, showing a medium-level positive effect on student achievement across multiple countries, with the impact observed in subjects such as English and social sciences.

Leadership plays a critical role in shaping school climate. Allen et al. (2015) found that transformational leadership positively influenced teachers' perceptions of school climate, mainly through fostering collaboration and a sense of order. However, the impact of school climate on student achievement was more nuanced, with significant effects observed primarily in reading but not mathematics. Veletić et al. (2023) highlighted the importance of distributed leadership, where shared decision-making among staff contributes to a more positive perception of school climate, especially in Scandinavian countries. This aligns with Zysberg and Schwabsky (2020), who found that a positive school climate in Israel, characterised by strong interpersonal relationships and a sense of belonging, enhanced students' academic self-efficacy, improving academic outcomes in core subjects.

In the Caribbean, Bartley (2024) examined the role of school climate in fostering resilience and well-being among Jamaican secondary school students. The study emphasised that supportive relationships between students and teachers, coupled with clear expectations and a safe environment, were crucial for promoting student resilience, particularly in the context of challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. La Salle et al. (2021) also found that students in Jamaica reported higher levels of school connectedness, which was linked to better mental health outcomes, further reinforcing the importance of a positive school climate for overall student well-being.

In summary, positive interpersonal relationships, a sense of belonging, and strong leadership that fosters collaboration are critical elements of a healthy school climate. While school climate has a more indirect effect on academic performance, its role in supporting student engagement, self-efficacy, and resilience is vital across diverse educational contexts.

Democratic Classrooms and Student-Centred Instruction

The literature across international and Caribbean concepts underscores the importance of democratic classrooms and student-centred instruction in improving student outcomes, both academically and socially. Print et al. (2002) highlight how democratic participation in Danish schools fosters active citizenship and critical thinking. In Albania, Bara and Xhomara (2020) found that problem-based learning and student-centred methods led to significant improvements in science achievement, with problem-based learning showing a particularly strong effect. Similarly, Asoodeh et al. (2012), in their study of Iranian elementary students, demonstrated that student-centred learning significantly improved academic performance in subjects like mathematics, science, and reading. Additionally, they found that this approach had a lasting positive impact on students' social skills, such as communication and adaptive behaviour, with benefits persisting even months after the intervention. Further, a recent meta-analysis also demonstrated that student-centred approaches in mathematics improved academic performance and reduced anxiety, especially in middle school students (Emanet & Kezer, 2021). Finally, Yildirim (2023) similarly found that student-centred methods in life sciences significantly boosted achievement, reinforcing the broad applicability of these approaches across subjects.

Student-centred methods have also been found to be effective in developing nations. In Nigeria, Precious and Feyisetan (2020) showed that student-centred approaches, such as discussions and field trips, improved biology performance, outperforming traditional teacher-centred methods. These findings align with research from the Caribbean, where Warrican and Leacock (2011) explored democratic education in Caribbean classrooms. Leacock and Warrican's (2011) study of online learning environments illustrates both the potential and challenges of promoting democratic practices. Their findings show that while online platforms can foster greater student participation and recognition of individual needs, issues such as technological barriers and isolation hinder their effectiveness. The study highlights the cultural tensions between online learning and traditional oral communication in the Caribbean, calling for more interactive components to fully support student-centred approaches. Similarly, Layne et al. (2008) demonstrated that group work in Trinidad and Barbados significantly improved academic performance, particularly for low-achieving students. Further, Warrican (2019) highlighted that while Barbadian teachers expressed support for learner centred instruction, practical barriers such as lack of resources and mentorship limited its full implementation.

School Leadership

School leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping both student outcomes and the broader school environment. Internationally, transformational and distributed leadership styles have been identified as particularly effective in fostering positive school climates and supporting student achievement. Veletić et al. (2023) demonstrated that distributed leadership, where decision making is shared among staff, was associated with improved school climate perceptions across different regions, although its impact varied, with particularly strong results in Scandinavian countries. This leadership model, emphasizing collaboration and shared responsibilities, creates a more inclusive organizational structure that contributes to better school outcomes. Further to this, Leithwood (2021) highlighted the importance of equitable leadership, focusing on culturally responsive practices that engage diverse communities and address the needs of all students. These leadership practices are essential for promoting inclusivity and ensuring that schools serve as equitable learning environments for students from various socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. The link between transformational leadership and improved school climate is further emphasized by Allen et al. (2015) and Tan et al. (2021), who found that leadership styles that inspire and motivate staff indirectly improve student outcomes through their positive effects on the school climate. However, the direct impact of leadership on student achievement remains modest, highlighting the importance of combining leadership with strong instructional practices.

In the Caribbean, Miller (2016) pointed out that effective school leadership in this region often blends formal training with experiential learning. Principals in the Caribbean face unique socioeconomic and cultural challenges, requiring them to adapt leadership strategies to their specific local contexts. This contextual adaptation is crucial for addressing the complex needs of Caribbean schools. Leacock (2009) echoed these findings, showing that in the Caribbean, transformational leadership is particularly effective in improving student outcomes, especially in core subjects like English and mathematics. Principals who motivate their staff create a collaborative school environment that enhances both teacher performance and student engagement. This leadership style is key to fostering positive academic outcomes in Caribbean schools. Further supporting this, Brown et al. (2014) in their study of primary schools in Trinidad and Tobago, demonstrated how professional networks among teachers, facilitated by strong leadership, positively impact academic performance. Schools where principals fostered collegial trust and encouraged teacher collaboration, particularly around the use of assessment data, had

higher student proficiency levels on national tests. However, the study noted that despite these gains, resource limitations and a lack of external professional support hindered the full implementation of collaborative teaching practices. These findings reinforce the idea that leadership, when focused on building collaborative school climates, directly influences teacher effectiveness and student achievement.

However, leadership alone may not be enough. Jennings et al. (2017) stressed that a combination of strong leadership and teacher quality is necessary for improving academic performance, particularly in schools serving low income communities. Leadership's role in supporting teacher effectiveness is critical to overcoming resource constraints and ensuring that all students have the opportunity to succeed. Finally, Heaven and Bourne (2016) in their study of Jamaican schools, found only a weak correlation between instructional leadership and student achievement, suggesting that broader contextual factors, such as socio-economic conditions, also play a crucial role in shaping educational outcomes. This highlights the complex interplay between leadership and external factors in influencing student success.

Post-Colonial Education Practices

Academic Tracking, Ability Labelling and the Use of the Common Entrance Exam for Secondary School Placement

Academic tracking, ability labelling and the Common Entrance Examination (CEE) for secondary school placement have profound effects on both student outcomes and educational equity. These practices often reinforce existing socioeconomic disparities, disproportionately impacting students from disadvantaged backgrounds. For example, research which drew on data from the UK Millennium Cohort Study demonstrated that early academic streaming tends to benefit students in higher streams while disadvantaging those in lower streams (Parsons & Hallam, 2014). Students in lower academic tracks, particularly in subjects like mathematics and English, often receive less challenging curricula, which diminishes their academic performance over time. Similarly, Boliver and Capsada-Munsech (2021) found that lower-tracked students in UK primary schools reported reduced enjoyment of key subjects, leading to decreased engagement and academic achievement.

The psychological effects of tracking and ability labelling are also significant. Research by Odongo et al. (2021) in Uganda revealed that students in lower ability streams had significantly

lower self-esteem than their peers in higher streams. This is further emphasized by Papachristou et al. (2022) who found students in lower ability groups were more likely to exhibit behavioural and emotional issues, such as hyperactivity and emotional challenges, reinforcing the socio-emotional divide between high and low achievers. Tracking and labelling significantly affect students' self-concepts, particularly in subjects like mathematics. Campbell (2021) found that girls placed in lower math groups developed negative self-concepts, which were further reinforced by teacher judgments. This finding aligns with Bradbury (2021) who highlighted how teachers often adopt a fixed ability mindset limiting students' opportunities for growth. Once labelled as "low ability" students are less likely to be exposed to challenging material or higher achieving peers, creating a self-fulfilling cycle that further widens the academic gap between high and low performers.

These trends are mirrored in the context of the Caribbean. Warrican et al. (2019) found that in Trinidad and Tobago's bi-dialectal context, peer effects substantially shaped individual literary achievement, where group performance significantly impacted individual outcomes. Students surrounded by higher-achieving peers performed better, regardless of their socio-economic background or individual characteristics, underscoring the importance of peer dynamics in shaping academic success. However, students in lower academic tracks, who are often separated from higher-achieving peers, lose these beneficial peer effects, further entrenching the academic divide. From a psychological standpoint, Lipps et al. (2010) reported that students in lower academic tracks in Caribbean countries, like Jamaica and St Vincent, exhibited higher levels of depressive symptoms, highlighting the emotional toll of being labelled as having "low ability".

These disparities are further engrained in the context of high-stakes exams like the CEE in Barbados. Pilgrim and Hornby (2019) noted that students from wealthier backgrounds with access to better preparatory resources consistently outperformed their less affluent peers, securing places in top-tier schools. This dynamic exacerbates existing educational inequalities, as students placed in lower-ranked schools receive fewer resources and face more significant academic challenges. Additionally, students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are disproportionately placed in lower-ranked schools based on their CEE performance. This is due to a number of factors including low levels of psychoeducational assessment, weak referral systems and inadequate supplies of SEND teachers and classes, further removing them from many educational opportunities.

Despite the persistence of tracking and ability labelling, several studies call for reform. Pilgrim and Hornby (2019) advocate for abolishing the CEE in Barbados in favour of a zoning system that allows students to attend schools within their communities, thus reducing socioeconomic segregation. Similarly, Bradbury (2021) and Boliver and Capsada-Munsech (2021) proposed mixed-ability teaching to mitigate the adverse effects of tracking and ability labelling, and must be supported by resources, training and strong student support systems, providing students with more equitable educational experiences.

Overall, the literature highlights the significant academic, emotional, and social inequalities perpetuated by academic tracking, ability labelling, and high-stakes exams like the CEE. These practices, while intended to tailor education to student ability, often exacerbate socioeconomic disparities and psychological distress, particularly among students in lower academic tracks. Reform efforts and the allocation of resources to these efforts must promote inclusivity, reduce reliance on tracking, and ensure that all students, regardless of background, have access to the resources and support they need to succeed.

Grade Retention

The literature consistently shows that grade retention negatively affects students' academic performance and motivation. Rodriguez-Rodriguez (2022) found that retained students did not see significant academic improvement and experienced decreased motivation, often focusing more on avoiding failure than achieving success. Similarly, Valbuena et al. (2020) observed that any short-term academic benefits of retention tend to diminish over time, with retained students facing a higher risk of dropping out and poorer labour market outcomes compared to their peers.

The long-term consequences of retention are not limited to academic performance. A study from the Netherlands found that while retained students eventually achieved similar educational qualifications as their peers, they entered the workforce later, resulting in lower lifetime earnings due to delayed labour market entry (ter Mullen, 2023). Further, Mariano et al. (2018) studied retention in New York City schools. They found that retained students were less likely to graduate on time, accumulated fewer credits, and were more likely to be placed in special education programmes, further contributing to their higher dropout rates. Retention policies can exacerbate these issues, especially when they disproportionately affect younger students. Jerrim et al. (2022) highlighted how rigid school entry laws in Spain, which require children to start school based on

calendar year rather than readiness, increased retention rates among younger children born later in the year.

Goos et al.'s (2021) meta-analysis of 84 studies on retention across various countries found that while about 24% of the studies reviewed found some positive short-term academic and psychosocial benefits for retained students, the majority (76%) reported negative outcomes or at least no benefits. Their review highlights that retention can slightly improve psychosocial functioning, such as motivation and academic self-concept, but these are often short-lived. Long-term retention generally leads to higher dropout rates, increased placement in special education, and diminished job prospects. Moreover, retention is notably less effective in countries with separation systems like Belgium and Germany, where it is paired with ability grouping and tracking. In contrast, countries like the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand that use this approach as a last resort with additional support see better outcomes.

Given these findings, Goos et al. (2021) emphasise that educational policymakers should shift away from retention as a solution for underperformance and focus instead on early interventions and targeted support. Valbuena et al. (2020) similarly suggest that interventions, such as remedial programmes and personalised academic support, can help struggling students catch up without the adverse long-term effects of retention.

Overall, the evidence points to grade retention's detrimental impacts on educational attainment and future economic prospects. Rather than relying on retention, which disproportionately affects vulnerable students, educational systems would benefit from flexible policies and support mechanisms that address students' academic needs early on, providing them with the resources to succeed without repeating a grade.

Technology in Education and the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Before the pandemic, technology and education were increasingly integrated into learning environments, but their use varied widely across contexts. For instance, George (2015) found that while some Caribbean countries had introduced technology-enabled learning, rural and low-income communities faced significant barriers to accessing these tools.

The COVID-19 pandemic radically transformed the role of technology in education. The sudden closure of schools worldwide led to an unprecedented reliance on online learning platforms.

Pokhrel and Chhetri (2021) reported that the pandemic disrupted the education of over 1.6 billion students globally, forcing students to shift to emergency remote education. However, this shift exposed significant technological access disparities, particularly in rural and underprivileged areas. Winter et al. (2021) documented how teachers in Ireland struggled to engage students online, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, due to a lack of adequate infrastructure and digital training.

In developing nations, such as those studied by Tadesse and Muluze (2020), the lack of digital infrastructure, particularly in rural areas, makes it difficult for students to continue their education. Parents in these regions often lacked the resources to support their children's online learning, worsening educational inequalities. The digital divide between urban and rural populations was also highlighted in Fikuree et al. (2021), who studied the Maldives education system during the pandemic.

Post-pandemic, blended learning models that combine online and in-person instruction are increasingly being adopted. Bubb and Jones (2020) suggested that the creative use of technology during home-schooling should be maintained to enhance student engagement. However, the pandemic also underscored the need for more equitable access to technology and infrastructure. Leacock and Warrican (2020) reported that in the Eastern Caribbean, many teachers were not adequately trained for online instruction, and students in rural areas struggled to access the necessary technology for effective learning.

In countries like Barbados and Jamaica, the pandemic exposed deep-rooted inequities and access to education. Blackman (2022) found that although the government distributed devices and set up online learning platforms, many students, particularly those from low-income households, remained disconnected. Further, Pokhrel and Chhetri (2021) noted that while online learning presented opportunities for innovation, the shift to digital platforms highlighted the need for better teacher training and infrastructure to ensure continuity and learning.

Despite these challenges, studies conducted before the pandemic have shown that technology can improve student outcomes when effectively implemented. Fraser (2018) demonstrated that computer-aided instruction in Caribbean Studies led to significant academic improvements among students. Further, Viera et al. (2014) demonstrated in an action research project in St Vincent and the Grenadines that while students were initially hesitant to use more formal platforms such as

Google Groups and a school website, they embraced familiar social media tools, showing that technology use can bridge formal and informal learning environments. However, as Abdullah et al. (2015) pointed out, the relationship between technology and academic achievement is complex, and effective outcomes depend on how well the technology is integrated into the teaching process.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the use of technology in education, it has also exposed significant disparities in access and readiness, particularly in developing regions like the Caribbean. Increased use of technology offers the potential for improving academic outcomes. However, its success depends on equitable access, teacher preparedness, and infrastructure development. Investments in digital infrastructure, ongoing teacher training, and blended learning models will be essential for creating resilient and inclusive education systems.

Conclusion

This review highlights the multifaceted nature of student academic achievement, demonstrating how factors ranging from socioeconomic conditions and home environments to school climate and leadership influence outcomes. Both international and Caribbean perspectives emphasise the importance of addressing inequities that stem from colonial legacies, socioeconomic disparities, and access to quality education. While the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed gaps in educational infrastructure, it has also accelerated the use of technology, presenting opportunities for reform. The studies reviewed underscore the need for evidence-based, inclusive strategies that promote equitable access to education and support students' academic success across diverse contexts.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Whether viewed from a psychological, sociological, or economic perspective, it is widely recognised that numerous factors influence children's academic performance and achievements. In larger countries with more substantial resources for research, extensive data is analysed to assess the impact of multiple factors on student academic achievement. However, in the Caribbean, which factors are most influential, how they interact to produce the observed outcomes, and the best strategies for maximising positive influences while minimising negative factors are often unclear. As a result, educational policy and education planning in the region are frequently based on incomplete information. This may lead to the inefficient use of resources and funds, devastatingly affecting small Caribbean countries with limited resources. Therefore, it is crucial to identify the factors affecting academic achievement in the region, keeping in mind that solutions from other countries may not be applicable in this context.

In countries such as the United States, the term 'achievement gap' typically highlights performance disparities between white students and students of colour. Opportunity gaps have been identified as crucial in explaining these differences in achievement among students from diverse backgrounds. Richard Milner (2012) introduced the opportunity gap explanatory framework to analyse these disparities in highly diverse and urban contexts in the United States. A vital component of this framework is the myth of meritocracy. Alongside other constructs such as colour blindness, cultural conflicts, low expectations, deficit mindsets, and context-neutral mindsets, this framework helps to "explain both positive and negative aspects and realities of people, places, and policies in educational practice." It serves as a basis for researchers to "explain and systematically name what they observe and come to know inductively" (Milner, 2012, p. 699). Although the educational context in the Caribbean differs significantly from that of the United States, the myth of meritocracy remains relevant for understanding how opportunities may be obstructed for students in the Caribbean.

The myth of meritocracy posits that educators may tend to believe that "their own, their parents, and their students' success and status have all been earned" and any individual failure regarding educational outcomes "is solely a result of making bad choices and decisions" (Milner, 2012, p. 704). While acknowledging achievement gaps, educators may overlook how socioeconomics intersect with education, even though they "appear to be more at ease, confident, and comfortable reflecting about, reading, and discussing how socioeconomics, particularly resources related to

wealth and poverty, influence educational disparities, inequities, outcomes, and opportunities” (Milner, 2012, p. 704). For example, those subscribing to the myth may overlook the role of economic privilege in their success, whether earned or unearned and may assume that all have equal or equitable opportunities for success. This myth can serve as a mechanism for understanding how teacher quality, teacher training, curriculum, the digital divide, wealth and income, healthcare, nutrition, and quality childcare affect achievement (Irvine, 2010).

In our examination of academic achievement within the current initiative, we recognise the potential for the myth of meritocracy to operate in Caribbean contexts, potentially obscuring and overlooking opportunities that impact the academic outcomes of young people. Smith (2020) has demonstrated the presence of Eurocentric mechanisms within the Caribbean educational landscape, which implicitly influence literacy and its role in student performance. Consequently, our investigations consider numerous opportunities such as school resources, technology, teacher and principal characteristics, and curriculum to understand better and uncover underlying patterns in achievement within Caribbean contexts. Through this exploration, we aim to develop frameworks that elucidate achievement and opportunity within the unique educational experience of the Caribbean region.

METHODOLOGY

In this section, a summary of the research methodology employed is provided.

Research Design

This study followed a survey design, and the larger project included data collection in four Eastern Caribbean countries (Antigua, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines) and Barbados in 2017. Although St Lucia was not one of the countries sampled in 2017, it was included in a second phase of data collection, which occurred in 2022 across five Eastern Caribbean countries (Dominica, Grenada, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines) and in 2024 in Barbados.

Sampling Strategy

Given the number of schools in St. Lucia and resource constraints, including all schools in the study was impractical. Therefore, a sampling guide was developed to select a representative sample of schools. A general sampling guide, outlined in Table 1, was established to guide the process. Additionally, recognising the difficulty in accessing private schools, the decision was made to limit the selection to public schools or government-assisted schools.

Table 1: General Sampling Guide

PRIMARY SCHOOLS	SECONDARY SCHOOLS
Four schools will be selected from each district. If schools are small, additional selections may be made. The sample should include single-sex schools, including at least one girl's and one boys' school, where possible. Efforts will be made to ensure the representation of different groups in cases of significant diversity (e.g. language, ethnicity) within the selected schools. Only students in the grade level preceding the level at which primary exit examinations are typically taken will be included. This guide is provisional and subject to adjustment upon obtaining information on the number of students in each school.	Two schools will be selected from each district. The sample should encompass former grammar school(s). The sample should include single-sex schools, including at least one girls' and one boys' school. Only students in the second and fourth form levels will be included. Efforts will be made to ensure the representation of different groups in cases of significant diversity (e.g. language, ethnicity) within the selected schools. This guide is provisional and subject to adjustment upon obtaining information on the number of students in each school.

Information was obtained from the Ministry of Education to facilitate the selection of schools. A list of schools categorised by districts was acquired. Additionally, data regarding the enrolment numbers of students in the required grades and the count of teachers at the selected schools were acquired to ensure an adequate supply of questionnaires. Although all attempts were made to follow the general sampling guide, alterations had to be made in some cases for practical reasons. Table 2 shows a breakdown of the number of schools from each district included in the sample.

Table 2: St. Lucian School Sample

District	Schools		
	# Schools	# Teachers	# Students
1	3	18	79
2	2	10	40
3	1	0	14
4	0	0	0
5	3	10	61
6	2	13	37
7	1	0	22
8	0	0	0

Procedure

Hard-copy surveys were distributed to each participating school's principal and all teachers. In many instances, the questionnaires had to be left at the schools and collected at a later arranged time due to the busy schedules of teachers and principals. For primary schools, surveys were administered to Grade Five students and for secondary schools, to Form Two and Four students. Where class sizes were small, classes were combined to collect the maximum number of responses, and where classes were streamed according to ability, the “middle” group of students was surveyed.

Surveying was conducted using the traditional face-to-face method. Trained researchers administered all questionnaires directly to students in their classrooms. This approach was chosen to ensure the highest quality of data. Two researchers visited each classroom whenever possible: one read the questionnaire aloud and the other to aid students with reading difficulties. Student questionnaires were administered and collected on the same day to streamline the data collection process.

All participants were instructed not to write their names or other identifying information on the surveys.

Data Analysis

Questionnaires were coded with unique identifiers, and responses were entered into six separate databases: one each for primary students, teachers and principals, and one each for secondary students, teachers and principals. Quantitative data analysis techniques using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) were employed to analyse the collected data. Descriptive statistics were utilised to compute frequencies, means, standard deviations and ranges for individual questions and scales within the questionnaire. Where open-ended response options were provided, responses were compiled and coded where necessary (e.g. secondary students' planned career choices).

FINDINGS

COUNTRY PROFILE: STUDENTS

Primary School Students

Data were collected from 129 primary school students in 2022 from 8 primary schools, and the results of the primary student survey are presented in the following sections.

Profile of Students in the Primary Schools Sample

The data were compiled and analysed using descriptive statistics to create a profile of the students in the primary school sample. All students in the sample were in Grade 5, and Tables 3 to 5 show the distribution of sex, age, and nursery enrolment before primary school.

Primary Students' Sex

Table 3: Distribution of Primary Students by Sex (N=129)

Sex of Student	N	%
Female	64	49.6
Male	65	50.4
No Response	0	0
TOTAL	129	100

The data was collected from one hundred and twenty-nine students, sixty-four females and sixty-five males.

Primary Students' Age

Table 4: Distribution of Primary Students by Age (N=129)

Age of Student	n	%
9	1	0.8
10	52	40.3
11	63	48.8
12	12	9.3
13	1	0.8
No Response	0	0
TOTAL	129	100

The modal age of primary school students in this study was eleven years.

Enrolment in Nursery Before Primary School

Table 5: Distribution of Primary Students by Prior Nursery Enrolment (N=129)

Prior Nursery Enrolment	N	%
Yes	109	84.5
No	17	13.2
No Response	3	2.3
TOTAL	129	100

Approximately eighty-five percent of the primary school students reported that they attended nursery school before enrolling in primary school.

Summary

The percentage of male and female primary school students in this study was approximately fifty percent each. Eighty-nine percent of the students were either 10 or 11 years old, and eighty-five percent said they were enrolled in a nursery before enrolment.

Secondary School Students

Data were collected from 124 secondary school students in 2022 across four schools involved in the research, and the results of the secondary student survey are presented in the following sections.

Profile of Students in the Secondary Schools Sample

The data were compiled and analysed using descriptive statistics to create a profile of the students in the Secondary school sample. All students in the sample were in either Form 2 or Form 4. Tables 6 to 8 show the distribution of students by sex, form level, and age.

Secondary Students' Sex

Table 6: Distribution of Secondary Students by Sex (N=124)

Sex of Student	N	%
Female	78	62.9
Male	46	37.1
No Response	1	8
TOTAL	124	100

Approximately sixty-three percent of the secondary students' respondents were female.

Secondary Students' Form Level

Table 7: Distribution of Secondary Students by Form Level (N=124)

Age of Student	N	%
Form 2	51	41.1
Form 4	72	58.1
TOTAL	123	99.2

Most respondents were from the fourth form, representing approximately sixty percent.

Secondary Students' Age

Table 8: Distribution of Secondary Students by Age (N=124)

Age of Student	N	%
12	0	0
13	16	13.2
14	16	13.2
15	44	36.4
16	26	21.5
17	18	14.9
18	1	0.8

The modal age was fifteen (15), with approximately thirty-six (36) percent of the respondents stating that they were fifteen (15) years.

Summary

More female students (sixty-three percent of the respondents) participated in this study than males. Of form fours and twos, most of the participants were at the form four level (approximately sixty percent). The modal age was fifteen (15), with approximately thirty-six (36) percent of the respondents stating that they were fifteen (15) years old.

COUNTRY PROFILE: TEACHERS

Primary School Teachers

Data were collected from thirty-three (33) primary school teachers across the six (6) primary schools involved in the research in 2022.

Profile of Teachers in the Primary Schools Sample

The data were compiled and analysed using descriptive statistics to create a profile of the teachers in the primary school sample. Tables 9 to 15 show the distribution of sex, the number of years teaching overall and at the current school, qualifications, professional status, and subjects taught.

Primary Teachers' Sex

Table 9: Distribution of Primary Teachers by Sex (N=33)

Sex of Teacher	n	%
Female	30	90.9
Male	3	9.1
No Response	0	0
TOTAL	33	100

The number of females (33) far outweighs the number of males (3) in this study, which may indicate gender disparities in teaching.

Primary Teachers' Years of Teaching Experience

Teachers reported their years in the teaching service; the results can be found in Table 10.

Table 10: Number of Years Teaching for Primary Teachers (N=33)

	n	Min	Max	Mean	SD
No. Years in Teaching Profession	32	1	39	17.03	12.167

Out of the ninety-seven percent of teachers who responded, the mean number of years in the teaching profession was 17.03, with a standard deviation of 12.167.

Primary Teachers' Years at the Current School

Teachers responded to the question about how many years they had been teaching at their current school, and the results are shown in Table 11.

Table 11: Number of Years Teaching at Current School for Primary Teachers (N=33)

	n	Min	Max	Mean	SD
No. Years at Current School	31	1	33	11.55	11.06

The mean number of years at the current school was 11.55, with a standard deviation of 11.06.

Qualifications Held by Primary Teachers

Teachers were asked to indicate the qualifications that they held at the time of data collection. They could select all the qualifications held.

Table 12: Qualifications of Primary Teachers (N=33)

Qualification	n	%
Associate degree	18	54.5
Bachelor's Degree	16	48.4
Master's Degree	5	15.1
Doctorate (EdD)	0	0
Doctorate (PhD)	0	0
Other Qual (e.g. CSEC)	8	24.2

Nearly half of the teachers in the study have associate and bachelor's degrees.

Education-Related Qualifications Held by Primary Teachers

Not only were the teachers asked to indicate the qualifications they held, but they were also asked to indicate the areas of qualification. These areas were categorised as being education-related and not. Education-related areas include primary education, primary education core areas English, Mathematics, Science and Social Sciences. The percentages of respondents holding their education-related qualifications are shown below.

Table 13: Proportion of Primary Teachers with Qualifications in Education-Related Areas (N=33)

Education-Related Qualification	n	%
Associate degree	11	33.3
Bachelor's Degree	5	15.1
Master's Degree	1	3.0
Doctorate (EdD)	0	0
Doctorate (PhD)	0	0
Other Qual	1	3.0

In 2022, teachers with qualifications in non-education-related areas held their degrees in counselling and social work, hospitality studies, and psychology with management.

Professional Status of Primary Teachers

The teachers indicated their status as to whether they were teacher-trained or held at least a first degree.

Table 14: Professional Status of Primary Teachers (N=33)

Professional Status	n	%
Trained Graduate	19	57.6
Trained non-graduate	6	18.2
Untrained Graduate	2	6.1
Untrained non-graduate	2	6.1
Other Professional Status	1	3.0
No Response	3	9.1
TOTAL	33	100

Approximately three-quarters of the teachers reported being trained graduate and non-graduate.

Level Mainly Taught by Primary Teachers

The teachers were asked to indicate the level they typically taught at their grade level.

Table 15: Level Mainly Taught by Primary Teachers (N=33)

Level Taught	n	%
Infants (4 –7 yrs.)	13	39.4
Lr Juniors (7-9 yrs.)	6	18.2
Upp Juniors (9-12 yrs.)	5	15.2
Other (e.g. Equally across different levels)	4	12.1
No response	5	15.1

Thirty-nine percent of the teachers reported teaching at the infant level, thirty-three percent taught at the upper and lower junior levels, and twelve percent reported teaching at other levels, such as equally across different levels.

Summary

A gender disparity was observed among the teachers in this study, with the number of females ten times the number of males. Their average number of years in the teaching profession was 17.3, with a standard deviation of 12.167. While fifty-five percent of the teachers held associate degrees and forty-eight percent held bachelor's degrees, thirty-three percent of the associate degrees and fifteen percent of the bachelor's degrees were in education-related areas. Seventy-five percent of the teachers reported that they were trained teachers.

Secondary School Teachers

Data were collected from eighteen (18) secondary school teachers across the two (2) schools involved in the research in 2022.

Profile of Teachers in the Secondary Schools Sample

The data were compiled and analysed using descriptive statistics to create a profile of the teachers in the secondary school sample. Tables 16 to 23 show the distribution of sex, the number of years teaching overall and at the current school, qualifications, professional status, and the subjects and levels taught.

Secondary Teachers' Sex

Table 16: Distribution of Secondary Teachers by Sex (N=18)

Sex of Teacher	n	%
Female	12	66.7
Male	5	27.8
No Response	1	5.6
TOTAL	18	100

Significantly more female teachers (approximately seventy (70) percent) than male teachers participated in this research.

Secondary Teachers' Years of Teaching Experience

Teachers reported their years in the teaching service; the results are shown in Table 17 below.

Table 17: Number of Years Teaching for Secondary Teachers (N=18)

	n	Min	Max	Mean	SD
No. Years in Teaching Profession	18	1	28	11.39	0.428

The mean number of years for teachers in the teaching profession was eleven (11) years.

Secondary Teachers' Years at the Current School

Teachers responded to the question about how many years they had been teaching at their current school.

Table 18: Number of Years Teaching at Current School for Secondary Teachers (N=18)

	n	Min	Max	Mean	SD
No. Years at Current School	18	1	20	7.41	6.374

The mean number of years teachers had been at their current school was approximately seven (7) years, with a standard deviation of about six (6)

Qualifications Held by Secondary Teachers

Teachers were asked to indicate the qualifications that they held at the time of data collection. They could select all the qualifications held.

Table 19: Qualifications of Secondary Teachers (N=18)

Qualification	n	%
Associate's degree	1	5.6
Bachelor's Degree	15	83.3
Master's Degree	4	22
Other	5	27

It should be noted that the majority of the teachers who participated in this research had a bachelor's degree (approximately eighty- three (83) percent)

Education-Related Qualifications Held by Secondary Teachers

Not only were the teachers asked to indicate the qualifications they held, but they were also asked to indicate the areas of qualification. These areas were categorised as being education-related and not. Education-related areas include secondary education, secondary education core areas English, Mathematics, Science and Social Sciences. The percentages of respondents holding their education-related qualifications are shown below.

Table 20: Proportion of Secondary Teachers with Qualifications in Education-Related Areas (N=18)

Education-Related Qualification	n	%
Associate Degree	2	11.1
Bachelor's Degree	3	16.6
Master's Degree	2	11.1
Other Qual	1	0.05

Teachers with qualifications in non-education-related areas held their degrees in areas such as Natural Sciences (biology, chemistry), Economics, Management, music, law and mass communication, and Computer Science.

Professional Status of Secondary Teachers

The teachers indicated their status as to whether they were teacher-trained or held at least a first degree.

Table 21: Professional Status of Secondary Teachers (N=18)

Professional Status	n	%
Trained Graduate	7	38.9
Trained Non-Graduate	2	11.1
Untrained Graduate	7	38.9
No Response	2	11.1
TOTAL	18	100

The percentage of trained and untrained graduates was the same, with approximately forty percent of teachers each.

Subject Areas Taught by Secondary Teachers

The teachers were asked to indicate the subject areas they typically taught at their particular grade level.

Table 22: Subject Areas Taught by Secondary Teachers (N=18)

Subject Area	n	%
English	1	5.6
Mathematics	4	22.2
General Studies	1	5.6
Science	4	22.2
Business	1	5.6
Industrial Arts	1	5.6
Art & Craft	1	5.6
Physical Education	2	11.1
Other Subject	3	16.7

From the sample of teachers who completed the survey, about twenty percent taught mathematics and science, respectively. In contrast, the other teachers taught English, General Studies, Business, Industrial Arts, Physical education, and Arts and crafts.

Level Taught by Secondary Teachers

The teachers were asked to indicate what grade level they typically teach.

Table 23: Subject Areas Taught by Secondary Teachers (N=18)

Subject Area	n	%
Lower Secondary (Forms 1-3)	2	11.1
Upper Secondary (Forms 4-5)	2	11.1
Post-Secondary (Lower 6-U6)	1	5.6
Other Level (Across Levels)	13	72.2

Most teachers taught across the different grade levels, with about seventy (70) indicating this.

Summary

It should be noted that there were significantly more female teachers (approximately 70% percent more than the number of male teachers) who participated in this research. The mean number of years for teachers in the teaching profession was eleven (11) years. Additionally, the mean number of years a teacher was at their current school was approximately seven (7) years, with a standard deviation of about six (6). It should be noted that most of the teachers who participated in this research had a bachelor's degree, approximately eighty-three (83) percent. Many teachers had non – education-related degrees. Teachers with qualifications in non-education-related areas held their degrees in areas such as Natural Sciences (biology, chemistry), Economics, Management, music, law and mass communication, and Computer Science. The percentage of trained graduates and untrained graduates was the same, with each approximately forty (40) percent of teachers.

COUNTRY PROFILE: PRINCIPALS

Primary School Principals

Data were collected from five principals across the six primary schools involved in the research in 2022.

Profile of Principals in the Primary Schools Sample

The data were compiled and analysed using descriptive statistics to create a profile of the principals in the primary school sample. Table 24 shows the distribution of principals by sex.

Primary Principals' Sex

Table 24: Distribution of Primary Principals by Sex (N=5)

Sex of Principal	n	%
Female	5	100
Male	0	0
TOTAL	5	100

All the principals who participated in this study were female.

Primary Principals' Years of Teaching Experience

Principals reported their years in the teaching service, and the distribution of responses is shown in Table 25.

Table 25: Number of Years Teaching for Primary Principals (N=5)

	n	Min	Max	Mean	SD
No. Years in Teaching Profession	5	27	41	32.60	5.51

All the principals have extensive experience in the teaching profession, from a minimum of twenty-seven years to a maximum of forty-one years.

Primary Principals' Years in Principal Position

Principals reported their years as principals, and the distribution of responses is shown in Table 26.

Table 26: Number of Years as a Principal for Primary Principals (N=5)

	n	Min	Max	Mean	SD
No. Years as Principal	5	5	15	9.60	4.56

The five principals have had an average of 9.60 years as principals.

Primary Principals' Years as Principal at the Current School

Principals responded to the question about how many years they had been serving as principals at their current school, and their responses are summarised in Table 27.

Table 27: Number of Years as Principal at Current School for Primary Principals (N=5)

	n	Min	Max	Mean	SD
No. Years as Principal at Current School	5	5	15	9.75	4.11

The principals had been principals at the school they were currently at for almost the same number of years, suggesting that they only had experience as principals at one school.

Highest Qualification Held by Primary Principals

Principals were asked to indicate the highest qualification held at the time of data collection. Their responses are shown in Table 28.

Table 28: Qualifications of Primary Teachers (N=5)

Qualification	n	%
Bachelor's Degree	1	20
Master's Degree	4	80
TOTAL	5	100

Eighty percent of the principals held master's degrees as their highest degrees.

Primary Principals' Training in School Leadership/Management

Principals were asked to indicate whether they had qualifications or training in school leadership and/or management, and if so, to report at what level and in which area. Their responses are shown in Tables 29 and 30.

Table 29: Primary Principals' Training in School Leadership/Management (N=5)

Qualifications/training in school leadership/management?	n	%
Yes	4	80
No	1	20
TOTAL	5	100

More than fifty percent of principals had school leadership and management qualifications.

Table 30: Highest Level of Training in School Leadership/Management for Primary Principals (N=5)

School Leadership/Management Qualification	n	%
Associate degree	1	20
Bachelor's Degree	1	20
Master's Degree	1	20
Other Qual	1	20

Principals' qualifications in leadership and or management were at various levels.

Summary

The study consisted of five female primary school principals with a mean teaching experience of 32.60 years and a standard deviation of 5.51. The principals held such positions for an average of 9.60 years and a standard deviation of 4.56. Eighty percent of the principals had master's degrees, and twenty percent had bachelor's degrees. All the principals were trained in school leadership/management.

Secondary School Principals

Data were collected from one (1) secondary school principal across the one (1) secondary school involved in the research in 2022.

Profile of Principals in the Secondary Schools Sample

The data were compiled and analysed using descriptive statistics to create a profile of the principals in the Secondary school sample. Table 31 shows the distribution of principals by sex.

Secondary Principals' Sex

Table 31: Distribution of Secondary Principals by Sex (N=1)

Sex of Principal	n	%
Female	1	100
Male	0	0
TOTAL	1	100

One female principal took part in this research.

Secondary Principals' Years of Teaching Experience

Principals reported their years in the teaching service. Table 32 shows the distribution of principal responses.

Table 32: Number of Years Teaching for Secondary Principals (N=1)

	n	Min	Max	Mean	SD
No. Years in Teaching Profession	1	30	30	30	0.0

The principal has been in the teaching profession for thirty years.

Secondary Principals' Years in Principal Position

Principals reported their years as principals. The distribution of principal responses can be found in Table 33.

Table 33: Number of Years as a Principal for Secondary Principals (N=1)

	n	Min	Max	Mean	SD
No. Years as Principal	1	8	8	8	0.0

The principal has been a principal for eight (8) years.

Secondary Principals' Years as Principal at the Current School

Principals responded to the question about how many years they had been principals at their current school. The distribution of principal responses can be found in Table 34.

Table 34: Number of Years as Principal at Current School for Secondary Principals (N=1)

	n	Min	Max	Mean	SD
No. Years as Principal at Current School	1	8	8	8	0.0

The principal has been the principal of his school for eight (8) years.

Highest Qualification Held by Secondary Principals

Principals were asked to indicate the highest qualification held at the time of data collection. Their responses are shown in Table 35.

Table 35: Qualifications of Secondary Principals (N=1)

Qualification	n	%
Master's Degree	1	100

The principal highest academic qualification was a master's degree.

Education-Related Qualifications Held by Secondary Principals

Not only were principals asked to indicate their qualifications, but they were also asked to indicate their areas of qualification. These areas were categorised as being education-related and not.

Education-related areas include secondary education, secondary education core areas of English, mathematics, science, and social sciences. The percentages of respondents holding their education-related qualifications are shown in Table 36.

Table 36: Proportion of Secondary Principals with Qualifications in Education-Related Areas (N=1)

Education-Related Qualification	n	%
Master's Degree	1	100

Secondary Principals' Training in School Leadership/Management

Principals were asked to indicate whether or not they had qualifications or training in school leadership and/or management, and if so, to report at what level and in which area. Their responses are shown in Tables 37 and 38.

Table 37: Secondary Principals' Training in School Leadership/Management (N=1)

Qualifications/training in school leadership/management?	n	%
Yes	1	100
TOTAL	1	100

Table 38: Highest Level of Training in School Leadership/Management for Secondary Principals (N=1)

Education-Related Qualification	n	%
Master's Degree	1	100
TOTAL	1	100

The principal in 2022 reported training in Educational Management, Administration, and Leadership and Learning.

Summary

One female principal took part in this research. The principal had been in the teaching profession for thirty (30) years and had been a principal for the past eight (8) years. It should be noted that the principal's highest academic qualification was a master's degree. The principal in 2022 reported training in Educational Management, Administration, and Leadership and Learning.

FACTORS AFFECTING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Several factors affect student achievement, and the study's findings are reported below. Findings are divided into the categories:

- ❖ Students' Home Environment
- ❖ Students' Perception of School and Learning
- ❖ Teachers' Classroom Practices
- ❖ School Leadership
- ❖ School Characteristics
- ❖ Teacher and Principal Views on Common Educational Practices
- ❖ The Impact of COVID-19 on Teaching and Learning

This report presents students' perspectives first in the primary and secondary school sections. Traditionally, educational research has focused on writing **about** students; however, there is a new focus on having “students fill the pages with their voices not to ‘prove’, or support researcher claims but rather to make claims of their own” (Cook-Sather, 2020, p. 9). From this perspective, we conducted this study to capture St. Lucian students' voices accurately.

Students' Home Environment

Primary and secondary students were asked about various factors influencing their home environments. These factors include which family members live with them at home, items found in the households, access to devices and the internet, and types of leisure activities engaged in. Students were also asked several questions that indicate the home literacy environment, including the number of books in the home and whether someone reads or reads to them.

Primary Students' Home Environment

Family Members Living with Primary Students

Students were asked who usually lives with them at home and their parents' employment status. Their responses are in Tables 39 to 41.

Table 39: Family Members Living with Primary Students (N=129)

Family Member	n	%
Mother (including stepmother or foster mother)	102	79.1
Father (including stepfather or foster father)	65	50.4
Brother(s) (including stepbrothers)	58	45.0
Sister(s) (including stepsisters)	58	45.0
Grandparent(s)	44	34.1
Others (e.g. cousin)	38	29.5

Seventy-nine percent of primary school students reported that they lived with their mother, fifty percent reported that they lived with their father, and forty-five percent reported living with a sibling. Thirty-four percent of the students indicated that they lived with their grandparents, and approximately thirty percent reported living with other people.

Table 40: Primary Students' Mothers' Employment Status (N=129)

Mother employment status	n	%
She is working full-time for pay	66	51.2
She is working part-time for pay	20	15.5
She is not working but looking for a job	16	12.4
Other (e.g. home duties; retired)	11	8.5
No Response	16	12.4
TOTAL	129	100

Table 41: Primary Students' Fathers' Employment Status (N=129)

Father employment status	n	%
He is working full-time for pay	72	55.8
He is working part-time for pay	25	19.4
He is not working but looking for a job	5	3.9
Other (e.g. home duties; retired)	4	3.1
No Response	23	17.8
TOTAL	129	100

Primary Students Access to Devices, Internet and Other Resources at Home

Students were asked if they have access to the internet and to indicate the electronic devices, they have access to at home. They were also asked to indicate access to other resources in their households. Their responses showing the percentage of students with regular access to these resources at home can be found in Tables 42 to 44.

Table 42: Primary Students' Access to the Internet at Home (N=129)

Regular internet access at home	n	%
Yes	111	86.0
No	11	8.5
No Response	7	5.4
TOTAL	129	100

Table 43: Primary Students' Access to Electronic Devices at Home (N=129)

Regular access to a device at home	n	%
Smartphone	78	60.5
Electronic tablet	97	75.2
Laptop computer	58	45.0
Desktop computer	14	10.9
Smart TV	81	62.8
Other	9	7.0

Table 44: Primary Students' Access to Other Resources at Home (N=129)

Regular access to	n	%
A computer you can use for schoolwork	59	45.7
A desk to study at	68	52.7
A dictionary	102	79.1
A dishwasher (or washing machine)	83	64.3
A DVD player	30	23.3
A guestroom	28	21.7
Internet access	100	77.5
Microwave oven	74	57.4
A musical instrument	52	40.3
A quiet place to study	70	54.3
A room of your own	81	62.8
Books of poetry	38	29.5
Books to help with your schoolwork	90	69.8
Classic literature (e.g. Roald Dahl; Dr Seuss)	26	20.2
Educational software	67	51.9
Puzzles and Educational toys	67	51.9
Technical reference books or manuals	35	27.1
Works of art (e.g., paintings)	62	48.1

Primary Students' Transportation to School

Students were asked how they usually travel to school every day. Table 45 shows the percentage of students who use various modes of transportation to school.

Table 45: Primary Students' Mode of Travel to School (N=129)

Mode of travel	n	%
Walking	43	33.3
By public transport (e.g. bus, minibus, route taxi)	52	40.3
By private vehicle (e.g. parent's car; with a friend)	24	18.6
Cycling (e.g. bicycle)	0	0
Other	10	7.8
TOTAL	129	100

Other modes of travel include a combination of walking and public and private transport.

Primary Students' Leisure Activities

Primary students were asked to report on the leisure activities they engage in at home. Table 46 shows the distribution of students engaged in each leisure activity.

Table 46: Primary Students' Leisure Activities at Home (N=129)

Leisure activity	n	%
Watching TV	95	73.6
Creative writing (e.g. stories, poetry, cartoons)	28	21.7
Watching movies/videos on a device	96	72.9
Listening to music	94	72.9
Playing sports	73	56.6
Reading	74	57.4
Hanging out with friends	74	57.4
Using social media (e.g. Snapchat; Facebook; Twitter; Instagram)	57	44.2
Playing video games	85	65.9
Surfing the Internet	40	31.0
Other	7	5.4

Primary Students' Home Literacy Environment

The students' home literacy environment was ascertained by asking about several factors. Students were asked to report on leisure-time reading materials and whether they were accessed in paper or electronic formats, the number of books in the home, who, if anyone, reads to them at home, and their perception of reading as a gender-specific activity. Primary student responses can be found in Tables 47 to 51.

Table 47: Primary Students' Reading Material and Format (N=129)

Reading material and format	n	%
Novels (Fiction): Paper format ONLY	35	27.1
Novels (Fiction): Electronic format ONLY	19	14.7
Novels (Fiction): BOTH Paper & Electronic	8	6.2
Other books (e.g. Non-fiction): Paper format ONLY	33	25.6
Other books (e.g. Non-fiction): Electronic format ONLY	21	16.3
Other books (e.g. Non-fiction): BOTH Paper & Electronic	14	10.9
Magazines: Paper format ONLY	16	12.4
Magazines: Electronic format ONLY	12	9.3
Magazines: BOTH Paper & Electronic	4	3.1
Comics: Paper format ONLY	17	13.2
Comics: Electronic format ONLY	12	9.3
Comics: BOTH Paper & Electronic	11	8.5
Newspapers: Paper format ONLY	10	7.8
Newspapers: Electronic format ONLY	13	10.1
Newspapers: BOTH Paper & Electronic	2	1.6
Other	2	1.6

Other reported reading materials include historical materials in paper format.

Table 48: Number of Books in Primary Students' Homes (N=129)

No. of books	n	%
0 – 10	27	20.9
11 – 25	44	34.1
26 – 100	24	18.6
101 – 200	9	7.0
201 – 500	9	7.0
More than 500	10	7.8
No Response	6	4.7
TOTAL	129	100

Table 49: Primary Students' Who Are Read to at Home (N=129)

Does someone read to you at home?	n	%
Yes	63	48.8
No	60	46.5
No Response	6	4.7
TOTAL	129	100

Table 50: Person Who Reads to Primary Students at Home (N=129)

The person who reads to the student	n	%
Father (including stepfather or foster father)	27	20.9
Mother (including stepmother or foster mother)	57	44.2
Brother(s) (including stepbrother)	15	11.6
Sister(s) (including stepsister)	14	10.9
Other relatives (e.g. grandparents; cousins; aunts, uncles)	25	19.4
Other(s) (e.g. friends)	2	1.6

Other individuals reportedly read to primary students, including friends and cousins.

Table 51: Primary Students' Perception of Reading as a Gender-Specific Activity (N=129)

Reading is an activity that is for	n	%
Girls only	3	2.3
Boys only	2	1.6
Both girls and boys	119	92.2
No Response	5	3.9
TOTAL	129	100

Primary Students' Participation in Extra-Curricular Activities

Students were asked if they participated in extracurricular activities. The primary student responses to this question can be found in Table 52. Students who responded yes to this question were asked to indicate the extracurricular activity they most often engage in. Students who answered no were asked why they do not participate in extracurricular activities.

Table 52: Primary Students' Participating in Extra-Curricular Activities (N=129)

Participate in extra-curricular activities	n	%
Yes	92	71.3
No	35	27.1
No Response	2	1.6
TOTAL	129	100

Primary students reported engaging in various activities, including running, dancing and playing football. Students who reported not participating in extracurricular activities gave various reasons, including insufficient activities and due to the COVID-19 virus.

Summary

While seventy-nine percent of the students reported living with a maternal figure, fifty percent said they lived with a father, step or foster father. Fifty-one percent of the primary school students reported that their mother worked full time, and fifty-six percent said their father worked full time. Public transport was the highest reported mode of travel to school (40%), thirty-three percent reported walking and nineteen percent reported travelling by private transport.

While eighty-six percent of the students reported having internet access at home the first time they were asked, the second time asked seventy-six percent of the students reported having access. While forty-five percent of the students reported having access to laptops, eleven percent to desktops, forty-six percent to a computer for schoolwork, fifty-three percent of them reported having access to a desk to study, fifty-four percent reported having a quiet place to study, and sixty-five percent reported having a room of their own.

While more than half of the students reported having access to devices, only fifteen percent reported reading fiction books in electronic form, sixteen percent reported reading non-fiction books in electronic form, nine percent electronic magazines and comics and ten percent electronic newspapers. With thirty-four percent of the students saying they have 11-25 books, nineteen percent having 26-100 books and approximately twenty-two percent indicating having more than one hundred books, twenty-seven percent of the students reported reading fiction books in paper form, twenty-six percent non-fiction paper form, thirteen percent paper comic and twelve percent paper magazine.

However, forty-nine percent of the students reported being read to at home, Twenty-one percent of the students were read to at home by their father and forty-four percent of the students were read to by their mother. An impressive ninety-two percent of the students believed reading was for both boys and girls. However, fifty-seven percent of students reported reading in their leisure time, seventy-four percent watched television and seventy-three percent watched movies or videos or listened to music.

Secondary Students' Home Environment

Family Members Living with Secondary Students

Students were asked who usually lives with them at home and their parents' employment status. Their responses are in Tables 53 to 55.

Table 53: Family Members Living with Secondary Students (N=124)

Family Member	n	%
Mother (including stepmother or foster mother)	96	77.4
Father (including stepfather or foster father)	61	49.2
Brother(s) (including stepbrothers)	49	39.5
Sister(s) (including stepsisters)	36	29
Grandparent(s)	19	15.3
Others (e.g. cousin)	22	17.7

While seventy-seven (77) percent of the students indicated that they lived with their mother, only forty-nine (49) percent indicated that they lived with their father. Students also indicated that they lived with siblings, grandparents, and cousins.

Table 54: Secondary Students' Mothers' Employment Status (N=124)

Mother employment status	n	%
She is working full-time for pay	86	69.4
She is working part-time for pay	10	8.1
She is not working but looking for a job	12	9.7
Other (e.g. home duties; retired)	7	5.6
No Response	9	7.3
TOTAL	124	100

It is significant to note that eighty-six percent of the students indicated that their mother worked full time.

Table 55: Secondary Students' Fathers' Employment Status (N=124)

Father employment status	n	%
He is working full-time for pay	85	68.5
He is working part-time for pay	15	12.1
He is not working but looking for a job	5	4
Other (e.g. home duties; retired)	7	5.6
No Response	10	8.1
TOTAL	124	100

Notably, eighty-five (85) percent of the students indicated that their father worked full-time.

Secondary Students Access to Devices, Internet and Other Resources at Home

Students were asked if they have access to the internet and to indicate the electronic devices they have access to at home. They were also asked to indicate access to other resources in their households. Their responses showing the percentage of students with regular access to these resources at home can be found in Tables 56 to 58.

Table 56: Secondary Students' Access to the Internet at Home (N=124)

Regular internet access at home	n	%
Yes	119	96.7
No	4	3.2
No Response	1	0.8
TOTAL	124	100

Almost all the students in the sample, approximately ninety-seven (97) percent, indicated that they have access to the internet at home.

Table 57: Secondary Students' Access to Electronic Devices at Home (N=124)

	n	%
Smartphone	101	81.5
Electronic tablet	58	46.8
Laptop computer	71	57.3
Desktop computer	20	16.1
Smart TV	72	58.1
Other	5	4

Among the various electronic devices identified, most students indicated that they had access to smartphones; this represented about eighty-two (82) percent of the students. The other three top devices used by secondary students were smart TVs (58%), laptop computers (57%), and electronic tablets (47%).

Over sixty (60) percent of students indicated that they had access to other resources at home, such as computers, internet access, a room of their own, washing machines/dishwashers, books to help with homework, and a dictionary. Less than fifty (50) percent of the students indicated that they had access to a desk to study, a quiet place to study, and musical instruments.

Table 58: Secondary Students' Access to Other Resources at Home (N=124)

Regular access to	n	%
A computer you can use for schoolwork	81	66.1
A desk to study at	61	49.2
A dictionary	109	87.9
A dishwasher (or washing machine)	77	62.1
A DVD player	29	23.4
A guestroom	24	19.4
Internet access	117	94.4
Microwave oven	71	57.3
A musical instrument	51	41.1
A quiet place to study	56	45.2
A room of your own	88	71
Books of poetry	37	29.8
Books to help with your schoolwork	99	79.8
Classic literature (e.g. Roald Dahl; Dr Seuss)	23	18.5
Educational software	62	50
Technical reference books or manuals	34	27.4
Works of art (e.g., paintings)	47	37.9

Secondary Students' Transportation to School

Students were asked how they usually travel to school every day. Table 59 shows the percentage of students who use various transportation modalities to school.

Table 59: Secondary Students' Mode of Travel to School (N=124)

Mode of travel	n	%
Walking	13	10.5
By public transport (e.g. bus, minibus, route taxi)	68	54.8
By private vehicle (e.g. parent's car; with a friend)	31	25
Cycling (e.g. bicycle)	1	0.8
Other	1	0.8
No Response	4	3.2
TOTAL	124	100

Most secondary students use public transportation to get to their school with about fifty-five (55) percent of students indicating this.

Secondary Students' Leisure Activities

Secondary students were asked to report on the leisure activities they engage in at home. Table 60 shows the distribution of students engaged in each leisure activity.

Table 60: Secondary Students' Leisure Activities at Home (N=124)

Leisure activity	n	%
Watching TV	77	62.1
Creative writing (e.g. stories, poetry, cartoons)	20	16.1
Watching movies/videos on a device	94	75.8
Listening to music	110	88.7
Playing sports	39	31.5
Reading	62	50
Hanging out with friends	59	47.6
Using social media (e.g. Snapchat; Facebook; Twitter; Instagram)	94	75.8
Playing video games	62	50
Surfing the Internet	72	58.1
Other	20	16.1

The top four (4) leisure activities that secondary school students indicated that they take part in are listening to music (about 89%), using social media (about 76%), watching videos /movies on a device (about 76%) and watching television (about 62%). It should be noted that only fifty (50) percent of students indicated that they read during their leisure time. Furthermore, only thirty-three (33) percent of students indicated that they engaged in sporting activities.

Secondary Students' Home Literacy Environment

The students' home literacy environment was ascertained by asking about several factors. Students were asked to report on leisure-time reading materials, whether they were accessed in paper or electronic formats, the number of books in the home, and their perception of reading as a gender-specific activity. The students were also asked who, if anyone, read to them at home when they were in primary school. Secondary student responses can be found in Tables 61 to 65.

The secondary students indicated that comics in both paper and electronic form were the most popular reading material and format, with about twenty-seven (27) percent choosing this option.

Table 61: Secondary Students' Reading Material and Format (N=124)

Reading material and format	n	%
Novels (Fiction): Paper format ONLY	25	20.2
Novels (Fiction): Electronic format ONLY	28	22.6
Novels (Fiction): BOTH Paper & Electronic	10	8.1
Other books (e.g. Non-fiction): Paper format ONLY	26	21
Other books (e.g. Non-fiction): Electronic format ONLY	19	15.3
Other books (e.g. Non-fiction): BOTH Paper & Electronic	7	5.6
Magazines: Paper format ONLY	12	9.7
Magazines: Electronic format ONLY	9	7.3
Magazines: BOTH Paper & Electronic	1	0.8
Comics: Paper format ONLY	14	11.3
Comics: Electronic format ONLY	33	26.6
Comics: BOTH Paper & Electronic	2	1.6
Newspapers: Paper format ONLY	9	7.3
Newspapers: Electronic format ONLY	11	8.9
Newspapers: BOTH Paper & Electronic	0.	0
Other	7	5.6

Table 62: Number of Books in Secondary Students' Homes (N=124)

No. of books	n	%
0 – 10	28	22.6
11 – 25	41	33.1
26 – 100	32	25.8
101 – 200	11	8.9
201 – 500	5	4
More than 500	3	2.4
No Response	4	3.2
TOTAL	124	100

Table 63: Secondary Students' Read to at Home When in Primary School (N=124)

Did someone read to you at home when you were in primary school?	n	%
Yes	80	64.5
No	41	33.1
No Response	2	1.6
TOTAL	124	100

Table 64: Person Who Read to Secondary Students at Home when in Primary School (N=124)

The person who read to the student	n	%
Father (including stepfather or foster father)	24	19.4
Mother (including stepmother or foster mother)	63	50.8
Brother(s) (including stepbrother)	6	4.8
Sister(s) (including stepsister)	15	12.1
Other relatives (e.g. grandparents; cousins; aunts, uncles)	20	15.1
Other(s) (e.g. friends)	12	9.7

Table 65: Secondary Students' Perception of Reading as a Gender-Specific Activity (N=124)

Reading is an activity that is for	n	%
Girls only	1	0.8
Boys only	1	0.8
Both girls and boys	120	96.8
No Response	2	1.6
TOTAL	124	100

Secondary Students' Participation in Extra-Curricular Activities

Students were asked if they participated in extra-curricular activities. Secondary student responses to this item can be found in Table 66. Students who responded yes to this question were asked to indicate the extracurricular activity they most often engage in. Students who answered no were asked why they do not participate in extracurricular activities.

Table 66: Secondary Students' Participating in Extra-Curricular Activities (N=124)

Participate in extra-curricular activities	n	%
Yes	78	62.9
No	44	35.5
No Response	2	1.6
TOTAL	124	100

Students in 2022 reported engaging in a range of activities, including sports (football, basketball), music (choir, orchestra), and Clubs (environmental). Students who reported not participating in extracurricular activities in 2017 gave various reasons, including health reasons and the fact that the extracurricular activities offered by the school did not interest them. Some indicated that they had to use the time to work on SBAs.

Summary

While seventy-seven (77) percent of the students indicated that they lived with their mother, only forty-nine (49) percent indicated that they lived with their father. Students also indicated that they lived with siblings, grandparents, and cousins.

It is significant to note that eighty-six (86) percent of the students indicated that their mother worked full time, and eighty-five (85) percent of the students indicated that their father worked full time.

Almost all the students in the sample, approximately ninety-seven (97) percent, indicated they have internet access at home. Among the various electronic devices identified, most students indicated that they had access to smartphones; this represented about eighty-two (82) percent of the students. The other three top devices used by secondary students were smart TVs (58%), laptop computers (57%), and electronic tablets (47%).

Over sixty (60) percent of students indicated that they had access to other resources at home, such as computers, internet access, a room of their own, washing machines/dishwashers, books to help with homework, and a dictionary. Less than fifty (50) percent of the students indicated that they had access to a desk to study, a quiet place to study, and musical instruments.

Most secondary students use public transportation to get to their school with about fifty-five (55) percent of students indicating this.

The top four (4) leisure activities that secondary school students indicated that they take part in are listening to music (about 89%), using social media (about 76%), watching videos /movies on a device (about 76%) and watching television (about 62%). It should be noted that only fifty (50) percent of students indicated that they read during their leisure time. Moreover, only thirty-three (33) percent of students indicated engaging in sporting activities.

The secondary students also indicated that comics in both paper and electronic form were the most popular reading material and format, with about twenty-seven (27) percent choosing this option.

Students in 2022 reported engaging in a range of activities, including sports (football, basketball), music (choir, orchestra), and Clubs (environmental). Students who reported not participating in extracurricular activities in 2017 gave various reasons, including health reasons and the fact that

the extracurricular activities offered by the school did not interest them. Some indicated that they had to use the time to work on SBAs.

Students' Perception of School and Learning

Primary and secondary students were asked about their feelings about learning and school in general, as well as about several aspects of their school's climate.

Primary Students' Attitudes Towards School and Learning

Students were presented with a list of statements about school and learning and were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with each statement. They were also allowed to indicate that they did not know if they agreed or disagreed. The frequency of primary student responses to each statement is presented in Table 67.

Table 67: Primary Students' Attitudes Towards School and Learning (N=129)

Statement	Responses (%)				
	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know	No Response	TOTAL
Going to school will help me get a good job when I am older.	89.1	2.3	2.3	6.3	100
School is fun.	69	10.1	14.7	6.2	100
I wish we didn't have to go to school at all.	11.6	64.3	17.1	7.0	100
I would rather stay at home than go to school.	13.2	68.2	12.4	6.2	100
I would rather go to the doctor or dentist than go to school.	15.5	57.4	17.8	9.3	100
Learning new things at school is fun.	79.1	7.8	4.7	8.5	100
In school, all we ever do is work, work, work.	40.3	45.0	7.0	7.8	100
School will help me know many things.	86.8	5.4	2.3	5.4	100
School will help me think better.	82.9	3.9	8.5	4.7	100
School will get me prepared for the future.	78.3	5.4	8.5	7.8	100
School is boring.	17.8	65.1	13.2	3.9	100
I don't like school.	14.0	61.2	18.6	6.2	100
I like to do schoolwork.	53.5	21.7	17.8	7.0	100
I will never use what I learn at school.	10.9	70.5	9.3	9.3	100
School is like a prison.	17.8	56.6	17.1	8.5	100
I would rather be at school than playing video games	48.8	30.2	14.0	7.0	100
I hate to do schoolwork.	14.7	65.9	13.2	6.2	100
I would rather be at school than at home watching TV.	42.6	33.3	15.5	8.6	100
I don't need school to get a job.	11.6	66.7	15.5	6.2	100
I like all the different things we do at school.	72.9	11.6	7.0	8.5	100
What I learn at school is good for my brain.	83.7	3.9	6.2	6.2	100
School is important for everyone.	83.7	3.1	5.4	7.8	100
I will never use what I learn at school	10.9	70.5	9.3	9.3	100
I would rather be at home alone than at school.	12.4	65.9	15.5	6.2	100

Summary

Students' responses portrayed a high percentage of positive attitudes towards school and learning. Sixty-nine percent of the students indicated that school was fun, and seventy-nine percent felt that learning new things in school was fun. Seventy-three percent reported that they liked all the different things done at school, and eighty-four percent felt that school was good for the brain and essential for everyone. Eighty-seven percent of the students agreed that school would help them know many things, eighty-three percent felt that school would help them think better and seventy-eight percent indicated that school would help prepare for the future.

Sixty-four percent of the students opposed the statement that they wished that they did not have to go to school, sixty-eight percent did not agree with the idea of staying home rather than going to school, and fifty-seven percent disagreed with the idea of going to the doctor rather than going to school. Sixty-five percent of the students did not find school boring, and fifty-seven percent did not feel that school was like a prison. Sixty-six percent of the students did not hate schoolwork, and sixty-seven percent disagreed that school is unnecessary for getting a job after graduation.

Primary Students' Perception of the School Environment

One of the research objectives is to understand students' perceptions of their school environment. To achieve this, primary school students were administered a 29-item School Climate Survey-Student Version ESAI-E-S3. This instrument comprises stems for 29 statements, each offering three options for completion. Students read each stem and select the option that best reflects their perception of the school. Typically, student responses within a school are aggregated, providing a measure of the school climate from the student's viewpoint. The presented findings summarise the percentage of students selecting each option for each item in Table 68, offering an overview of the proportions of primary school students' responses. Some students circled more than one response, and these are shown as option "d" in the table below.

Table 68: Primary Students' Responses on School Climate Survey (N=129)

Statement	Responses (%)
1) From what I can tell, this school is	
a) A great place for people to visit.	58.9
b) An okay place for people to visit.	30.2
c) Not a place people want to visit.	4.7
d) Ambivalent (multiple responses chosen)	0.8

e) No response	5.4
2) In my experience, at this school	
a) Everything works or gets fixed quickly.	46.5
b) A few things are broken, but mostly things here work.	44.2
c) A lot of things are broken.	3.1
d) Ambivalent (multiple responses chosen)	0
e) No response	6.2
3) When I look around at this school I see	
a) Lots of colour and kids' work is up everywhere.	54.3
b) Some colour and kids' work is up in some places.	33.3
c) Mostly blank walls.	5.4
d) No response	7.0
4) Most of the students at this school	
a) Help the teachers and other kids make the school clean and nice to look at.	40.3
b) Keep the school clean because we would get in trouble if we did not.	33.3
c) Don't keep the school pretty and clean even when teachers tell us to.	20.2
d) No response	6.2
5) My teacher spends time with other teachers	
a) Planning, talking and teaching together often.	56.6
b) Talking mostly at recess or school events.	24.8
c) Only at lunch or not at all.	10.1
d) Ambivalent (multiple responses chosen)	0.8
e) No response	7.8
6) When I am at school, I feel like	
a) The teachers, classmates, and I are like a family.	51.9
b) I am part of a good school, but not really a family.	33.3
c) No one cares about me at this school.	7.8
d) No response	7.0
7) At this school	
a) Students all get along no matter what they look like or where they are from.	41.1
b) Students who are alike or friends get along.	25.6
c) A lot of students don't get along.	26.4
d) No response	7.0
8) The popular students at this school	
a) Are nice to the other students.	34.1
b) Are nice to the other popular students.	17.8
c) Think they are better and are often mean to others.	32.6
d) Ambivalent (multiple responses chosen)	0.8
e) No response	14.7
9) In my class	
a) We make a lot of the decisions along with the teacher.	39.5
b) The teacher lets us choose sometimes.	34.9
c) The teacher makes all the decisions.	13.2
d) Ambivalent (multiple responses chosen)	0.8
e) No response	11.6

10) In my class	
a) There are lots of classroom jobs and we all take turns doing them.	33.3
b) There are a few jobs for students in the class.	32.6
c) Students only do classroom jobs because they have to or have gotten in trouble.	18.6
d) Ambivalent (multiple responses chosen)	1.6
e) No response	14.0
11) School events such as games, plays, performances, meetings, or conferences are attended by	
a) Lots of people.	54.3
b) Some people who care about that event.	30.2
c) Not many people.	7.8
d) No response	7.8
12) At this school, I feel safe	
a) Everywhere in the school.	52.7
b) Only in my classroom.	24.8
c) Some days and not other days.	13.2
d) No response	9.3
13) At this school	
a) Many students are in leadership roles in and out of class.	23.3
b) A few students are picked by the teachers to be leaders.	45.0
c) There are few or no students in leadership roles.	22.5
d) Ambivalent (multiple responses chosen)	0.8
e) No response	8.5
14) At this school	
a) The students and teachers from different classrooms work together on many projects.	37.2
b) The students work together on projects in their class.	39.5
c) Students do not work together on projects.	14.0
d) No response	9.3
15) In my class, the rules	
a) Are clear and help the kids get along.	43.4
b) Are clear and keep the kids from misbehaving.	33.3
c) Are not clear and the kids are afraid of doing something to make the teacher angry.	15.5
d) No response	7.8
16) When students break rules	
a) The teacher gives them a fair consequence and helps them understand why.	51.2
b) The teacher gives consequences sometimes.	27.1
c) The teacher gets upset at the students publicly.	11.6
d) Ambivalent (multiple responses chosen)	0.8
e) No response	9.3
17) In my judgment, I would say that	
a) I am learning to be more responsible every day because of my teacher.	64.3
b) I am learning to do what the teacher wants.	14.7
c) I feel like if I did what I wanted to do, I would get in trouble.	11.6
d) Ambivalent (multiple responses chosen)	0.8
e) No response	8.5
18) I would say that	

a) I can see clear evidence that my teacher respects and cares about me.	59.7
b) When I show my teacher respect, he/she shows me respect.	21.7
c) I try to respect my teacher, but sometimes I feel like I am not respected.	10.1
d) Ambivalent (multiple responses chosen)	0.8
e) No response	7.8
19) In my class	
a) Things run smoothly because the teacher makes things very clear.	38.0
b) Things run pretty well because the teacher has a lot of control.	31.0
c) A lot of the time things do not run smoothly.	21.7
d) Ambivalent (multiple responses chosen)	0.8
e) No response	8.5
20) When it comes to grades and assignments	
a) What it takes to get a good grade is very clear to me.	58.9
b) Most of the time I understand what is expected.	20.9
c) Often, I am confused as to why I get the grades I do.	10.9
d) No response	9.3
21) What is important in my class is	
a) How much we try and the effort we put into our work.	58.1
b) Getting right answers and good grades.	24.8
c) Doing what makes the teacher happy.	8.5
d) Ambivalent (multiple responses chosen)	0.8
e) No response	7.8
22) I would describe the work in my class as	
a) Active, hands-on and interesting.	53.5
b) Interesting but mostly out of the book.	21.7
c) Mostly worksheets and the teacher talking.	14.7
d) Ambivalent (multiple responses chosen)	0.8
e) No response	9.3
23) The work in my class	
a) Makes me think and challenges me.	55.8
b) Is mostly about remembering what the teacher or textbook says	27.9
c) Is mostly about keeping us all busy	7.0
d) No response	9.3
24) At this school when a student uses mean language	
a) Other students point out to them that it is not right.	37.2
b) Sometimes they get in trouble from an adult.	37.2
c) Usually nothing happens to them, so they keep doing it.	14.7
d) Ambivalent (multiple responses chosen)	1.6
e) No response	9.3
25) At this school	
a) I trust and can talk to most of the adults.	39.5
b) There are one or two adults that I can trust to talk to, but not many.	33.3
c) I do not feel like I can be honest with the adults at the school.	16.3
d) No response	10.9
26) On the playground	

a) We have peer mediators and/or “Peacemakers” that help the students solve their own problems.	45.7
b) We have peer mediators and/or “Peacemakers,” but they mostly just get kids in trouble.	15.5
c) There are only adults to supervise.	24.8
d) Ambivalent (multiple responses chosen)	0.8
e) No response	13.2
27) The best way to describe how I feel about this school is	
a) I am very proud to be a student here.	45.0
b) I like this school.	28.7
c) This school is okay, but I would rather be at another school.	16.3
d) No response	10.1
28) My parents	
a) Feel welcome to come to the school.	45.0
b) Mostly just come to school for events that are expected such as parent-teacher conferences.	27.1
c) Don’t come to the school very often.	17.1
d) Ambivalent (multiple responses chosen)	0.8
e) No response	10.1
29) At this school	
a) We have lots of guests, visitors, and volunteers.	48.1
b) We have a few guests, visitors and volunteers.	30.2
c) There are not many guests, visitors or volunteers.	13.2
d) No response	8.5

Summary

Fifty-nine percent of the students reported that their school was a good place for people to visit, and fifty-four percent reported that looking around their school, they could see lots of colour and students’ work up everywhere. It was also reported by fifty-seven percent of the students that their teachers spent time with other teachers planning, talking and teaching together. Fifty-two percent of the students felt they were part of a family, including their teachers and classmates. Forty-one percent of the students reported that everyone got along despite their looks and origin, and thirty-four percent felt that popular students were friendly to other students.

Approximately half of the students reported that many people usually attended school activities such as meetings and performances and indicated they felt safe everywhere in the school. Forty-three percent of the students felt that in-class rules were clear and helpful for getting along. Fifty-one percent of the students indicated that when students broke the rules, the teachers gave fair consequences and helped them understand why. Sixty percent of the students reported that it was quite evident that the teachers respected and cared about them. Fifty-nine percent of the students reported that what it takes to get good grades was clear when it came to grades and assignments.

Fifty-four percent of the students felt that classwork was active, hands-on and interesting. Fifty-six percent of the students felt that work in class helped them think and challenged them.

Secondary Students' Attitudes Towards School and Learning

Secondary students were also presented with a list of statements about school and learning and were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with each statement. They were allowed to indicate that they did not know if they agreed or disagreed. The frequency of secondary student responses to each statement is presented in Table 69.

Table 69: Secondary Students' Attitudes Towards School and Learning (N=124)

Statement	Responses (%)				
	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know	No Response	TOTAL
Going to school will help me get a good job when I am older.	87.1	4.8	5.6	2.4	100
School is fun.	52.4	20.2	22.6	4	100
I wish we didn't have to go to school at all.	23.4	48.4	23.4	4	100
I would rather stay at home than go to school.	22.6	50.0	20.2	6.5	100
I would rather go to the doctor or dentist than go to school.	16.9	62.1	14.5	4.8	100
Learning new things at school is fun.	74	4	16.9	4.8	100
In school, all we ever do is work, work, work.	55.6	36.3	3.2	4.8	100
School will help me know many things.	76.6	11.3	7.3	4.8	100
School will help me think better.	65.3	12.1	17.7	4.8	100
School will get me prepared for the future.	79	8.1	7.3	5.6	100
School is boring.	35.5	32.3	26.6	5.6	100
I don't like school.	25.8	49.2	19.4	5.6	100
I like to do schoolwork.	29	39.5	24.2	7.3	100
I will never use what I learn at school.	12.9	63.7	17.7	5.6	100
School is like a prison.	41.1	41.1	12.9	4.8	100
I would rather be at school than playing video games	35.5	37.1	21	6.5	100
I hate to do schoolwork.	35.5	39.5	15.3	9.7	100
I would rather be at school than at home watching TV.	50.8	28.2	15.3	5.6	100
I don't need school to get a job.	17.7	53.2	21	8.1	100
I like all the different things we do at school.	58.9	18.5	15.3	7.3	100
What I learn at school is good for my brain.	75.8	2.3	13.7	8.1	100
School is important for everyone.	79	5.6	7.3	8.1	100
I would rather be at home alone than at school.	26.6	49.2	16.1	8.1	100

Summary

Students' responses indicated a high percentage of positive attitudes towards school and learning. Most students agreed with most of the positive statements about school. Approximately eighty-

seven (87) percent of the students indicated that “going to school will help me get a good job when I am older”. Seventy-nine (79) percent indicated that “school is important for everyone, and school will prepare me for the future. school “. Interestingly, about seventy-seven (77) percent of students indicated that learning new things at school is fun. However, only about fifty-two (52) percent of the students indicated school is fun.

Secondary Students’ Perception of the School Environment

One of the research objectives is to understand students’ perceptions of their school environment. Secondary school students were administered a 29-item School Climate Survey-Student Version ESAI-E-S3 to achieve this. This instrument comprises stems for 29 statements, each offering three options for completion. Students read each stem and select the option that best reflects their perception of the school. Typically, student responses within a school are aggregated, providing a measure of the school climate from the student’s viewpoint. In the presented findings, the percentage of students selecting each option for each item is summarised in Table 70, offering an overview of the proportions of Secondary school students’ responses. Some students circled more than one response, and these are shown as option “d” in the table below.

Table 70: Secondary Students' Responses on School Climate Survey (N=124)

Statement	Responses (%)
1) From what I can tell, this school is	
a) A great place for people to visit.	21
b) An okay place for people to visit.	61.3
c) Not a place people want to visit.	10.5
d) No response	7.3
2) In my experience, at this school	
a) Everything works or gets fixed quickly.	12.9
b) A few things are broken, but mostly things here work.	56.5
c) A lot of things are broken.	22.0
d) No response	7.3
3) When I look around at this school I see	
a) Lots of colour and kids’ work is up everywhere.	22.6
b) Some colour and kids’ work is up in some places.	48.4
c) Mostly blank walls.	21.8
d) No response	7.3
4) Most of the students at this school	
a) Help the teachers and other kids make the school clean and nice to look at.	18.5
b) Keep the school clean because we would get in trouble if we did not.	32.3
c) Don’t keep the school pretty and clean even when teachers tell us to.	40.3

d) No response	10.4
5) My teacher spends time with other teachers	
a) Planning, talking and teaching together often.	47.6
b) Talking mostly at recess or school events.	29.8
c) Only at lunch or not at all.	12.1
d) No response	10.5
6) When I am at school, I feel like	
a) The teachers, classmates, and I are like a family.	19.4
b) I am part of a good school, but not really a family.	51.6
c) No one cares about me at this school.	19.4
d) No response	7.3
7) At this school	
a) Students all get along no matter what they look like or where they are from.	16.9
b) Students who are alike or friends get along.	51.6
c) A lot of students don't get along.	24.2
d) No response	7.3
8) The popular students at this school	
a) Are nice to the other students.	21.8
b) Are nice to the other popular students.	22.6
c) Think they are better and are often mean to others.	44.4
d) No response	11.2
9) In my class	
a) We make a lot of the decisions along with the teacher.	29.8
b) The teacher lets us choose sometimes.	44.4
c) The teacher makes all the decisions.	14.5
d) No response	11.2
10) In my class	
a) There are lots of classroom jobs and we all take turns doing them.	9.7
b) There are a few jobs for students in the class.	29
c) Students only do classroom jobs because they have to or have gotten in trouble.	46.8
d) No response	14.5
11) School events such as games, plays, performances, meetings, or conferences are attended by	
a) Lots of people.	37.1
b) Some people who care about that event.	14.5
c) Not many people.	37.9
d) No response	11.2
12) At this school, I feel safe	
a) Everywhere in the school.	37.1
b) Only in my classroom.	14.5
c) Some days and not other days.	37.9
d) No response	10.4
13) At this school	
a) Many students are in leadership roles in and out of class.	24.2
b) A few students are picked by the teachers to be leaders.	46
c) There are few or no students in leadership roles.	18.5

d) No response	11.3
14) At this school	
a) The students and teachers from different classrooms work together on many projects.	24.2
b) The students work together on projects in their class.	50.8
c) Students do not work together on projects.	12.9
d) Ambivalent (multiple responses chosen)	12.1
15) In my class, the rules	
a) Are clear and help the kids get along.	24.2
b) Are clear and keep the kids from misbehaving.	43.5
c) Are not clear and the kids are afraid of doing something to make the teacher angry.	19.4
16) When students break rules	
a) The teacher gives them a fair consequence and helps them understand why.	35.5
b) The teacher gives consequences sometimes.	29.8
c) The teacher gets upset at the students publicly.	24.2
17) In my judgment, I would say that	
a) I am learning to be more responsible every day because of my teacher.	45.2
b) I am learning to do what the teacher wants.	12.9
c) I feel like if I did what I wanted to do, I would get in trouble.	30.6
d) No response	11.3
18) I would say that	
a) I can see clear evidence that my teacher respects and cares about me.	45.3
b) When I show my teacher respect, he/she shows me respect.	12.9
c) I try to respect my teacher, but sometimes I feel like I am not respected.	30.6
d) No response	11.3
19) In my class	
a) Things run smoothly because the teacher makes things very clear.	25
b) Things run pretty well because the teacher has a lot of control.	38.7
c) A lot of the time things do not run smoothly.	25
d) No response	11.3
20) When it comes to grades and assignments	
a) What it takes to get a good grade is very clear to me.	21.8
b) Most of the time I understand what is expected.	29.8
c) Often, I am confused as to why I get the grades I do.	37.9
d) No response	10.5
21) What is important in my class is	
a) How much we try and the effort we put into our work.	29
b) Getting right answers and good grades.	38.7
c) Doing what makes the teacher happy.	21.8
d) No response	10.5
22) I would describe the work in my class as	
a) Active, hands-on and interesting.	43.5
b) Interesting but mostly out of the book.	33.1
c) Mostly worksheets and the teacher talking.	11.3
d) No response	12.1
23) The work in my class	

a) Makes me think and challenges me.	30.6
b) Is mostly about remembering what the teacher or textbook says	31.5
c) Is mostly about keeping us all busy	25.8
d) No response	12.1
24) At this school when a student uses mean language	
a) Other students point out to them that it is not right.	39.5
b) Sometimes they get in trouble from an adult.	37.1
c) Usually nothing happens to them, so they keep doing it.	12.9
d) Ambivalent (multiple responses chosen)	0
e) No response	10.5
25) At this school	
a) I trust and can talk to most of the adults.	15.3
b) There are one or two adults that I can trust to talk to, but not many.	48.4
c) I do not feel like I can be honest with the adults at the school.	24.2
d) Ambivalent (multiple responses chosen)	12.1
26) On the playground	
a) We have peer mediators and/or “Peacemakers” that help the students solve their own problems.	22.6
b) We have peer mediators and/or “Peacemakers,” but they mostly just get kids in trouble.	29
c) There are only adults to supervise.	29.8
d) Ambivalent (multiple responses chosen)	0.8
e) No response	17.7
27) The best way to describe how I feel about this school is	
a) I am very proud to be a student here.	22.6
b) I like this school.	29
c) This school is okay, but I would rather be at another school.	29.8
d) Ambivalent (multiple responses chosen)	0.8
e) No response	17.7
28) My parents	
a) Feel welcome to come to the school.	28.2
b) Mostly just come to school for events that are expected such as parent-teacher conferences.	27.4
c) Don’t come to the school very often.	33.1
d) No response	11.3
29) At this school	
a) We have lots of guests, visitors, and volunteers.	22.6
b) We have a few guests, visitors and volunteers.	42.7
c) There are not many guests, visitors or volunteers.	21.8
d) No response	12.1

Physical Appearance

Sixty-one (61) percent of students described their school as an okay place for people to visit, and fifty-seven (57) percent indicated that few things are broken. However, forty (40) percent of

students indicated that most students do not keep the school pretty and clean, even when the teacher tells them to.

Student Interaction

About fifty-two (52) percent of the students indicated they feel part of a good school but not a family. Approximately fifty-two (52) percent of students indicated that students who are alike or friends get along; however, forty-four (44) percent of students indicated that the popular students in the school think they are better and are often mean to others.

Discipline Environment

Approximately half (51%) of students indicated that the rules are clear and keep the kids from misbehaving. While about forty – four (44) percent indicated that the teachers sometimes give consequences when the rules are broken. Forty-five percent of the students further indicated that they are learning to be more responsible because of their teacher.

Learning and Assessment

Approximately thirty-nine (39) percent of students indicated that getting right answers and good grades is important in their class. Forty-four (44) percent of the students describe the work in their class as active, hands-on and interesting. Thirty-two (32) percent of the students indicate that the work in the class is mostly about remembering what the teacher or textbook says. Furthermore, about thirty- (31) percent indicated that the work makes them think and challenges them.

Attitude and Culture

Thirty-nine (39) percent of the students indicated that when students use mean language, other students point out that it is not right. Approximately forty-eight percent of the students indicated that there are one or two adults that they can trust to talk to, but not many. Only twenty-three (23) percent of the students indicated they are proud of their school, while about thirty (30) percent indicated they would rather be at another school.

Community Relations

Thirty-three (33) percent of the students indicated that their parents did not visit their school regularly. Forty-three (43) percent of the students indicated that the school has few visitors, guests, and volunteers.

Teachers' Classroom Practices

One section of the questionnaire focused on teachers' classroom practices, particularly technology integration. Additionally, given the current emphasis on student-sensitive practices that foster engagement and embody democratic principles, teachers were also asked about their student's involvement in activities that align with these ideals and their use of democratic teaching practices.

Summary

Generally, secondary school students had a positive perception of their schools regarding physical appearance, the nature of students' interaction, discipline, learning and assessment, and attitude and culture.

Primary Teachers' Classroom Practices

Primary Teachers' Frequency of Using Technology for Various Purposes

The questionnaire included a list of activities where technology might be utilised in teaching and learning. Teachers were asked to reflect on their practices over the past academic year and indicate how often they use technology for these purposes. The percentages of the teachers in the sample reporting the frequency of use of technology for each activity are presented in Table 71.

Half of the teachers frequently accessed lessons from the internet, and two-thirds frequently created instructional materials using the technology. While forty-six percent of the teachers reported using technology to design presentations sometimes, one-third of the teachers never engaged students in online discussions such as blogs. Fifty-eight percent of the teachers reported using the technology to formulate tests for students, but a whopping ninety-one percent got information from the internet for lessons. Fifty-two percent of the teachers used technology to produce handouts, and fifty-eight percent used the technology to record grades. However, one-third of the teachers seldom used projectors, software for remediation of basic skills and software

to teach concepts. Moreover, forty-six percent of the teachers reported frequently having students use the internet to research a subject.

Teachers were provided with a list of factors that impact the frequency of technology use in teaching and learning. They were asked to specify how each factor influenced their use of technology in their practice. Table 72 presents the percentages of teachers in the sample who reported various levels of influence for each factor.

One-third of the teachers reported that insufficient computers affect their use of technology to some extent, and forty-nine percent felt that lack of good instructional software also had an impact to some extent. Fifty-three percent of the primary school teachers reported that inadequate training opportunities have an effect to some extent, and forty-eight percent identified a lack of computer

Table 71: Primary Teachers' Frequency of Use of Technology for Specific Purposes (N=33)

Purpose of using Technology	Frequency of Use over the Academic Year (% of sample)					TOTAL
	Often 8+times	Sometimes 3-7 times	Seldom 1-2 times	Never	No Response	
Access lessons from the internet	51.5	30.3	12.1	6.1	0	100
Create instructional materials	66.7	27.3	6.1	0	0	100
Design multimedia presentations (e.g. PowerPoint)	27.3	45.5	21.2	3.0	3.0	100
Engage students in online discussion (e.g., blogs, chat rooms, social networking sites)	18.2	21.2	24.2	30.3	6.1	100
Formulate tests for students.	57.6	24.2	12.1	6.1	0	100
Get information from the Internet for use in lessons	90.9	6.1	3.0	0	0	100
Have students use the internet for researching subject content	45.5	24.2	12.1	18.2	0	100
Post homework assignments online	36.4	33.3	21.2	9.1	0	100
Prepare homework assignments	63.6	18.2	9.1	6.1	3.0	100
Produce handouts for students	51.5	27.3	9.1	9.1	3.0	100
Record student grades	57.6	21.2	15.2	6.1	0	100
Send lesson information, assignments and other communication to students by email	24.2	30.3	21.2	21.2	3.0	100
Share material, ideas and/or information with other teachers	48.5	33.3	12.1	6.1	0	100
Use digital cameras to enhance lessons	18.2	12.1	24.2	42.4	3.0	100
Use LCD projectors to present lessons	15.2	18.2	33.3	30.3	3.0	100
Use scanners to prepare for lessons	12.1	24.2	30.3	27.3	6.1	100
Use skill games to reinforce concepts taught	39.4	39.4	9.1	6.1	6.1	100
Use software for remediation of basic skills	21.2	27.3	30.3	12.1	9.1	100
Use software to teach concepts	30.3	21.2	30.3	12.1	6.1	100
Use videos or DVS to teach concepts	66.7	27.3	6.1	0	0	100

Table 72: Factors Affecting the Use of Technology by Primary Teachers (N=33)

Purpose of using Technology	Extent of Influence (% of sample)					TOTAL
	To a Great Extent	To a Moderate Extent	A Little Bit	Not At All	No Response	
Not enough computers available	30.3	33.3	15.2	15.2	6.1	100
Unreliable computers	18.2	36.4	15.2	24.2	6.1	100
Internet not easily accessible	24.2	27.3	24.2	24.2	0	100
Lack of good instructional software	12.1	36.4	30.3	18.2	3.0	100
Inadequate training opportunities	21.2	33.3	21.2	24.2	0	100
Lack of administrative support	12.1	12.1	15.2	60.6	0	100
Lack of support regarding ways to integrate technology into the curriculum	9.1	27.3	27.3	36.4	0	100
Lack of technical support or advice	9.1	24.2	27.3	39.4	0	100
Lack of relevant computer skills	9.1	27.3	15.2	42.4	6.1	100
Inadequate amount of computer peripherals	24.2	24.2	39.4	9.1	3.0	100
Lack of knowledge in ways to integrate technology to enhance the curriculum	3.0	21.2	39.4	33.3	3.0	100
Use of technology not integrated into curriculum documents	12.1	24.2	39.4	15.2	9.1	100

peripherals having an impact. However, seventy-three percent of the teachers felt that the lack of knowledge on integrating technology to enhance the curriculum had little to no effect on the use of technology by primary school teachers.

Student Engagement and the Use of Democratic Teaching Practices in the Primary Classroom

Student-centred instruction is indicated by the extent to which teachers use activities that involve high levels of student engagement. Teachers were given a list of activities, including traditional methods and methods aligned with democratic principles, as well as student-centred approaches. They were asked to report the frequency with which students participated in these activities during the term. Tables 73 and 74 show the percentages of teachers who reported various frequencies of student engagement in these activities and the percentage of teachers using democratic teaching practices, respectively.

Summary

Seventy percent of the primary school teachers reported that students often worked individually, answering questions in textbooks or on worksheets. Fifteen percent reported that students often gave presentations, and twenty-one percent said students often led discussions, engaged in writing activities in which they were expected to explain their thinking or reasoning, or just worked on

projects with durations exceeding one week. The individualistic approach was magnified, with seventy-three percent of the teachers reporting that students often worked on their own assignments at their own desks. While ninety-four percent indicated that students engaged in whole class discussions, a mere fifteen percent reported that students often worked in small groups to develop solutions or approaches to problems.

Despite an individualistic approach regarding students' engagement, most teachers reported using democratic instructional practices such as demonstrations, guided methods, differentiated instructions, reflective discussions and role-playing. Problem-solving approaches and cooperative and collaborative learning were also reported as being implemented by the primary school teachers.

Table 73: Primary Teachers' Reported Student Engagement in Activities (N=33)

Activity	Frequency of Engagement (%)					
	Often 8+times	Sometimes 3- 7 times	Seldom 1-2 times	Never	No Response	TOTAL
Worked on projects that took a week or longer	21.2	39.4	27.3	12.1	0	100
Worked in small groups to come up with solutions or approaches to problems.	15.2	42.4	21.2	21.2	00	100
Engaged in a writing activity in which they were expected to explain their thinking or reasoning at some length	21.2	36.4	27.3	15.2	0	100
Suggested or helped plan classroom activities	18.2	30.3	36.4	12.1	3.0	100
Worked individually answering questions in textbooks or worksheets	69.7	21.2	3.0	3.0	3.0	100
Led discussions	21.2	33.3	27.3	15.2	3.00	100
Gave presentations	15.2	27.3	42.4	15.2	0	100
Worked in small groups to complete an assignment	24.2	33.3	27.3	12.1	3.0	100
Worked on their own assignment at their own desks.	72.7	18.2	6.1	3.0	0	100
Wrote in a journal	18.2	15.2	18.2	45.5	3.0	100
Participated in interactive/hands-on classroom activities	63.6	36.4	0	0	0	100
Conducted research for projects via the Internet	15.2	30.3	24.2	27.3	3.0	100
Worked on individual tasks for portfolios	21.2	30.3	21.2	24.2	3.0	100
Engaged in whole-class activities	93.9	6.1	0	0	0	100
Demonstrated their work to others (teachers/students)	39.4	33.3	15.2	6.1	6.1	100

Table 74: Primary Teachers' Reported Use of Democratic Instructional Practices (N=33)

Practice	Frequency of Use (%)				
	Never Uses	Uses	Unsure / Not Applicable	No Response	TOTAL
Used didactic questions (Who? What? Where? When? How?)	0	100	0	0	100
Used demonstrations	0	100	0	0	100
Used guided methods (e.g. Guided reading)	3.0	93.9	3.0	0	100
Used shared methods (e.g. Shared writing)	3.0	94.0	3.0	0	100
Used journals	33.3	57.7	6.1	3.0	100
Used learning logs	30.3	54.6	6.1	9.1	100
Used research projects	15.2	72.7	9.1	3.0	100
Used learning centres	6.1	84.9	3.0	6.1	100
Used learning contracts	30.3	54.6	9.1	6.1	100
Used differentiated instruction	0	90.9	0	9.1	100
Used problem-solving approaches	3.0	87.9	3.0	6.1	100
Used case-based method	24.2	54.5	12.1	9.1	100
Used reflective discussions	3.0	90.9	3.0	3.0	100
Used simulations	3.0	78.8	3.0	15.2	100
Used field observation	12.1	69.7	6.0	12.1	100
Used role play	0	90.9	0	9.1	100
Used service learning	24.2	51.6	15.2	9.1	100
Used cooperative and collaborative learning	3.0	87.9	6.1	3.0	100
Used controversial discussions	12.1	63.6	15.2	9.1	100
Used debates	21.2	51.5	15.2	12.1	100
Used peer partner learning	3.0	84.9	0	12.1	100
Told the students the objectives of an assessment activity	3.0	87.9	3.0	6.1	100
Allowed the students to rate their own work before you graded it	24.2	69.7	3.0	3.0	100
Allowed the students to engage in peer assessment activities	15.2	78.8	3.0	3.0	100
Taught students strategies for reading in your subject area	6.1	81.8	6.1	3.0	100
Gave time for reading books of own choice	6.1	87.9	3.0	3.0	100
Allowed choice of reading material	0	87.8	9.1	3.0	100
Provided support for struggling readers in your classroom	0	84.9	12.1	3.0	100
Encouraged students to read for pleasure	0	87.9	9.1	3.0	100
Encouraged students to read for information	0	87.9	6.1	6.1	100
(Re)Wrote instructional materials to facilitate diverse reading ability in the classroom	3.0	87.9	6.1	3.0	100

Assigned grade- and ability-appropriate open-ended mathematics problems for students to solve	0	81.8	15.2	3.0	100
Encouraged students to talk about the mathematics that they are learning in the classroom	0	81.8	15.2	3.0	100
Led the students in grade and ability-appropriate investigations of mathematics concepts	3.0	78.8	15.2	3.0	100
Allowed students to submit mathematics projects and investigations using different modes	9.1	69.7	15.2	6.1	100
Allowed students to explain phenomena scientifically	9.1	60.7	21.2	9.1	100
Allowed students to evaluate and design scientific enquiry	18.2	54.6	24.2	3.0	100
Allowed students to interpret data and evidence scientifically	15.2	57.5	21.2	6.1	100
Rewarded positive behaviours with incentives (e.g. stars, stickers)	3.0	87.9	3.0	6.1	100
Used physical restraint for misbehaving students	36.4	54.5	3.0	6.1	100
Threatened to send students out of the classroom if they do not behave	30.3	63.7	0	6.1	100
Sent home notes to parents about students' good behaviour	15.2	78.8	0	6.1	100
Called parents about students' misbehaviour	3.0	87.9	0	9.1	100
Worked with students to establish a code of classroom behaviour and consequences for infractions	3.0	87.9	3.0	6.1	100

Secondary Teachers' Classroom Practices

Secondary Teachers' Frequency of Using Technology for Various Purposes

The questionnaire included a list of activities where technology might be utilised in teaching and learning. Teachers were asked to reflect on their practices over the past academic year and indicate how often they use technology for these purposes. The percentages of the teachers in the sample reporting the frequency of use of technology for each activity are presented in Table 75.

Approximately eighty-three (83) percent of the teachers reported that they often used technology to get information for the lesson. About sixty- (61) percent of teachers indicated that they often use technology to prepare homework assignments, produce handouts, and record students' grades. The fifth most common use of technology indicated by teachers was to post homework activities online, with about forty- four (44) percent of teachers indicating this.

It is important to note that about thirty-nine percent of teachers never use technology to formulate tests for students or engage their students in online discussions in avenues such as blogs and chat

Table 75: Secondary Teachers' Frequency of Use of Technology for Specific Purposes (N=18)

Purpose of using Technology	Frequency of Use over the Academic Year (% of sample)					
	Often 8+times	Sometimes 3-7 times	Seldom 1-2 times	Never	No Response	TOTAL
Access lessons from the internet	22.2	33.3	22.2	11.1	11.1	100
Create instructional materials	44.4	50	0	0	5.6	100
Design multimedia presentations (e.g. PowerPoint)	33.3	33.3	22.2	0	11.1	100
Engage students in online discussion (e.g., blogs, chat rooms, social networking sites)	22.2	22.2	11.1	38.9	5.6	100
Formulate tests for students.	22.2	22.2	11.1	38.9	5.6	100
Get information from the Internet for use in lessons	83.3	11.1	0	0	5.6	100
Have students use the internet for researching subject content	38.9	38.9	16.7	0	5.6	100
Post homework assignments online	44.4	11.1	16.7	22.2	5.6	100
Prepare homework assignments	61.1	16.7	16.7	0	5.6	100
Produce handouts for students	61.1	11.1	16.7	0	5.6	100
Record student grades	61.1	16.7	11.1	5.6	5.6	100
Send lesson information, assignments and other communication to students by email	38.9	27.8	16.7	11.1	5.6	100
Share material, ideas and/or information with other teachers	38.9	44.4	5.6	5.6	5.6	100
Use digital cameras to enhance lessons	11.1	11.1	38.9	33.3	5.6	100
Use LCD projectors to present lessons	11.1	11.1	44.4	27.8	5.6	100
Use scanners to prepare for lessons	5.6	0	44.4	44.4	5.6	100
Use skill games to reinforce concepts taught	27.8	38.9	22.2	5.6	5.6	100
Use software for remediation of basic skills	11.1	22.2	27.8	33.3	5.6	100
Use software to teach concepts	16.7	27.8	16.7	33.3	5.6	100
Use videos or DVDs to teach concepts	16.7	55.6	11.1	11.1	5.6	100

rooms. Additionally, approximately one-third of the teachers or thirty-three (33) percent of teachers indicated that they never use software for remediation of basic skills or to teach concepts.

Teachers were provided with a list of factors that impact the frequency of technology use in teaching and learning. They were asked to specify how each factor influenced their use of technology in their practice. Table 76 presents the percentages of teachers in the sample who reported various levels of influence for each factor.

The most significant factors affecting technology use were the accessibility of the internet and not enough computers available, as one-third of the teachers or thirty – three (33) percent of the teachers, indicated this. The teachers also reported that a lack of good instructional software, inadequate training opportunities, technical support, and knowledge of integrating technology to enhance the curriculum moderately influenced their use of technology.

Table 76: Factors Affecting the Use of Technology by Secondary Teachers (N=18)

Influence	Extent of Influence (% of sample)					TOTAL
	To a Great Extent	To a Moderate Extent	A Little Bit	Not at All	No Response	
Not enough computers available	33.3	16.7	33.3	16.7	0	100
Unreliable computers	27.8	50	16.7	5.6	0	100
Internet not easily accessible	33.3	38.9	22.2	5.6	0	100
Lack of good instructional software	16.7	44.4	22.2	11.1	5.6	100
Inadequate training opportunities	16.7	44.4	38.9	0	0	100
Lack of administrative support	0	50	16.7	27.8	5.6	100
Lack of support regarding ways to integrate technology into the curriculum	22.2	33.3	27.8	16.7	0	100
Lack of technical support or advice	16.7	44.4	16.7	22.2	0	100
Lack of relevant computer skills	0	22.2	33.3	44.4	0	100
Inadequate amount of computer peripherals	11.1	38.9	22.2	22.2	0	100
Lack of knowledge in ways to integrate technology to enhance the curriculum	0	44.4	27.8	27.8	0	100
Use of technology not integrated into curriculum documents	11.1	38.9	44.4	5.6	.0	100

Student Engagement and the Use of Democratic Teaching Practices in the Secondary Classroom

Secondary teachers were given a list of activities, including traditional methods, those aligned with democratic principles, and student-centred approaches. They were asked to report the frequency with which students participated in these activities during the term. Tables 77 and 78 show the percentages of teachers who reported various frequencies of student engagement in these activities and the percentage of teachers using democratic teaching practices.

Table 77: Secondary Teachers' Reported Student Engagement in Activities (N=18)

Activity	Frequency of Engagement (%)					
	Often 8+times	Sometimes 3- 7 times	Seldom 1-2 times	Never	No Response	TOTAL
Worked on projects that took a week or longer	5.6	33.3	50	5.6	5.6	100
Worked in small groups to come up with solutions or approaches to problems.	16.7	33.3	38.9	5.6	5.6	100
Engaged in a writing activity in which they were expected to explain their thinking or reasoning at some length	22.2	22.2	50	0	5.6	100
Suggested or helped plan classroom activities	5.6	11.1	66.7	11.1	5.6	100
Worked individually answering questions in textbooks or worksheets	55.6	38.9	0	0	5.6	100
Led discussions	33.3	50	11.1	0	5.6	100
Gave presentations						
Worked in small groups to complete an assignment	11.1	55.6	27.8	0	5.6	100
Worked on their own assignment at their own desks.	22.2	55.6	16.7	0	5.6	100
Wrote in a journal	11.1	11.1	22.2	50	5.6	100
Participated in interactive/hands-on classroom activities	27.8	38.9	5.6	16.7	11.1	100
Conducted research for projects via the Internet	22.2	50	16.7	0	11.1	100
Worked on individual tasks for portfolios	5.6	50	27.8	11.1	5.6	100
Engaged in whole-class activities	55.6	27.8	11.1	0	5.6	100
Demonstrated their work to others (teachers/students)	16.7	27.8	44.4	5.6	5.6	100

Table 78: Secondary Teachers' Reported Use of Democratic Teaching Practices (N=18)

Activity	Frequency of Use (%)				
	Never Uses	Uses	Unsure / Not Applicable	No Response	TOTAL
Used didactic questions (Who? What? Where? When? How?)	0	88.9	0	11.1	100
Used demonstrations	0	88.9	0	11.1	100
Used guided methods (e.g. Guided reading)	11.1	77.8	0	11.1	100
Used shared methods (e.g. Shared writing)	22.2	55.6	11.1	11.1	100
Used journals	27.8	38.9	22.2	11.1	100
Used learning logs	27.8	33.3	27.8	11.1	100
Used research projects	5.6	66.6	16.7	11.1	100
Used learning centres	33.3	38.9	16.7	11.1	100
Used learning contracts	22.2	27.8	38.9	11.1	100
Used differentiated instruction	5.6	77.7	5.6	11.2	100
Used problem-solving approaches	11.1	55.6	11.1	11.1	100
Used case-based method	27.8	50	11.1	11.1	100
Used reflective discussions	22.2	55.6	11.1	11.1	100

Used simulations	16.7	66.6	5.6	11.1	100
Used field observation	16.7	61.1	11.1	11.1	100
Used role play	27.8	44.4	16.7	11.1	100
Used service learning	11.1	33.3	38.9	16.7	100
Used cooperative and collaborative learning	22.2	66.7	0	11.1	100
Used controversial discussions	22.2	55.5	16.7	16.7	100
Used debates	27.8	33.3	27.8	11.1	100
Used peer partner learning	0	83.3	5.6	11.1	100
Told the students the objectives of an assessment activity	0	83.3	5.6	11.1	100
Allowed the students to rate their own work before you graded it	27.8	38.9	22.2	11.1	100
Allowed the students to engage in peer assessment activities	16.7	66.6	5.6	11.1	100
Taught students strategies for reading in your subject area	5.6	61.1	22.2	11.1	100
Provided support for struggling readers in your classroom	11.1	66.7	11.1	11.1	100
Encouraged students to read for pleasure	16.7	61	5.6	16.7	100
Encouraged students to read for information	5.6	83.3	0	11.1	100
(Re)Wrote instructional materials to facilitate diverse reading ability in the classroom	16.7	44.4	22.2	16.7	100
Rewarded positive behaviours with incentives (e.g. stars, stickers)	0	77.8	11.1	11.1	100
Used physical restraint for misbehaving students	22.2	11.1	55.6	11.1	100
Threatened to send students out of the classroom if they do not behave	33.3	50	0	13.7	100
Sent home notes to parents about students' good behaviour	44.4	27.8	16.7	11.1	100
Called parents about students' misbehaviour	5.6	77.7	5.6	11.1	100
Worked with students to establish a code of classroom behaviour and consequences for infractions	11.1	77.8	0	11.1	100

Student-centred instruction is indicated by the extent to which teachers use activities that involve high levels of student engagement. Teachers were given a list of activities, including traditional methods, those aligned with democratic principles, and student-centred approaches. They were asked to report the frequency with which students participated in these activities during the term. Tables 78 and 79 show the percentages of teachers who reported various frequencies of student engagement in these activities and the percentage of teachers using democratic teaching practices.

Summary

Approximately fifty-six (56) percent of the teachers reported that they often allowed students to work on their own assignments on their own at their own desks. Additionally, fifty-six (56) percent of the teachers reported that students often participated in whole class activities. Meanwhile, fifty

(50) percent of teachers indicated that they sometimes allow students to conduct research for projects via the internet and sometimes allow students to work on portfolios. Interestingly, fifty (50) percent of teachers reported that they never allow students to write in journals.

It should be noted that secondary teachers generally reported that they use a wide range of democratic teaching practices. Approximately eighty-nine (89) percent of teachers reported using didactic questions and demonstrations in their classes. Additionally, eighty- three (83) percent reported that they use peer partner learning, encourage students to read for information, and inform students of the objectives for the assessment activity. Over seventy (70) percent of teachers indicated that they use differentiated instruction and guided methods, reward positive behaviour with incentives, call parents about students' misbehaviour and work with students to establish a code of classroom behaviour and consequences for infractions.

School Leadership

One section of the questionnaire aimed to capture teachers' perspectives on the conduct of their school leaders. Both primary and secondary teachers were asked for their perspectives on their school's leadership.

Primary Teacher Perspectives on School Leadership

The tool utilised for this purpose was the teacher's short form of the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS; Hallinger & Wang, 2015). This instrument comprises 22 behaviours associated with school leadership. Teachers were asked to assess the extent to which they observed these behaviours in their school principal during the preceding school year, utilising a rating scale ranging from 1 (Almost Never) to 5 (Almost Always). The instrument allows for scoring and analysis on a comprehensive scale and across three dimensions of school leadership or ten functions/jobs of school principals. The distribution of responses from teachers in 2022 is outlined in Table 79.

Table 79: Primary Teachers' Responses on PIMRS Short Form 2022 (N=33)

To what extent does your principal ...?	%						
	Almost Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost Always	No Response	TOTAL
Develop a focused set of annual school-wide goals	0	3.0	12.1	15.2	57.6	12.1	100
Use data on student performance when developing the school's academic goals	0	3.0	9.1	21.2	60.3	6.1	100
Develop goals that are easily understood and used by teachers in the school	0	3.0	12.1	9.1	69.7	6.1	100
Communicate the school's mission effectively to members of the school community	0	3.0	18.2	15.2	57.6	6.1	100
Refer to the school's academic goals when making curricular decisions with teachers	0	3.0	6.1	15.2	72.7	3.0	100
Ensure that the classroom priorities of teachers are consistent with the goals and direction of the school	0	0	12.1	18.2	66.7	3.0	100
Review student work products when evaluating classroom instruction	0	0	12.1	42.4	36.4	9.1	100
Make clear who is responsible for coordinating the curriculum across grade levels (e.g., the principal, vice principal, or teacher-leaders)	0	0	9.1	27.3	54.5	9.1	100
Draw upon the results of school-wide testing when making curricular decisions	0	0	6.1	18.2	72.7	3.0	100
Participate actively in the review of curricular materials	0	6.1	6.1	24.2	57.6	6.1	100
Meet individually with teachers to discuss student progress	0	0	21.2	36.4	39.4	3.0	100
Use tests and other performance measure to assess progress toward school goals	0	0	6.1	27.3	63.6	3.0	100
Encourage teachers to use instructional time for teaching and practicing new skills and concepts	0	0	3.0	15.2	78.8	3.0	100
Take time to talk informally with students and teachers during recess and breaks	0	0	6.1	33.3	57.6	3.0	100
Attend/participate in extra- and co-curricular activities	0	0	3.0	27.3	66.7	3.0	100
Compliment teachers privately for their efforts or performance	0	0	18.2	27.3	48.5	6.1	100
Acknowledge teachers' exceptional performance by writing memos for their personnel files	6.1	6.1	9.1	21.2	33.3	24.2	100
Create professional growth opportunities for teachers as a reward for special contributions to the school	6.1	6.1	12.1	24.2	36.4	15.2	100
Lead or attend teacher in-service activities concerned with instruction	0	0	9.1	27.3	51.5	12.1	100
Set aside time at faculty meetings for teachers to share ideas or information from in-service activities	3.0	0	3.0	21.2	63.6	9.1	100
Recognise superior student achievement or improvement by seeing in the office the students with their work	0	12.1	9.1	18.2	51.5	9.1	100
Contact parents to communicate improved or exemplary performance or contributions	0	15.2	12.1	12.1	51.5	9.1	100

Summary

Half of the primary school teachers reported that the principal consistently developed annual school-wide goals using data on students' performance for the development. Approximately

seventy percent of the teachers reported that the principal often made the goals easy to understand, and fifty-eight percent reported that the principal almost always communicated the mission to the school community members. Seventy-three percent reported that the principal almost always referred to the goals with teachers and drew upon the results of school-wide testing when making curricular decisions. Fifty-five percent of the teachers reported that the principal almost always made it clear who was responsible for coordinating the curriculum across grade levels. Meanwhile, fifty-two percent reported that the principal recognised superior student achievement or improvement by seeing the students with their work in the office and contacting parents to communicate improved or exemplary student performance or contributions quite often.

Secondary Teachers' Perspectives on School Leadership

The tool utilised to gain information on secondary teachers' perspectives of their school's leadership was the same tool used for primary teachers: the teacher's short form of the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS; Hallinger & Wang, 2015). This instrument comprises 22 behaviours associated with school leadership. Teachers were asked to assess the extent to which they observed these behaviours in their school principal during the preceding school year, utilising a rating scale ranging from 1 (Almost Never) to 5 (Almost Always). The instrument allows for scoring and analysis on a comprehensive scale and across three dimensions of school leadership or ten functions/jobs of school principals. The distribution of responses from teachers in 2022 is outlined in Table 80. The option with the most significant sample proportion is in bold font.

Table 80: Secondary Teachers' Responses on PIMRS Short Form 2022 (N=18)

To what extent does your principal ...?	%						TOTAL
	Almost Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost Always	No Response	
Develop a focused set of annual school-wide goals	0	5.6	38.9	22.2	27.8	5.6	100
Use data on student performance when developing the school's academic goals	5.6	0	50	22.2	16.7	5.6	100
Develop goals that are easily understood and used by teachers in the school	5.6	11.1	22.2	33.3	22.2	5.6	100
Communicate the school's mission effectively to members of the school community	0	27.8	16.7	22.2	27.8	5.6	100
Refer to the school's academic goals when making curricular decisions with teachers	0	22.2	22.2	27.8	16.7	5.6	100

Ensure that the classroom priorities of teachers are consistent with the goals and direction of the school	0	11.1	44.4	22.2	13.7	5.6	100
Review student work products when evaluating classroom instruction	5.6	11.1	33.3	27.8	16.7	5.6	100
Make clear who is responsible for coordinating the curriculum across grade levels (e.g., the principal, vice principal, or teacher-leaders)	5.6	5.6	27.8	22.2	33.3	5.6	100
Draw upon the results of school-wide testing when making curricular decisions	5.6	11.1	22.2	27.8	27.8	5.6	100
Participate actively in the review of curricular materials	11.1	5.6	38.9	16.7	22.2	5.6	100
Meet individually with teachers to discuss student progress	5.6	16.7	38.9	22.2	11.1	5.6	100
Use tests and other performance measure to assess progress toward school goals	5.6	22.2	33.3	16.7	16.7	5.6	100
Encourage teachers to use instructional time for teaching and practicing new skills and concepts	0	11.1	22.2	16.7	44.4	5.6	100
Take time to talk informally with students and teachers during recess and breaks	0	22.2	16.7	16.7	38.9	5.6	100
Attend/participate in extra- and co-curricular activities	0	16.7	5.6	33.3	38.9	5.6	100
Compliment teachers privately for their efforts or performance	16.7	16.7	11.1	16.7	33.3	5.6	100
Acknowledge teachers' exceptional performance by writing memos for their personnel files	33.3	11.1	22.2	5.6	16.7	5.6	100
Create professional growth opportunities for teachers as a reward for special contributions to the school	27.8	11.1	38.9	5.6	5.6	5.6	100
Lead or attend teacher in-service activities concerned with instruction	5.6	22.2	50	5.6	5.6	5.6	100
Set aside time at faculty meetings for teachers to share ideas or information from in-service activities	16.7	27.8	11.1	38.9	0	5.6	100
Recognise superior student achievement or improvement by seeing in the office the students with their work	5.6	22.2	33.3	5.6	22.2	5.6	100
Contact parents to communicate improved or exemplary performance or contributions	0	27.8	33.3	5.6	22.2	5.6	100

Generally, teachers reported that their principals sometimes displayed some behaviours associated with school leadership. Approximately thirty-nine (39) percent of teachers expressed that their principal sometimes develops a focused set of annual school-wide goals. About fifty (50) percent of these teachers indicated that their principals sometimes use data on student performance when developing the school's academic goals. Also, fifty (50) percent of these teachers indicated that their principals sometimes lead or attend teacher in-service activities concerned with instruction. However, it is essential to note that only thirty –three (33) percent of teachers indicated that the goals developed by their principals are frequently easily understood. Moreover, only about twenty-

two (22) percent of teachers reported that their principals frequently communicate the school's mission effectively to the members of the school community. Additionally, thirty-three (33) percent of teachers indicated that their principals almost always complement teachers privately for their efforts; however, only about seventeen (17) percent indicated that their principals almost always acknowledge teachers' exceptional performance by writing memos for their personnel files. It should be noted that only about seventeen (17) percent of teachers reported that their principals almost always use tests and other performance measures to assess progress towards school goals. In contrast, only approximately twenty – two (22) percent reported that their principals frequently contact parents to communicate improved or exemplary student performance or contributions.

Summary

Generally, teachers reported that their principals sometimes displayed some behaviours associated with school leadership.

Defining the School's Mission

Regarding how the principal communicates the school's most important goals to key stakeholders such as teachers, parents, students, etc., approximately thirty-nine (39) percent of teachers expressed that their principal sometimes develops a focused set of annual school-wide goals. While only thirty –three (33) percent of teachers indicated that the goals developed by their principals are frequently easily understood, and only about twenty- two (22) percent of teachers reported that their principals frequently communicate the school's mission effectively to the members of the school community

Managing the Instructional Program

In terms of the coordination and control of instruction and curriculum. It should be noted that approximately twenty-two (22) percent of teachers reported that their principals frequently participate actively in reviewing curricular materials. Additionally, only twenty-seven (27) percent of these teachers indicated that their principals frequently draw upon the results of school-wide testing when making curricular decisions.

Promoting a Positive School Learning Climate

In terms of the principals modelling values and practices that create a climate and support the continuous improvement of instruction (teaching and learning). It should be noted that only about fifty (50) percent of these teachers indicated that their principals sometimes lead or attend teacher in-service activities concerned with instruction. Additionally, about thirty-nine (39) percent reported that their principals sometimes create professional growth opportunities for teachers as a reward for exceptional contributions to the school. Interestingly, it should be noted that only about seventeen (17) percent of teachers reported that their principals almost always use tests and other performance measures to assess progress towards school goals, and only approximately twenty – two (22) percent reported that their principals frequently contact parents to communicate improved or exemplary student performance or contributions. Additionally, thirty-three (33) percent of teachers indicated that their principals almost always complement teachers privately for their efforts; however, only about seventeen (17) percent indicated that their principals almost always acknowledge teachers’ exceptional performance by writing memos for their personnel files.

Principals’ Perspectives on Primary School Leadership

One section of the survey was designed to provide a profile of principals’ leadership. The tool utilised for this purpose was the principal form of the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS; Hallinger & Wang, 2015). This section included fifty behavioural statements that describe principal job practices and behaviours. Principals were asked to consider each statement concerning their leadership over the past academic year and circle the appropriate response based on its frequency in their practices and behaviours. Response categories range from 5 (Almost Always) to 1 (Almost Never). The distribution of principal responses to each statement can be found in Table 81.

Table 81: Primary Principals’ Leadership Practices (N=5)

Behavioural Statement	Frequency of Occurrence over the Academic Year (%)					
	1 Almost Never	2 Seldom	3 Sometimes	4 Frequently	5 Almost Always	No Response
FRAME THE SCHOOL GOALS						
Develop a focused set of annual school-wide goals	0	0	0	40	60	0
Frame the school's goals in terms of staff responsibilities for meeting them	0	0	60	20	20	0
Use needs assessment or other formal and informal methods to secure staff input on goal development	0	0	0	40	60	0

Use data on student performance when developing the school's academic goals	0	0	0	40	60	0
Develop goals that are easily understood and used by teachers in the school	0	0	0	40	60	0
COMMUNICATE THE SCHOOL GOALS						
Communicate the school's mission effectively to members of the school community	0	20	0	20	60	0
Discuss the school's academic goals with teachers at faculty meetings	0	0	0	0	100	0
Refer to the school's academic goals when making curricular decisions with teachers	0	0	0	20	80	0
Ensure that the school's academic goals are reflected in highly visible displays in the school (e.g., posters or bulletin boards emphasising academic progress)	0	20	40	20	20	0
Refer to the school's goals or mission in forums with students (e.g., in assemblies or discussions)	0	0	20	20	60	0
SUPERVISE & EVALUATE INSTRUCTION						
Ensure that the classroom priorities of teachers are consistent with the goals and direction of the school	0	0	0	20	80	0
Review student work products when evaluating classroom instruction	0	0	0	40	60	0
Conduct informal observations in classrooms on a regular basis (informal observations are unscheduled, last at least 5 minutes, and may or may not involve written feedback or a formal conference)	0	0	0	40	60	0
Point out specific strengths in teacher's instructional practices in post-observation feedback (e.g., in conferences or written evaluations)	0	0	0	20	80	0
Point out specific weaknesses in teacher instructional practices in post-observation feedback (e.g., in conferences or written evaluations)	0	0	0	0	100	0
COORDINATE THE CURRICULUM						
Make clear who is responsible for coordinating the curriculum across grade levels (e.g., the principal, vice principal, or teacher-leaders)	0	0	20	20	60	0
Draw upon the results of school-wide testing when making curricular decisions the school's curricular objectives	0	0	0	20	80	0
Monitor the classroom curriculum to see that it covers the school's curricular objectives	0	0	0	60	40	0

Assess the overlap between the school's curricular objectives and the school's achievement tests	0	0	0	60	40	0
Participate actively in the review of curricular materials	0	0	20	0	80	0
MONITOR STUDENT PROGRESS						
Meet individually with teachers to discuss student progress	0	0	0	20	80	0
Discuss academic performance results with the faculty to identify curricular strengths and weaknesses	0	0	0	0	100	0
Use tests and other performance measure to assess progress toward school goals	0	0	0	20	80	0
Inform teachers of the school's performance results in written form (e.g., in a memo or newsletter)	0	20	40	20	20	0
Inform students of school's academic progress	0	0	20	40	40	0
PROTECT INSTRUCTIONAL TIME						
Limit interruptions of instructional time by public address announcements	0	0	0	40	60	0
Ensure that students are not called to the office during instructional time	0	20	40	20	20	0
Ensure that tardy and truant students suffer specific consequences for missing instructional time	0	0	40	40	0	20
Encourage teachers to use instructional time for teaching and practicing new skills and concepts	0	0	0	0	100	0
Limit the intrusion of extra- and co-curricular activities on instructional time	0	0	20	40	40	0
MAINTAIN HIGH VISIBILITY						
Take time to talk informally with students and teachers during recess and breaks	0	0	0	20	80	0
Visit classrooms to discuss school issues with teachers and students	0	0	0	20	80	0
Attend/participate in extra- and co-curricular activities	0	0	20	0	80	0
Cover classes for teachers until a late or substitute teacher arrives	0	0	0	60	40	0
Tutor students or provide direct instruction to classes	0	20	0	0	80	0
PROVIDE INCENTIVES FOR TEACHERS						
Reinforce superior performance by teachers in staff meetings, newsletters, and/or memos	0	20	0	40	40	0
Compliment teachers privately for their efforts or performance	0	0	0	0	100	0
Acknowledge teachers' exceptional performance by writing memos for their personnel files	0	20	40	20	20	0

Reward special efforts by teachers with opportunities for professional recognition	20	0	20	40	20	0
Create professional growth opportunities for teachers as a reward for special contributions to the school	0	0	0	40	60	0
PROMOTE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT						
Ensure that in-service activities attended by staff are consistent with the school's goals	0	0	0	60	40	0
Actively support the use in the classroom of skills acquired during in-service training	0	0	0	20	80	0
Obtain the participation of the whole staff in important in-service activities	0	0	0	0	100	0
Lead or attend teacher in-service activities concerned with instruction	0	0	0	20	80	0
Set aside time at faculty meetings for teachers to share ideas or information from in-service activities	0	0	0	60	40	0
PROVIDE INCENTIVES FOR LEARNING						
Recognize students who do superior work with formal rewards such as an honour roll or mention in the principal's newsletter	0	20	0	0	80	0
Use assemblies to honour students for academic accomplishments or for behaviour or citizenship	0	0	0	60	40	0
Recognize superior student achievement or improvement by seeing in the office the students with their work	20	0	20	40	20	0
Contact parents to communicate improved or exemplary student performance or contributions	0	20	20	40	20	0
Support teachers actively in their recognition and/or reward of student contributions to and accomplishments in class	0	0	0	60	40	0

Summary

While forty percent of the principals reported that they frequently developed a focused set of annual school-wide goals, sixty percent reported that they almost always developed such goals. Sixty percent of the principals sometimes framed these goals in terms of responsibilities for the staff members. All the principals indicated that they almost always discussed the school's goals with teachers at faculty meetings, and twenty percent of them seldom communicated the school's missions effectively to school community members. Twenty percent of the principals further reported that they seldom ensured that the school's academic goals were positioned in highly

visible places in the school. Eighty percent of the principals almost always ensured that the classroom priorities of teachers were consistent with the goals.

While forty percent frequently reviewed students' work when evaluating instructions, sixty percent of principals were even more regular. All the principals reported that they almost always pointed out specific weaknesses in teacher instructional practices in post-observation feedback sessions. Eight percent reported that they almost always drew upon the results of school-wide testing when making curricular decisions and actively reviewed curricular materials. However, twenty percent of them reported that they only participated sometimes.

In terms of monitoring students' progress, eighty percent of the principals reported that they almost always met with teachers individually to discuss student's progress, and all the principals claimed to have discussions about academic performance results with faculty to identify weaknesses and strengths almost all the time. While twenty percent of the principals indicated that they seldomly informed teachers of the school's performance results in written form, forty percent reported that they did so sometimes, twenty percent reported they frequently did and twenty percent almost always. All principals reported encouraging teachers to use instructional time to teach and practice new skills and concepts almost always.

Regarding principals' visibility at the school, eighty percent reported that they almost always talked informally with students and teachers during recess and breaks and visited classrooms to discuss school issues. While twenty percent said that they attended and/or participated in extracurricular and co-curricular activities sometimes, eighty percent indicated that they almost always did so. Eighty percent of the principals reported that they tutored students or provided direct instructions to classes.

While all principals reported that they complimented teachers privately for their efforts or performances, the incentives they provided to teachers were not quite frequent. Twenty percent of the principals reported that they seldom acknowledged teachers' exceptional performances by writing memos for their personnel files, and twenty percent of the principals rarely rewarded teachers for their extraordinary efforts with opportunities for professional recognition. Professional development was, however, promoted significantly, with all principals almost always obtaining the participation of the whole staff in in-service activities and eighty percent supporting the use of skills acquired in in-service activities in the classroom.

Incentives for learning were also lacking, with twenty percent of the principals seldom contacting parents to communicate improved or exemplary performances or contributions, twenty percent rarely recognising superior students' achievements or improvements by seeing them in their office, and twenty percent seldom recognising students who did superior work with formal rewards such as honour rolls or mention in the principal's newsletter.

Principals' Perspectives on Secondary School Leadership

One section of the survey was designed to provide a profile of principals' leadership. The tool utilised for this purpose was the principal form of the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS; Hallinger & Wang, 2015). This section included fifty behavioural statements that describe principal job practices and behaviours. Principals were asked to consider each statement concerning their leadership over the past academic year and circle the appropriate response based on its frequency in their practices and behaviours. Response categories range from 5 (Almost Always) to 1 (Almost Never). The distribution of principal responses to each statement can be found in Table 82.

Table 82: Secondary Principals' Leadership Practices (N=1)

Behavioural Statement	Frequency of Occurrence over the Academic Year (%)					
	1 Almost Never	2 Seldom	3 Some- times	4 Frequ- ently	5 Almost Always	No Response
FRAME THE SCHOOL GOALS						
Develop a focused set of annual school-wide goals	0	0	0	0	100	0
Frame the school's goals in terms of staff responsibilities for meeting them	0	0	100	0	0	0
Use needs assessment or other formal and informal methods to secure staff input on goal development	0	0	0	100	0	0
Use data on student performance when developing the school's academic goals	0	0	100	0	0	0
Develop goals that are easily understood and used by teachers in the school	0	0	0	0	100	0
COMMUNICATE THE SCHOOL GOALS						
Communicate the school's mission effectively to members of the school community	0	0	100	0	0	0
Discuss the school's academic goals with teachers at faculty meetings	0	0	0	0	100	0
Refer to the school's academic goals when making curricular decisions with teachers	0	0	100	0	0	0
Ensure that the school's academic goals are reflected in highly visible displays in the school (e.g., posters or bulletin boards emphasising academic progress)	0	0	100	0	0	0

Refer to the school's goals or mission in forums with students (e.g., in assemblies or discussions)	0	0	100	0	0	0
SUPERVISE & EVALUATE INSTRUCTION						
Ensure that the classroom priorities of teachers are consistent with the goals and direction of the school	0	0	0	100	0	0
Review student work products when evaluating classroom instruction	0	0	100	0	0	0
Conduct informal observations in classrooms on a regular basis (informal observations are unscheduled, last at least 5 minutes, and may or may not involve written feedback or a formal conference)	0	0	0	0	100	0
Point out specific strengths in teacher's instructional practices in post-observation feedback (e.g., in conferences or written evaluations)	0	0	0	100	0	0
Point out specific weaknesses in teacher instructional practices in post-observation feedback (e.g., in conferences or written evaluations)	0	0	0	100	0	0
COORDINATE THE CURRICULUM						
Make clear who is responsible for coordinating the curriculum across grade levels (e.g., the principal, vice principal, or teacher-leaders)	0	0	0	0	100	0
Draw upon the results of school-wide testing when making curricular decisions the school's curricular objectives	0	0	0	100	0	0
Monitor the classroom curriculum to see that it covers the school's curricular objectives	0	0	0	100	0	0
Assess the overlap between the school's curricular objectives and the school's achievement tests	0	0	100	0	0	0
Participate actively in the review of curricular materials	0	0	100	0	0	0
MONITOR STUDENT PROGRESS						
Meet individually with teachers to discuss student progress	0	0	0	100	0	0
Discuss academic performance results with the faculty to identify curricular strengths and weaknesses	0	0	0	0	100	0
Use tests and other performance measure to assess progress toward school goals	0	0	0	100	0	0
Inform teachers of the school's performance results in written form (e.g., in a memo or newsletter)	0	0	0	0	100	0
Inform students of school's academic progress	0	0	0	100	0	0
PROTECT INSTRUCTIONAL TIME						
Limit interruptions of instructional time by public address announcements	0	0	100	0	0	0
Ensure that students are not called to the office during instructional time	0	0	100	0	0	0
Ensure that tardy and truant students suffer specific consequences for missing instructional time	0	0	100	0	0	0

Encourage teachers to use instructional time for teaching and practicing new skills and concepts	0	0	0	100	0	0
Limit the intrusion of extra- and co-curricular activities on instructional time	0	0	100	0	0	0
MAINTAIN HIGH VISIBILITY						
Take time to talk informally with students and teachers during recess and breaks	0	0	100	0	0	0
Visit classrooms to discuss school issues with teachers and students	0	0	0	100	0	0
Attend/participate in extra- and co-curricular activities	0	0	0	0	100	0
Cover classes for teachers until a late or substitute teacher arrives	0	0	100	0	0	0
Tutor students or provide direct instruction to classes	0	0	0	100	0	0
PROVIDE INCENTIVES FOR TEACHERS						
Reinforce superior performance by teachers in staff meetings, newsletters, and/or memos	0	0	100	0	0	0
Compliment teachers privately for their efforts or performance	0	0	0	0	100	0
Acknowledge teachers' exceptional performance by writing memos for their personnel files	0	100	0	0	0	0
Reward special efforts by teachers with opportunities for professional recognition	0	100	0	0	0	0
Create professional growth opportunities for teachers as a reward for special contributions to the school	0	100	0	0	0	0
PROMOTE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT						
Ensure that in-service activities attended by staff are consistent with the school's goals	0	0	0	100	0	0
Actively support the use in the classroom of skills acquired during in-service training	0	0	0	100	0	0
Obtain the participation of the whole staff in important in-service activities	0	0	0	100	0	0
Lead or attend teacher in-service activities concerned with instruction	0	0	0	100	0	0
Set aside time at faculty meetings for teachers to share ideas or information from in-service activities	0	0	0	100	0	0
PROVIDE INCENTIVES FOR LEARNING						
Recognize students who do superior work with formal rewards such as an honour roll or mention in the principal's newsletter	0	0	0	0	100	0
Use assemblies to honour students for academic accomplishments or for behaviour or citizenship	0	0	0	100	0	0
Recognize superior student achievement or improvement by seeing in the office the students with their work	0	0	100	0	0	0
Contact parents to communicate improved or exemplary student performance or contributions	0	0	0	100	0	0
Support teachers actively in their recognition and/or reward of student	0	0	0	100	0	0

contributions to and accomplishments in class						
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Summary

The principal's perspective on framing school goals is that she frequently develops a focused set of annual school-wide goals and sometimes frames the school's goals in terms of staff responsibilities for meeting them. However, she frequently uses needs assessment or other formal and informal methods to secure staff input on goal development.

In terms of communicating the school goals, she indicated that she sometimes effectively communicates the school's mission to members of the school community, almost always discusses the school's academic goals with teachers at faculty meetings, and sometimes refers to the school's academic goals when making curricular decisions with teachers.

As it pertains to supervising and evaluating instruction, the principal indicated that she almost always conducts informal observations in classrooms on a regular basis (informal observations are unscheduled, last at least 5 minutes, and may or may not involve written feedback or a formal conference) and frequently points out specific strengths and weaknesses in teacher's instructional practices in post-observation feedback (e.g., in conferences or written evaluations)

In terms of coordinating the curriculum, she frequently draws upon the results of school-wide testing when making curricular decisions regarding the school's curricular objectives, monitors the classroom curriculum to see that it covers the school's curricular objectives, sometimes assesses the overlap between the school's curricular objectives and the school's achievement tests and sometimes participates actively in the review of curricular materials.

Regarding monitoring students' progress, she reported that she almost always informs teachers of the school's performance results in written form (e.g., in a memo or newsletter) and frequently informs students of the school's academic progress.

She also reported that she frequently encourages teachers to use instructional time to teach and practice new skills and concepts. She maintains high visibility by sometimes taking time to talk informally with students and teachers during recess and breaks.

The principal indicated that she sometimes reinforces superior teacher performance in staff meetings, newsletters, and/or memos and compliments teachers privately for their efforts or performance.

Finally, to promote professional development, the principal reported that she frequently ensures that staff in-service activities are consistent with the school's goals and that she frequently leads or attends teacher in-service activities concerned with instruction.

School Characteristics

Data were compiled and analysed using descriptive statistics to create a profile of the primary and secondary schools in the sample.

Primary School Characteristics

School Roll and Number of Personnel in Primary Schools

Principals were asked to report on their school's roll by sex and the number of personnel in their schools. The reported student roll and number of personnel are shown in Tables 83 and 84.

Table 83: Primary School Roll by Sex (N=5)

Number of students	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Female	60	197	110.8	62.97
Male	61	168	114.8	45.15

Table 84: Primary School Personnel (N=5)

Number of personnel	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Teachers (Female)	8	21	16.2	5.07
Teachers (Male)	2	4	2.8	0.84
Librarians	1	1	1	0
Guidance Counsellors	0	0	0	0
Ancillary Staff	3	11	6.2	3.03
Other	0	4	2.50	1.92

The other staff members in the school, as reported by principals, were not listed.

Student and Teacher Absenteeism in Primary Schools

Absenteeism is an issue of concern in schools in St. Lucia. Principals were asked to indicate how much student and teacher absenteeism challenges their school. The distribution of responses can be found in Table 85.

Table 85: Student and Teacher Absenteeism in Primary Schools (N=5)

	%			
	No Challenge at All	A Moderate Challenge	A Big Challenge	No Response
Student Absenteeism	40	60	0	0
Teacher Absenteeism	60	40	0	0

While forty percent of the principals reported that teacher absenteeism was a moderate challenge, sixty percent indicated that student absenteeism was a moderate challenge.

Primary School Facilities

Attention was directed toward the available facilities and their use to gain insight into the environment of the participating schools. To accomplish this, school principals were asked to complete an item prompting them to indicate the presence of certain facilities at the school and, if available, whether they were currently in use. The percentages of primary principals' responses to each facility listed are shown in Table 86.

Table 86: Primary School Facilities Present and in Use (N=5)

School facility	%			
	Present & In Use	Present & Not in Use	Not Present	No Response
Library	100	0	0	0
Computer Lab	80	20	0	0
Canteen	40	60	0	0
Sickbay	100	0	0	0
Playing Field	40	20	20	20
Hard Courts	20	80	0	0
Science Labs	20	80	0	0
Art Rooms	0	0	100	0
IA Rooms	0	0	100	0
HE Rooms	0	0	100	0
Music Room	20	0	80	0
Special subject rooms (e.g. math room, geography room)	40	0	60	0

All principals reported the presence of libraries and sickbays and their active use at their schools. While all principals reported the absence of rooms such as Art rooms, eighty percent reported that their schools did not have music rooms, while twenty percent indicated the presence and use of the music room at their school. Eighty percent reported that there were science labs and hard courts at the schools, but they were not in use.

Primary School Class Structure

Principals were asked to indicate if classes were best described as grouped by ability or mixed ability grouping. They were also asked how the school day was divided into lessons, including the length of each lesson. Principal responses to these items can be found in Tables 87 and 88.

Table 87: Ability Grouping in Primary Schools (N=5)

Class organisation	n	%
Mixed Ability Grouping	5	100
TOTAL	0	0

All principals reported that all classes could be classified as mixed-ability classrooms.

Table 88: Number and Length of Lessons in Primary School (N=5)

Lesson variable	Min	Max	Mean	SD
No. in a day	4	8	6.4	1.52
Length (mins)	35	45	40	5.00

Primary School Reading Policies

Principals were asked to indicate if their school had a reading policy and if their school's timetable included a designated time for leisure reading. Principal responses to these items can be found in Table 89.

Table 89: Primary School Reading Policies (N=5)

School has a reading policy?	n	%
Yes	1	20
No	3	60
No Response	1	20
TOTAL	5	100
Timetabled reading for leisure?	n	%
Yes	3	60
No	2	40
TOTAL	5	100

Sixty percent of the principals reported that their school did not have reading policies, and forty percent reported that they did not timetable reading for leisure at their school.

Primary School Extracurricular Activities

Principals were asked to indicate whether their school had a policy on extracurricular and/or co-curricular activities and whether their school's timetables included a designated time for these activities. Principal responses to these items can be found in Table 90.

Table 90: Primary School Extracurricular Activities (N=5)

School has a policy on extracurricular and/or cocurricular activities?	n	%
Yes	1	20
No	3	60
No Response	1	20
TOTAL	5	100
Timetabled extracurricular and/or co-curricular activities?	n	%
Yes	4	80
No	1	20
TOTAL	5	100

While sixty percent of the principals reported that their school did not have a policy for extra- and/or co-curricular activities, eight percent reported that such activities were timetabled.

Summary

Sixty percent of the principals reported that there were no reading or extra-/co-curricular policies at their institutions, but while forty percent did not timetable reading for leisure, eighty percent reported that extra-/co-curricular activities were timetabled.

Secondary School Characteristics

School Roll and Number of Personnel in Secondary Schools

Principals were asked to report on their school's roll by sex and the number of personnel in their schools. Responses can be seen in Tables 91 and 92.

Table 91: Secondary School Roll by Sex (N=1)

Number of students	Min	Max	Mean	SD
No Response	1	1	n/a	n/a

Table 92: Secondary School Personnel (N=1)

Number of personnel	Min	Max	Mean	SD
No Response	1	1	n/a	na

The principal did not indicate the number of students and personnel enrolled at her school.

Student and Teacher Absenteeism in Secondary Schools

Absenteeism is an issue of concern in schools in St. Lucia. Principals were asked to indicate how much student and teacher absenteeism challenges their school. The distribution of responses can be found in Table 93.

Table 93: Student and Teacher Absenteeism in Secondary Schools (N=1)

Issue	%			
	No Challenge at All	A Moderate Challenge	A Big Challenge	No Response
Student Absenteeism	0	100	0	0
Teacher Absenteeism	0	100	0	0

The principal indicated that teacher and student absenteeism moderately pose a challenge.

Secondary School Facilities

Attention was directed toward the available facilities and their use to gain insight into the environment of the participating schools. To accomplish this, school principals were asked to complete an item prompting them to indicate the presence of certain facilities at the school and, if available, whether they were currently in use. The percentages of Secondary principals' responses to each facility listed are shown in Table 94.

The principal indicated that the school had the following specialised rooms: computer labs, science labs, Art room, canteen, playing field, sickbay, music room, and high courts, and they were being used. She did indicate that the school did not have a library or special subject room.

Table 94: Secondary School Facilities Present and in Use (N=1)

School facility	%			
	Present & In Use	Present & Not in Use	Not Present	No Response
Library	0	0	100	0
Computer Lab	100	0	0	0
Canteen	100	0	0	0
Sickbay	100	0	0	0
Playing Field	100	0	0	0
Hard Courts	100	0	0	0
Science Labs	100	0	0	0
Art Rooms	100	0	0	0
IA Rooms	0	0	0	100
HE Rooms	0	0	0	100
Music Room	100	0	0	0
Special subject rooms (e.g. math room, geography room)	0	0	100	0

Secondary School Class Structure

Principals were asked to indicate if classes were best described as grouped by ability or mixed ability grouping. They were also asked how the school day was divided into lessons, including the length of each lesson. Principal responses to these items can be found in Tables 95 and 96.

Table 95: Ability Grouping in Secondary Schools (N=1)

Class organisation	n	%
Mixed Ability Grouping	1	100
TOTAL	1	100

The principal indicated that her school had mixed ability grouping.

Table 96: Number and Length of Lessons in Secondary School (N=1)

Lesson variable	Min	Max	Mean	SD
No. in a day	8	8	8	
Length (mins)	40	40	40	

Secondary School Reading Policies

Principals were asked to indicate if their school had a reading policy and if their school's timetable included a designated time for leisure reading. Principal responses to these items can be found in Table 97.

Table 97: Secondary School Reading Policies (N=1)

School has a reading policy?	n	%
No	1	100
TOTAL	1	100
Timetabled reading for leisure?	n	%
No	1	100
TOTAL	1	100

The principal indicated that her school had no reading policy and reading was not timetabled for leisure.

Secondary School Extracurricular Activities

Principals were asked to indicate whether their school had a policy on extracurricular and/or co-curricular activities and whether their school's timetables included a designated time for these activities. Principal responses to these items can be found in Table 98.

Table 98: Secondary School Extracurricular Activities (N=1)

School has a policy on extracurricular and/or cocurricular activities?	n	%
Yes	1	100
TOTAL	1	100
Timetabled extracurricular and/or co-curricular activities?	n	%
No	1	100
TOTAL	1	100

Although the principal indicated that there was a policy on extra curriculum and/or co-curricular activities, the school did not incorporate this into the timetable.

Secondary Students' Academic Track

Secondary students were asked to indicate their academic track and whether or not they chose this track for themselves. If they did not choose their educational track, students were asked who decided for them to follow this academic track. The distribution of responses on these items can be seen in Tables 99 to 101.

Several students reported multiple academic tracks, including Arts and Business, Arts and Science, Arts and Visual Arts, Business and Science, Business and TVET, and Arts, Business, and Science.

Table 99: Secondary Students' Academic Track (N=124)

Current Academic Track	n	%
Arts (e.g. Languages, Literature, History, Geography)	7	5.6
Business (e.g. Accounts, Business, Management)	28	22.6
Science (e.g. Biology, Chemistry, Physics)	18	12.9
Technical and Vocational (e.g. Building Technology, Building drawing; Home management; textiles; food & beverage technology)	10	8.1
Visual and Performing Arts (e.g. Art, Theatre, Music, Dance)	6	4.8
Other	46	37
No Response	11	8.9
TOTAL	124	100

Table 100: Secondary Students' Choosing Their Academic Track (N=124)

Is your current academic track your choice?	n	%
Yes	97	78.2
No	11	8.9
No Response	15	12.1
TOTAL	124	100

Most students indicated that they chose their current academic track, with approximately seventy-eight (78) percent indicating that.

Table 101: Person Who Chose Secondary Students' Academic Track (N=124)

If someone other than you chose your academic track, the decision was made by:	n	%
The teachers at the school	8	6.5
My mother	11	8.9
My father	6	4.8
Other	7	5.6

The students' data indicated that less than 10% of students indicated that someone other than themselves chose their academic track.

Summary

Several students reported multiple academic tracks, including Arts and Business, Arts and Science, Arts and Visual Arts, Business and Science, Business and TVET, and Arts, Business, and Science. Most of the students indicated that they chose their current academic track, with approximately seventy-eight (78) percent of students indicating that. The data from the students indicated that less than 10% of students indicated that someone other than themselves chose their academic track.

Factors with Indirect Influences: Views on Common Educational Practices

This section explores the views of primary and secondary teachers and principals in St Lucia on several common educational practices. These include attitudes toward teaching, extra lessons, the Caribbean Primary Exit Assessment (CPEA), streaming and grade retention. These educational practices are often linked to teacher expectations, which research shows profoundly influences student outcomes. Teacher expectations can be influenced by various factors, including stereotypes and preconceived notions about students' abilities, which in turn affects teachers' instruction and interaction with students (Rubie-Davies, 2009). These preconceived notions of ability may be influenced by the results of standardised tests, placement in certain schools or classes and whether a student has had to repeat a grade.

Primary Teachers' Views on School and Other Education-Related Issues

Primary Teachers' Feelings About Teaching

Teachers in the sample were asked to indicate their feelings about teaching in general. Their responses are summarised in Table 102.

Table 102: Primary Teachers' Feelings About Teaching (N=33)

I like teaching in general	n	%
Never True	0	0
Sometimes True	6	18.2
Always True	26	78.8
No Response	1	3.0
TOTAL	33	100

Approximately eighty percent of the teachers reported consistently enjoying teaching in general.

Primary Teachers' Feelings about Current School

Teachers were asked to indicate their feelings about their current school. Their responses are summarised in Table 103.

Seventy-three percent of the teachers reported that they always liked teaching at the school that they were currently at.

Table 103: Primary Teachers' Feelings About Their Current School (N=33)

I like teaching at this school	n	%
Never True	0	0
Sometimes True	7	21.2
Always True	24	72.7
No Response	2	6.1
TOTAL	33	100

Primary Teachers' Attitudes Toward Out-of-School Lessons

Three questionnaire items address the issue of teachers delivering instruction beyond regular school hours. The teachers' responses in the primary school sample are presented in Tables 104 to 106.

Table 104: Primary Teachers' Provision of Extra Lessons Outside of School Time (N=33)

I provide extra lessons for students in my class outside of school hours	n	%
Never True	13	39.4
Sometimes True	9	27.3
Always True	9	27.3
No Response	2	6.1
TOTAL	33	100

Fifty-five percent of the teachers reported that they sometimes or always gave extra lessons outside school hours.

Table 105: Primary Teachers' Perceptions of Parent's Willingness to Pay for Extra Lessons (N=33)

Parents at this school are willing to pay for extra lessons for their children	n	%
Never True	1	3.0
Sometimes True	23	69.7
Always True	3	9.1
No Response	6	18.2
TOTAL	33	100

Seventy percent of the teachers revealed that parents are sometimes willing to pay for extra lessons.

Table 106: Primary Teachers' Perceptions of Teachers Being Paid to Provide Extra Lessons Outside of School (N=33)

Teachers should be paid for extra lessons	n	%
Yes	30	90.9
No	1	3.0
No Response	2	6.1
TOTAL	33	100

Ninety-one percent of the teachers reportedly felt that teachers should be paid for extra lessons outside of regular school time.

Primary Teachers' Attitudes Toward the Common Entrance Examination

Teachers in the sample were asked to express their support for specific practices embedded within the current St. Lucian education system. One such practice involves using the CPEA results to allocate students to secondary schools. Table 107 illustrates the extent of teachers' endorsement of this practice.

Table 107: Primary Teachers' Support for Use of CPEA for Secondary School Placement (N=33)

Using the common entrance examination for secondary school placement	n	%
I support this	19	57.6
I do not support this	8	24.2
Not Applicable/No Opinion	5	15.2
No Response	1	3.0
TOTAL	33	100

Twenty-four percent of the teachers reported not supporting using CPEA for secondary school placement.

Primary Teachers' Attitudes Toward Streaming and Grade Retention

Teachers in the sample were asked about their endorsement of the practices of streaming students based on academic ability and grade retention (having students repeat grades until they pass). Their responses are outlined in Tables 108 and 109, respectively.

Table 108: Primary Teachers' Support for Streaming According to Ability (N=33)

Streaming classes according to ability	n	%
I support this	21	63.6
I do not support this	7	21.2
Not Applicable/No Opinion	3	9.1
No Response	2	6.1
TOTAL	33	100

Table 109: Primary Teachers' Support for Grade Retention (N=33)

Grade Retention	n	%
I support this	13	39.4
I do not support this	12	36.4
Not Applicable/No Opinion	5	15.2
No Response	3	9.1
TOTAL	33	100

While sixty-four percent of the teachers reported their support for streaming classes according to ability practices, thirty-nine percent did support having students repeat grades until they pass.

Summary

Teachers reported their love for teaching, with eighty percent indicating that they enjoyed it in general and seventy-three indicating that they liked it at the school where they were currently. Twenty-seven percent of the teachers reported that they provided extra lessons sometimes and always, and seventy percent reported that parents were sometimes willing to pay. Despite the fifty-four percent who reported that they provided lessons at times, ninety-one percent felt that teachers should be paid for those extra sessions. Fifty-eight percent of the teachers indicated their support for using common entrance (CPEA) examinations for secondary school placement, sixty-four percent supported streaming of classes based on abilities and thirty-nine percent supported grade retention practices.

Secondary Teachers' Views on School and Other Education-Related Issues

Several current issues in education in St. Lucia were investigated, including feelings about teaching, extra lessons, the St. Lucia Common Entrance Examination (CPEA), streaming and grade retention.

Secondary Teachers' Feelings About Teaching

Teachers in the sample were asked to indicate their feelings about teaching in general. Their responses are summarised in Table 110.

Approximately fifty –six (56) percent of teachers reported that it is always true that they like teaching in general.

Table 110: Secondary Teachers' Feelings About Teaching (N=18)

I like teaching in general	n	%
Never True	0	0
Sometimes True	7	38.9
Always True	10	55.6
No Response	1	5.6
TOTAL	18	100

Secondary Teachers' Feelings about Their Current School

Teachers were asked to indicate their feelings about their current school. Their responses are summarised in Table 111.

Table 111: Secondary Teachers' Feelings About Their Current School (N=18)

I like teaching at this school	n	%
Never True	2	11.1
Sometimes True	10	55.6
Always True	6	33.3
No Response	0	0
TOTAL	18	100

While approximately fifty-six (56) percent indicated that they sometimes like teaching at their school.

Secondary Teachers' Attitudes Toward Out-of-School Lessons

The issue of teachers delivering instruction beyond regular school hours is addressed through three questionnaire items. The teachers' responses in the secondary school sample are presented in Tables 112 to 114.

Table 112: Secondary Teachers' Provision of Extra Lessons Outside of School Time (N=18)

I provide extra lessons for students in my class outside of school hours	n	%
Never True	4	22.2
Sometimes True	10	55.6
Always True	5	22.2
No Response	1	5.6
TOTAL	18	100

Approximately fifty-six (56) percent indicated that they sometimes provide extra lessons to students outside of school hours.

Table 113: Secondary Teachers' Perceptions of Parent's Willingness to Pay for Extra Lessons (N=18)

Parents at this school are willing to pay for extra lessons for their children	n	%
Never True	1	5.6
Sometimes True	14	77.8
Always True	2	11.1
No Response	1	5.6
TOTAL	18	100

Approximately seventy-eight (78) percent of teachers reported that sometimes parents are willing to pay for extra lessons for their children.

Table 114: Secondary Teachers' Perceptions of Teachers Being Paid to Provide Extra Lessons Outside of School (N=18)

Teachers should be paid for extra lessons	n	%
Yes	18	100
No	0	0
No Response	0	0
TOTAL	18	100

All of the teachers indicated that teachers should be paid for extra lessons.

Secondary Teachers' Attitudes Toward the Common Entrance Examination

Teachers in the sample were asked to express their support for specific practices embedded within the current St. Lucian education system. One such practice involves using the results of the CPEA to allocate students to secondary schools. The extent of teachers' endorsement of this practice is illustrated in Table 115.

Table 115: Secondary Teachers' Support for Use of CPEA for Secondary School Placement (N=18)

Using the common entrance examination for secondary school placement	n	%
I support this	11	61.1
I do not support this	5	27.8
Not Applicable/No Opinion	2	11.1
No Response	0	0
TOTAL	18	100

Most teachers indicated that they support the CPEA for secondary placement, with about sixty-one (61) percent of participants indicating this.

Secondary Teachers' Attitudes Toward Streaming and Grade Retention

Teachers in the sample were asked about their endorsement of the practices of streaming students based on academic ability and grade retention (having students repeat grades until they pass). Their responses are outlined in Tables 116 and 117, respectively.

Table 116: Secondary Teachers' Support for Streaming According to Ability (N=18)

Streaming classes according to ability	n	%
I support this	14	77.8
I do not support this	3	16.7
Not Applicable/No Opinion	1	5.6
No Response	0	0
TOTAL	18	100

The majority of teachers indicated that they support streaming according to ability, with about seventy-eight (78) percent of participants indicating this.

Table 117: Secondary Teachers' Support for Grade Retention (N=18)

Grade Retention	n	%
I support this	11	61.1
I do not support this	6	33.3
Not Applicable/No Opinion	1	5.6
TOTAL	18	100

The majority of teachers indicated that they support grade retention for secondary students, with about sixty-one (61) percent of participants indicating this.

Summary

Approximately fifty-six (56) percent of teachers reported that they always like teaching in general, while approximately fifty-six (56) percent indicated that they sometimes like teaching at their school.

All of the teachers indicated that they should be paid for extra lessons. Approximately fifty-six (56) percent indicated that they sometimes provide extra lessons to students outside of school hours. About seventy-eight (78) percent of teachers reported that sometimes parents are willing to pay for extra lessons for their children.

The majority of teachers indicated that they support the common Entrance/CPEA for secondary placement and grade retention for secondary students, with about sixty-one (61) percent of participants indicating this. Additionally, most teachers indicated that they support streaming according to ability, with about seventy-eight (78) percent of participants indicating this.

Primary Principals' Views on Other Education-Related Issues

Several current issues in education in St. Lucia were investigated from primary principals' perspectives, including feelings about extra lessons, the St. Lucia Common Entrance Examination (CPEA), streaming and grade retention.

Primary Principals' Attitudes Toward Out-of-School Lessons

The questionnaire addressed the concern of teachers delivering instruction beyond regular school hours. The principals' responses in the primary school sample are presented in Table 118.

Table 118: Primary Principals' Perceptions of Teachers Being Paid to Provide Extra Lessons Outside of Regular School Hours (N=5)

Teachers should be paid for extra lessons	n	%
Yes	5	100
TOTAL	5	100

All principals reported their perception that teachers should be paid for extra lessons.

Primary Principals' Attitudes Toward the Common Entrance Examination

Principals in the sample were asked to express their support for specific practices embedded within the current St. Lucian education system. One such practice involves using the results of the CPEA to allocate students to secondary schools. The extent of the principals' endorsement of this practice is illustrated in Table 119.

Table 119: Primary Principals' Support for Use of CPEA for Secondary School Placement (N=5)

Using the common entrance examination for secondary school placement	n	%
I support this	1	20
I do not support this	1	20
Not Applicable/No Opinion	3	60
No Response	0	0

Sixty percent of the principals did not have an opinion on the use of the CPEA examination for secondary school placement, and only twenty percent reported their full support for its use.

Primary Principals' Attitudes Toward Streaming and Grade Retention

Principals in the sample were asked about their endorsement of the practices of streaming students based on academic ability and grade retention (having students repeat grades until they pass). Their responses are outlined in Tables 120 and 121, respectively.

Table 120: Primary Principals' Support for Streaming According to Ability (N=5)

Streaming classes according to ability	n	%
I support this	3	60
I do not support this	2	40
TOTAL	5	100

Table 121: Primary Principals' Support for Grade Retention (N=5)

Grade Retention	n	%
I support this	5	100
TOTAL	5	100

Sixty percent of the principals reported their support for streaming, and all the principals reported their support for grade retention practices.

Summary

There were commonalities between the principals' perceptions, with all reporting their support for teachers being paid for extra lessons and grade retention practices. While sixty percent support streaming classes based on abilities, sixty percent reported no opinion on using CPEA for secondary school placement.

Secondary Principals' Views on Other Education-Related Issues

Several current issues in education in St. Lucia were investigated from Secondary principals' perspectives, including feelings about extra lessons, the St. Lucia Common Entrance Examination (CPEA), streaming and grade retention.

Secondary Principals' Attitudes Toward Out-of-School Lessons

The questionnaire addressed the concern of teachers delivering instruction beyond regular school hours. The principals' responses in the Secondary school sample are presented in Table 122.

Table 122: Secondary Principals' Perceptions of Teachers Being Paid to Provide Extra Lessons Outside of Regular School Hours (N=1)

Teachers should be paid for extra lessons	n	%
Yes	1	100
No	0	0
TOTAL	1	100

The principal indicated support for teachers in receiving payment for extra lessons.

Secondary Principals' Attitudes Toward the Common Entrance Examination

Principals in the sample were asked to express their support for specific practices embedded within the current St. Lucian education system. One such practice involves using the results of the CPEA to allocate students to secondary schools. The extent of the principals' endorsement of this practice is illustrated in Table 123.

Table 123: Secondary Principals' Support for Use of CPEA for Secondary School Placement (N=1)

Using the common entrance examination for secondary school placement	n	%
I support this	1	100
I do not support this	0	0
TOTAL	1	100

The principal supported using the common entrance examination /for secondary school placement.

Secondary Principals' Attitudes Toward Streaming and Grade Retention

Principals in the sample were asked about their endorsement of the practices of streaming students based on academic ability and grade retention (having students repeat grades until they pass). Their responses are outlined in Tables 124 and 125, respectively.

Table 124: Secondary Principals' Support for Streaming According to Ability (N=1)

Streaming classes according to ability	n	%
I support this	0	0
I do not support this	1	100
TOTAL	1	100

The principal did not support streaming according to ability.

Table 125: Secondary Principals' Support for Grade Retention (N=1)

Grade Retention	n	%
I support this	1	100
I do not support this	0	0
TOTAL	1	100

The principal indicated support for grade retention.

Summary

The principal indicated support for paying teachers for extra lessons. She also supported the common Entrance/CPEA for secondary placement and grade retention for secondary students. However, she did not support streaming according to ability.

The Impact of COVID-19 on Teaching and Learning

This section focuses on the factors associated with COVID-19 that affect student achievement. Primary and secondary students were asked various questions about their experiences during online schooling, including the challenges and positive aspects of learning online, how they accessed lessons, the support they received from the school and at home and their feelings about the impact of online schooling on their attitude toward learning. Primary and secondary teachers were asked questions about teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic, including the challenges they experienced, the technology they used, the support they provided to their students and the impact of teaching online on their overall attitudes toward teaching.

Primary Students' Experiences of Schooling During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Student School Attendance During Lockdown in Primary Schools

Two questionnaire items asked students how they attended school during the island-wide lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic. Primary student responses can be found in Tables 126 and 127.

Table 126: Primary Students' Attendance During Lockdown (N=129)

How did you attend classes during the COVID-19 lockdown?	n	%
I did not attend classes during the lockdown	20	15.5
I accessed classes online during the lockdown	100	77.5
No Response	9	7.0
TOTAL	129	100

Table 127: Primary Students' Method of Accessing Lessons During Lockdown (N=129)

Methods of access to lessons	n	%
I had no access to lessons	17	13.2
I had access to lessons on the radio	6	4.7
I had access to lessons on television	11	8.5
My teachers sent me worksheets to do	68	52.7
Other	21	16.3

Other methods reported by primary students include using their mother's phone or tablet or the teacher relaying the book and page number to peruse and/or complete activities.

Challenges Faced During Online Schooling by Primary Students

Primary students were asked to indicate whether they experienced any challenges during online schooling and, if so, what kinds of technological challenges they experienced. They were also asked to indicate more general challenges when adjusting to online schooling. The proportion of primary students facing challenges, and the kinds of challenges are reported in Tables 128 to 130.

Table 128: Primary Students' Experiencing Challenges in Online Schooling (N=129)

Did you experience challenges doing schooling online?	n	%
Yes	74	57.4
No	42	32.6
No Response	13	10
TOTAL	129	100

Table 129: Primary Students' Technology Challenges in Online Schooling (N=129)

Challenges in online schooling	n	%
Didn't own a device	19	14.7
Device did not always work	20	15.5
No access to internet	6	4.7
Internet always dropping out	40	31.0
Had to share a device	12	9.3
Did not know how to use the learning platform (Google Classroom, Teams)	10	7.8
Trouble logging in to meeting spaces (e.g., Zoom)	51	39.5
Other	5	3.9

Other technology challenges reported by students include the need for a better device and disturbances caused by noises from mother's laptop.

Table 130: Primary Students' Challenges Adjusting to Online Schooling (N=129)

Challenges shifting to online schooling	n	%
Difficulty keeping up with my schoolwork	60	46.5
Difficulty organizing my time (e.g., getting to classes on time)	43	33.3
Not able to get extra help with schoolwork from teachers	29	22.5
Not feeling like doing schoolwork	24	18.6
Difficulty finding a quiet place to work	43	33.3

Another challenge reported by students includes the teacher encountering problems with other students.

Positive Experiences During Online Schooling by Primary Students

Primary students were asked to indicate whether they had any positive experiences during online schooling and, if so, what kinds of experiences they perceived as positive. The proportion of primary students reporting positive experiences associated with online learning and the kinds of positive experiences are reported in Tables 131 and 132, respectively.

Table 131: Primary Students' Positive Experiences during Online Schooling (N=129)

Did you have any positive experiences attending school online?	n	%
Yes	89	69.0
No	25	19.4
No Response	15	11.6
TOTAL	129	100

Table 132: Primary Students' Technology Challenges in Online Schooling (N=129)

Positive experiences in online schooling	n	%
More time with family	74	57.4
More time for other activities	46	35.7
Not having to travel to school	41	31.8
More rest time	54	41.9
Staying in bed longer in the morning before having to get up for school	53	41.1
Others (Please state below)	0	0
Getting to wear own clothing	1	0.8

Other positive experiences reported by students include doing fun games for the lessons and getting time to be alone.

Primary Students' Preferred Learning Environment

Students were asked about their preferences for face-to-face, online, or hybrid learning, and their responses can be found in Table 133.

Table 133: Primary Students' Preferred Teaching Modality (N=129)

In which one of the following modalities do you prefer to attend school?	n	%
Face-to-face only	67	51.9
Online only	16	12.4
Some face-to-face and some online	36	27.9
No Response	10	7.8
TOTAL	129	100

Students reported no other preferred learning environments. Face-to-face modality was the preferred teaching modality.

Support Received by Primary Students

Primary students were asked what support they received during online schooling from the school and at home and their level of satisfaction with the support they received. Student responses to these items on the survey are shown in Tables 134 to 137.

Table 134: School Support Provided to Primary Students During Online Schooling (N=129)

What additional support did you receive from the school/teachers?	n	%
I did not receive any additional support from my school/teachers.	26	20.2
Home visits from teachers	7	5.4
One-on-one sessions with teachers when necessary	18	14.0
Additional time for completing classwork and assignments	52	40.3
Direction to online learning resources to support my learning	28	21.7

Table 135: Primary Students' Satisfaction with Support from School (N=129)

How satisfied are you with the support you received from the SCHOOL for schooling online?	n	%
Very satisfied	51	39.5
Moderately satisfied	30	23.3
Barely satisfied	19	14.7
Not satisfied at all	14	10.9
No Response	15	11.6
TOTAL	129	100

Approximately sixty-three percent of the students reported being moderately or very satisfied with the support they received from their school during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Table 136: Home Support Provided to Primary Students During Online Schooling (N=129)

What additional support did you receive at home?	n	%
I did not receive any additional support at home.	20	15.5
I got an appropriate device of my own	53	41.1
One-on-one sessions with teachers when necessary	21	16.3
Additional time for completing classwork and assignments	39	30.2
Direction to online learning resources to support my learning	22	17.1

Students reported no other support from home during online school.

Table 137: Primary Students' Satisfaction with Home Support (N=129)

How satisfied are you with the support you received at HOME for schooling online?	n	%
Very satisfied	60	46.5
Moderately satisfied	29	22.5
Barely satisfied	19	14.7
Not satisfied at all	8	6.2
No Response	13	10.1
TOTAL	129	100

Sixty-nine percent of the students were moderately or very satisfied with the support they received at home for online schooling.

Primary Students' Access to Technology During Online Schooling

Primary students were asked to indicate how often they had the technology they needed during online schooling, and their responses can be found in Table 138.

Table 138: Primary Students' Access to Technology During Online Schooling (N=129)

When you had online schoolwork, how often did you have the technology you needed?	n	%
Always	63	48.8
Often	20	15.5
Sometimes	29	22.5
Seldom	2	1.6
Never	4	3.1
No Response	11	8.5
TOTAL	129	100

Almost half of the students always had the technology they needed for their online schoolwork. Only three percent of the students reported that they never had the required technology; however, nearly nine percent of them did not respond.

Primary Students' Perceptions and Experiences During the Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic profoundly impacted the lives of primary students, and they were asked about their perspectives, views and experiences during this time. Students were asked to rate the difficulty they experienced transitioning to online schooling and following safety protocols. They were also asked about the overall effect of the pandemic on their attitude toward learning. The results can be found in Tables 139 to 141.

Table 139: Ease of Following Safety Protocols for Primary Students during COVID-19 (N=129)

Statements that BEST applies to following rules when attending face-to-face school during COVID-19	n	%
It was always hard for me to follow the safety rules.	37	28.7
It was sometimes hard for me to follow the safety rules.	33	25.6
It was seldom hard for me to follow the safety rules.	15	11.6
It was never hard for me to follow the safety rules.	29	22.5
No Response	15	11.6
TOTAL	129	100

The percentages of students' perceptions of following protocols were dispersed relatively evenly, with always, sometimes, and never hard all being in the twenties.

Table 140: Ease of Changing from Face-to-Face to Online for Primary Students (N=129)

Statements that BEST applies	n	%
Changing from face-to-face school to online school was very hard for me.	43	33.3
Changing from face-to-face school to online school was somewhat hard for me.	18	14.0
Changing from face-to-face school to online school was a little hard for me.	22	17.1
Changing from face-to-face school to online school was not hard at all for me.	34	26.4
No Response	12	9.3
TOTAL	129	100

While thirty-three percent of the students reported that changing from face-to-face to online school was very hard, twenty-six percent reported that this was not hard at all.

Table 141: Impact of COVID-19 on Primary Students' Attitude to School (N=129)

Statements that BEST applies	n	%
The COVID-19 pandemic has had a very good effect on how I feel about school.	30	23.3
The COVID-19 pandemic has had a fairly good effect on how I feel about school.	8	6.2
The COVID-19 pandemic has had no effect on how I feel about school.	32	24.8
The COVID-19 pandemic has had a fairly bad effect on how I feel about school.	13	10.1
The COVID-19 pandemic has had a very bad effect on how I feel about school.	29	22.5
No Response	17	13.1
TOTAL	129	100

The percentages of students' perceptions of the impact that COVID-19 had on them were dispersed relatively evenly, with very good, no effect, and very bad effects, all being in the 23-25 range.

Summary

Approximately fifty percent of the students always had the technology they needed during online schooling. While twenty-nine percent reported that it was always hard to follow the safety rules, twenty-three percent said it was never hard. One-third of the students felt that it was very hard to transition from face-to-face to online schooling, but twenty-six percent felt that it was not hard at all. Moreover, twenty-three percent of the students reported that Covid-19 had a very good effect, twenty-five percent reported no effect, and twenty-three percent indicated that the pandemic had a very bad effect on them.

Secondary Students' Experiences of Schooling During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Student School Attendance During Lockdown in Secondary Schools

Two questionnaire items asked students how they attended school during the island-wide lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic. Secondary student responses can be found in Tables 142 and 143.

Table 142: Secondary Students' Attendance During Lockdown (N=124)

How did you attend classes during the COVID-19 lockdown?	n	%
I did not attend classes during the lockdown	22	18.5
I accessed classes online during the lockdown	88	71
No Response	13	10.5
TOTAL	124	100

Table 143: Secondary Students' Method of Accessing Lessons During Lockdown (N=124)

Methods of access to lessons	n	%
I had no access to lessons	34	27.4
I had access to lessons on the radio	5	4
I had access to lessons on television	8	6.5
My teachers sent me worksheets to do	49	39.5
Other	15	12.1
No Response	13	10.5
TOTAL	124	100

Challenges Faced During Online Schooling by Secondary Students

Secondary students were asked to indicate whether they experienced any challenges during online schooling and, if so, what kinds of technological challenges they experienced. They were also asked to indicate more general challenges when adjusting to online schooling. The proportion of Secondary students facing challenges and the kinds of challenges are reported in Tables 144 to 146.

Table 144: Secondary Students' Experiencing Challenges in Online Schooling (N=124)

Did you experience challenges doing schooling online?	n	%
Yes	90	72.6
No	12	16.1
No Response	14	11.3
TOTAL	124	100

Table 145: Secondary Students' Technology Challenges in Online Schooling (N=124)

Challenges in online schooling	n	%
Didn't own a device	12	9.7
Device did not always work	41	33.1
No access to internet	12	9.7
Internet always dropping out	46	37.1
Had to share a device	23	18.5
Did not know how to use the learning platform (Google Classroom, Teams)	21	16.9
Trouble logging in to meeting spaces (e.g., Zoom)	57	46
Other	8	6.5

Table 146: Secondary Students' Challenges Adjusting to Online Schooling (N=124)

Challenges shifting to online schooling	n	%
Difficulty keeping up with my schoolwork	67	54.0
Difficulty organizing my time (e.g., getting to classes on time)	67	54.0
Not able to get extra help with schoolwork from teachers	44	35.5
Not feeling like doing schoolwork	61	49.2
Difficulty finding a quiet place to work	39	31.5
Other	2	1.6

Positive Experiences During Online Schooling by Secondary Students

Secondary students were asked to indicate whether they had any positive experiences during online schooling and, if so, what kinds of experiences they perceived as positive. The proportion of Secondary students reporting positive experiences associated with online learning and the kinds of positive experiences are reported in Tables 147 and 148, respectively.

Table 147: Secondary Students' Positive Experiences during Online Schooling (N=124)

Did you have any positive experiences attending school online?	n	%
Yes	76	61.3
No	34	27.4
No Response	14	11.3
TOTAL	124	100

Table 148: Secondary Students' Technology Challenges in Online Schooling (N=124)

Positive experiences in online schooling	n	%
More time with family	38	30.6
More time for other activities	43	34.7
Not having to travel to school	46	37.1
More rest time	61	49.2
Staying in bed longer in the morning before having to get up for school	51	41.1
Others (Please state below)	6	4.8

Secondary Students' Preferred Learning Environment

Students were asked about their preferences for face-to-face, online, or hybrid learning, and their responses can be found in Table 149.

Table 149: Secondary Students' Preferred Teaching Modality (N=124)

In which one of the following modalities do you prefer to attend school?	n	%
Face-to-face only	64	51.6
Online only	7	5.6
Some face-to-face and some online	36	29
Other modality	2	1.6
No Response	14	11.3
TOTAL	124	100

Support Received by Secondary Students

Secondary students were asked what support they received during online schooling from the school and at home and their level of satisfaction with the support they received. Student responses to these items on the survey are shown in Tables 150 to 153.

Table 150: School Support Provided to Secondary Students During Online Schooling (N=124)

What additional support did you receive from the school/teachers?	n	%
I did not receive any additional support from my school/teachers.	40	32.3
Home visits from teachers	2	1.6
One-on-one sessions with teachers when necessary	21	16.9
Additional time for completing classwork and assignments	53	42.7
Direction to online learning resources to support my learning	23	18.5
Other	2	1.6

Table 151: Secondary Students' Satisfaction with Support from School (N=124)

How satisfied are you with the support you received from the SCHOOL for schooling online?	n	%
Very satisfied	30	24.2
Moderately satisfied	45	36.3
Barely satisfied	26	21
Not satisfied at all	7	5.6
No Response	16	12.9
TOTAL	124	100

Thirty-six (36) percent of students indicated that they were moderately satisfied with the school's support for online schooling.

Table 152: Home Support Provided to Secondary Students During Online Schooling (N=124)

What additional support did you receive at home?	n	%
I did not receive any additional support at home.	15	12.1
I got an appropriate device of my own	49	39.5
One-on-one sessions with teachers when necessary	11	8.9
Additional time for completing classwork and assignments	51	41.1
Direction to online learning resources to support my learning	20	16.1
Other	2	1.6

Table 153: Secondary Students' Satisfaction with Home Support (N=124)

How satisfied are you with the support you received at HOME for schooling online?	n	%
Very satisfied	30	24.2
Moderately satisfied	45	36.3
Barely satisfied	26	21
Not satisfied at all	7	5.6
No Response	16	12.9
TOTAL	124	100

Most students indicated that they were moderately satisfied with the support they received from the school for schooling online, as thirty-six (36) percent indicated this.

Secondary Students' Access to Technology During Online Schooling

Secondary students were asked to indicate how often they had the technology they needed during online schooling, and their responses can be found in Table 154.

Table 154: Secondary Students' Access to Technology During Online Schooling (N=124)

When you had online schoolwork, how often did you have the technology you needed?	n	%
Always	63	50.8
Often	24	19.4
Sometimes	15	12.1
Seldom	6	4.8
No Response	16	12.9
TOTAL	124	100

About half of the students, fifty-one (51) percent, indicated that they always had the technology they needed to do the online school work.

Secondary Students' Perceptions and Experiences During the Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic profoundly impacted Secondary students' lives, and they were asked about their perspectives, views and experiences during this time. Students were asked to rate the difficulty they experienced transitioning to online schooling and following safety protocols. They were also asked about the overall effect of the pandemic on their attitude toward learning. The results can be found in Tables 155 to 157.

Table 155: Ease of Following Safety Protocols for Secondary Students during COVID-19 (N=124)

Statements that BEST applies to following rules when attending face-to-face school during COVID-19	n	%
It was always hard for me to follow the safety rules.	21	16.9
It was sometimes hard for me to follow the safety rules.	46	37.1
It was seldom hard for me to follow the safety rules.	11	8.9
It was never hard for me to follow the safety rules.	28	22.6
No Response	18	14.5
TOTAL	124	100

Approximately thirty-seven (37) percent of students indicated that it was sometimes difficult to follow the safety rules.

Table 156: Ease of Changing from Face-to-Face to Online for Secondary Students (N=124)

Statements that BEST applies	n	%
Changing from face-to-face school to online school was very hard for me.	30	24.2
Changing from face-to-face school to online school was somewhat hard for me.	31	25
Changing from face-to-face school to online school was a little hard for me.	27	21.8
Changing from face-to-face school to online school was not hard at all for me.	17	13.7
No Response	18	14.5
TOTAL	124	100

About one quarter, or twenty-five (25) percent, of students indicated that changing from face-to-face school to online school was very hard for them or somewhat hard for them.

Table 157: Impact of COVID-19 on Secondary Students' Attitude to School (N=124)

Statements that BEST applies	n	%
The COVID-19 pandemic has had a very good effect on how I feel about school.	9	7.3
The COVID-19 pandemic has had a fairly good effect on how I feel about school.	24	19.4
The COVID-19 pandemic has had no effect on how I feel about school.	26	21
The COVID-19 pandemic has had a fairly bad effect on how I feel about school.	17	13.7
The COVID-19 pandemic has had a very bad effect on how I feel about school.	27	21.8
No Response	20	16.1
TOTAL	124	100

About twenty (20) percent of the students indicated that the COVID-19 pandemic had had a very bad effect on how they feel about school, while about twenty (20) percent of the students indicated that the COVID-19 had a fairly good effect on how I feel about school.

Summary

During the lockdown, seventy-one (71) percent of secondary students reported attending classes online. Also, about forty (40) percent of students indicated that their teachers sent them worksheets to do. Most of the students indicated that they experienced challenges in online schooling, with seventy-two (72) percent of students indicating this. The top three challenges reported by the students with online schooling were trouble logging in to meeting spaces (e.g., Zoom) (46%), the internet constantly dropping out (37%), and the device did not always work (33%). Additionally, students expressed some challenges adjusting to online schooling. These challenges included difficulty organising their time, keeping up with their schoolwork (54% respectively), and not feeling like doing schoolwork (49%). Regardless of the challenges, students highlighted some positive experiences in attending school online, as approximately sixty-one (61) percent indicated yes to having positive experiences attending school online. They further reported the three top positive experiences in online schooling, which were more rest time (49%), staying in bed longer in the morning before having to get up for school (41%), and not having to travel to school (37%). Most students indicated that they were moderately satisfied with the support they received from the school for online schooling, with thirty-six (36) percent indicating this. About Forty (40) percent of the secondary students indicated that they received additional support from home in the form of additional time for completing classwork and getting an appropriate device. Thirty-six

(36) percent of students indicated that they were moderately satisfied with the support they received at home for schooling online, while thirty (30) percent indicated that they were very satisfied with the support they received at home for schooling online. Although half of the students indicated that they always had the technology they needed to do the online school work, about one quarter or twenty-five (25) percent of students indicated that changing from face-to-face school to online school was very hard for them or changing from face-to-face school to online school was somewhat hard for them. Additionally, approximately thirty-seven (37) percent of students indicated that it was sometimes hard to follow the safety rules. Interestingly, about twenty (20) percent of the students indicated that the COVID-19 pandemic had had a very bad effect on how they feel about school, while about twenty (20) percent of the students indicated that the COVID-19 had a fairly good effect on how they feel about school. About half of the students, fifty-two (52) percent, preferred only face-to-face teaching.

Primary Teachers' Experiences of Schooling During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Engagement and Teaching Methods During Lockdown in Primary Schools

Two items on the questionnaire asked teachers how they engaged students during the island-wide lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers were asked to indicate whether they engaged students and report on the engagement methods. Primary teacher responses can be found in Tables 158 and 159.

Table 158: Primary Teachers' Engagement/Teaching During Lockdown (N=33)

How did you engage/teach your students during the COVID-19 lockdown?	n	%
I did not engage/teach my students during the lockdown	1	3.0
I engaged/taught my students online during the lockdown	30	90.9
No Response	2	6.1
TOTAL	33	100

Table 159: Primary Teachers' Method of Engagement/Teaching During Lockdown (N=33)

Did you at any time use any of the following means to engage your students? If so, please indicate which methods you used	n	%
I used (or directed my students to) lessons on the radio	1	3.0
I used (or directed my students to) lessons on television	0	0
I sent my students worksheets to do	24	72.7
I used other means to engage my students	4	12.1
No Response	4	12.1
TOTAL	33	100

Challenges Faced During Online Schooling by Primary Teachers

Teachers were asked to indicate whether they experienced any challenges during online schooling and, if so, what kinds of challenges they experienced. Tables 160 and 161 show the proportion of teachers facing challenges and the types of challenges.

Table 160: Primary Teachers' Experiencing Challenges in Online Schooling (N=33)

Did you experience challenges doing schooling online?	n	%
Yes	30	90.9
No	1	3.0
No Response	2	6.1
TOTAL	33	100

Table 161: Primary Teachers' Challenges in Online Schooling (N=33)

Challenges in online schooling	n	%
Preparing lessons for online teaching	8	24.2
Creating appropriate assessment activities to gauge learning in the online setting	18	54.5
Didn't own a device	5	15.2
Device did not always work	15	45.5
No access to internet	4	12.1
Internet always dropping out (unstable)	25	75.8
Had to share a device	8	24.2
Did not know how to use the learning platform (Google Classroom, Teams)	9	27.3
Trouble logging in to meeting spaces (e.g., Zoom)	6	18.2
Dealing with parents in the online setting	13	39.4
Other challenge	5	15.2

The teachers reported no other challenges.

Primary Teachers' Preferred Teaching Modalities

Teachers were asked about their preferences for face-to-face, online, or hybrid teaching, and their responses can be found in Table 162.

Table 162: Primary Teachers' Preferred Teaching Modality (N=33)

In which one of the following modalities do you prefer to engage your students?	n	%
Face-to-face only	19	57.6
Online only	1	3.0
Some face-to-face and some online	11	33.3
No Response	2	6.1
TOTAL	33	100

The teachers reported no other preferred teaching modalities.

Platforms, Devices and Internet Access for Primary Teachers During COVID-19

Teachers were asked about communication applications, learning platforms, and electronic devices, the source of those devices, and their internet access during online schooling. Tables 163 to 167 show primary teachers' responses to these items.

Table 163: Learning Platforms Used by Primary Teachers (N=33)

Which of the following learning platforms have you used to engage your students?	n	%
Google Suite/Google Classroom	29	87.9
Edmodo	8	24.2
Other	6	18.2

The teachers reported no other learning platforms.

Table 164: Communication Applications Used by Primary Teachers (N=33)

Which of the following communication applications have you used to engage your students?	n	%
Zoom Conferencing	21	63.6
Google Meet	24	72.7
Microsoft Teams	1	3.0
WhatsApp Messaging	27	81.8
Other	1	3.0

Table 165: Devices Used by Primary Teachers for Online Schooling (N=33)

Which of the following devices have you used for online schooling?	n	%
A desktop computer	5	15.2
A laptop computer	28	84.8
A tablet	17	51.5
A smartphone	27	81.8

Table 166: Sources of Devices Used by Primary Teachers for Online Schooling (N=33)

Who provided the device(s) that you used for online schooling?	n	%
I used my own throughout the entire period of online schooling	23	69.7
I used my own at first, but then the school assigned me a device	1	3.0
I used my own at first, but then the Ministry of Education assigned me a device	4	12.1
I used my own at first, but then I got one from elsewhere	1	3.0
No Response	4	12.1
TOTAL	33	100

Table 167: Source of Internet Access for Primary Teachers during Online Schooling (N=33)

How have you accessed Internet services for online schooling?	n	%
At home	28	84.8
At the school	12	36.4
From a neighbour	2	6.1
From a community hotspot	2	6.1

Additional Support Provided by Primary Teachers

Teachers were asked what additional support they were able to provide for their students during online schooling. Primary teacher responses are shown in Table 168.

Table 168: Additional Student Support Provided by Primary Teachers During Online Schooling (N=33)

What additional support did you provide for your students during online schooling?	n	%
I did not provide any additional support for my students.	2	6.1
I paid home visits to some students	3	9.1
I offered one-on-one sessions with students when necessary	20	60.6
I gave additional time for completing classwork and assignments	27	81.8
I directed students to online resources to support their learning	23	69.7

Primary Teachers' Perceptions and Experiences During the Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted primary teachers' professional and personal lives, and they were asked about their perspectives, views and experiences during this time. Teachers were asked to rate various aspects of the online teaching experience and the difficulty they experienced transitioning to online schooling and following safety protocols. They were also asked about the overall effect of the pandemic on their attitude toward teaching. The results can be found in Tables 169 to 172.

Only eighteen percent of the teachers reported that their school and/or Ministry of Education was very supportive of online teaching. Fifteen percent of the teachers felt they balanced work and personal life well while teaching online. Only six percent of the teachers reported that students' attendance was very good during the online teaching period. Nine percent of the teachers reported being very motivated to teach online, and only six percent were very satisfied with the online teaching activities during the pandemic.

Table 169: Primary Teachers' Perspectives on Various Aspects of Online Schooling (N=33)

Features	Ratings (%)					
	0 Not at All Supportive	1	2	3	4	5 Very Supportive
How supportive was your school or Ministry of Education with respect to teaching online?	0	0	12.1	42.4	21.2	18.2
How supportive were your students' parents during online learning?	0	6.1	12.1	30.3	27.3	18.2
	0 Not at All Stressful	1	2	3	4	5 Very Stressful
How stressful did you find teaching online?	3.0	0	12.1	18.2	27.3	30.3
	0 Not at All Well	1	2	3	4	5 Very Well
How well were you able to balance work and personal life while teaching online?	0	6.1	6.1	48.5	18.2	15.2
	0 Not at All Conducive	1	2	3	4	5 Very Conducive
How conducive was your home environment for teaching online?	0	9.1	15.2	27.3	21.2	21.2
	0 Not at All Comfortable	1	2	3	4	5 Very Comfortable
How comfortable were you with using technology in online teaching?	0	0	6.1	27.3	39.4	21.2
	0 Extremely Poor	1	2	3	4	5 Very Good
How would you rate your students' learning in the online environment?	0	9.1	15.2	42.4	27.3	0
How would you rate your students' attendance for online classes?	3.0	3.0	15.2	30.3	36.4	6.1
How would you rate your students' participation?	3.0	0	3.0	27.3	36.4	24.2
	0 Not at All Motivated	1	2	3	4	5 Very Motivated
How motivated were you to teach online?	0	6.1	18.2	39.4	21.2	9.1
	0 Not at All Satisfied	1	2	3	4	5 Very Satisfied
How satisfied were you with your online teaching activities during the pandemic?	3.0	6.1	6.1	39.4	33.3	6.1

Table 170: Ease of Following Safety Protocols for Primary Teachers during COVID-19 (N=33)

Statements that BEST applies	n	%
It was always hard for me to follow the safety rules.	0	0
It was sometimes hard for me to follow the safety rules.	13	39.4
It was seldom hard for me to follow the safety rules.	9	27.3
It was never hard for me to follow the safety rules.	9	27.3
No Response	2	6.1
TOTAL	33	100

Table 171: Ease of Changing from Face-to-Face to Online for Primary Teachers (N=33)

Statements that BEST applies	n	%
Changing from face-to-face school to online school was very hard for me.	8	24.2
Changing from face-to-face school to online school was somewhat hard for me.	8	24.2
Changing from face-to-face school to online school was a little hard for me.	8	24.2
Changing from face-to-face school to online school was not hard at all for me.	7	21.2
No Response	2	6.1
TOTAL	33	100

Table 172: Impact of COVID-19 on Primary Teachers' Attitude to Teaching (N=33)

Statements that BEST applies	n	%
The COVID-19 pandemic has had a very good effect on how I feel about teaching.	4	12.1
The COVID-19 pandemic has had a fairly good effect on how I feel about teaching.	8	24.2
The COVID-19 pandemic has had no effect on how I feel about teaching.	12	36.4
The COVID-19 pandemic has had a fairly bad effect on how I feel about teaching.	3	9.1
The COVID-19 pandemic has had a very bad effect on how I feel about teaching.	3	9.1
No Response	3	9.1
TOTAL	33	100

Summary

The Covid-19 pandemic impacted teachers in many ways. During this period, having support was crucial, but only eighteen percent of the teachers felt that their school or ministry of education was very supportive. Thirty percent of the teachers reported that students' parents were only moderately supportive. Moreover, thirty percent of the teachers reported that teaching online was extremely stressful during the pandemic. Forty-nine percent of the teachers indicated that they could only balance work and personal life to a middling extent, and fifteen percent reported that they balanced very well.

Twenty-one percent of the teachers indicated they were very comfortable using the technology, and their homes were conducive to online teaching. Thirty-nine percent acknowledged that they were moderately motivated and satisfied with the online teaching activities. Thirty-nine percent found that it was sometimes hard to follow the safety rules. On average, about one-fifth of the teachers felt that the transition from face-to-face to online was very hard, one-fifth somewhat hard, a little hard and not hard at all. Thirty-six percent indicated that the pandemic did not affect their feelings about teaching.

Secondary Teachers' Experiences of Schooling During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Engagement and Teaching Methods During Lockdown in Secondary Schools

Two items on the questionnaire asked teachers how they engaged students during the island-wide lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers were asked to indicate whether they engaged students and report on the engagement methods. Secondary teacher responses can be found in Tables 173 and 174.

Table 173: Secondary Teachers' Engagement/Teaching During Lockdown (N=18)

How did you engage/teach your students during the COVID-19 lockdown?	n	%
I did not engage/teach my students during the lockdown	0	0
I engaged/taught my students online during the lockdown	18	100
TOTAL	18	100

Table 174: Secondary Teachers' Method of Engagement/Teaching During Lockdown (N=18)

Did you at any time use any of the following means to engage your students? If so, please indicate which methods you used	n	%
I sent my students worksheets to do	10	55.6
I used other means to engage my students	6	33
No Response	2	11.1
TOTAL	18	100

Challenges Faced During Online Schooling by Secondary Teachers

Teachers were asked to indicate whether or not they experienced any challenges during online schooling and, if so, what kinds of challenges they experienced. Tables 175 and 176 show the proportion of teachers facing challenges and the types of challenges.

Table 175: Secondary Teachers' Experiencing Challenges in Online Schooling (N=18)

Did you experience challenges doing schooling online?	n	%
Yes	16	88.9
No	2	11.1
TOTAL	18	100

Table 176: Secondary Teachers' Challenges in Online Schooling (N=18)

Challenges in online schooling	n	%
Preparing lessons for online teaching	6	33.3
Creating appropriate assessment activities to gauge learning in the online setting	12	66.7
Didn't own a device	2	11.1]
Device did not always work	8	44.4
No access to internet	2	11.1
Internet always dropping out (unstable)	9	50
Had to share a device	6	33.3
Did not know how to use the learning platform (Google Classroom, Teams)	2	11.1
Trouble logging in to meeting spaces (e.g., Zoom)	3	16.7
Dealing with parents in the online setting	4	22.2
Other challenge	5	27.8

Secondary Teachers' Preferred Teaching Modalities

Teachers were asked about their preferences for face-to-face, online, or hybrid teaching, and their responses are shown in Table 177.

Table 177: Secondary Teachers' Preferred Teaching Modality (N=18)

In which one of the following modalities do you prefer to engage your students?	n	%
Face-to-face only	2	11.1
Some face-to-face and some online	16	88.9
TOTAL	18	100

Platforms, Devices and Internet Access for Secondary Teachers During COVID-19

Teachers were asked about communication applications, learning platforms, and electronic devices, the source of those devices, and their internet access during online schooling. Secondary teachers' responses to these items can be found in Tables 178 to 182.

Table 178: Learning Platforms Used by Secondary Teachers (N=18)

Which of the following learning platforms have you used to engage your students?	n	%
Google Suite/Google Classroom	17	94.4
Moodle	1	5.6
Edmodo	2	11.1
Other	5	27.8

Table 179: Communication Applications Used by Secondary Teachers (N=18)

Which of the following communication applications have you used to engage your students?	n	%
Zoom Conferencing	14	77.8
Google Meet	16	88.9
Microsoft Teams	1	5.6
WhatsApp Messaging	13	72.2

Table 180: Devices Used by Secondary Teachers for Online Schooling (N=18)

Which of the following devices have you used for online schooling?	n	%
A desktop computer	4	22
A laptop computer	14	77.8
A tablet	8	44.4
A smartphone	11	61.1
Other	2	11.1

Table 181: Sources of Devices Used by Secondary Teachers' for Online Schooling (N=18)

Who provided the device(s) that you used for online schooling?	n	%
I used my own throughout the entire period of online schooling	12	66.7
I used my own at first, but then the school assigned me a device	2	11.1
I used my own at first, but then the Ministry of Education assigned me a device	1	5.6
No Response	3	16.7
TOTAL	18	100.1

Table 182: Source of Internet Access for Secondary Teachers' during Online Schooling (N=18)

How have you accessed Internet services for online schooling?	n	%
At home	15	83.3
At the school	6	33.3
From a neighbour	1	5.6
From a community hotspot	1	5.6

Additional Support Provided by Secondary Teachers

Teachers were asked what additional support they were able to provide for their students during online schooling. Secondary teacher responses are shown in Table 183.

Table 183: Additional Student Support Provided by Secondary Teachers' During Online Schooling (N=18)

What additional support did you provide for your students during online schooling?	n	%
I did not provide any additional support for my students.	1	5.6
I paid home visits to some students	1	5.6
I offered one-on-one sessions with students when necessary	9	50
I gave additional time for completing classwork and assignments	16	88.9
I directed students to online resources to support their learning	14	77.8
Other	1	5.6

Secondary Teachers' Perceptions and Experiences During the Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted secondary teachers' professional and personal lives, and they were asked about their perspectives, views and experiences during this time. Teachers were asked to rate various aspects of the online teaching experience and the difficulty they experienced transitioning to online schooling and following safety protocols. They were also asked about the overall effect of the pandemic on their attitude toward teaching. The results can be found in Tables 184 to 187.

Approximately seventeen (17) percent of the teachers felt that their school or ministry of education was very supportive. Thirty-three (33) percent of the teachers reported that students' parents were only moderately supportive. About forty-four (44) percent of the teachers reported that teaching online was extremely stressful during the pandemic. Seventeen (17) percent of the teachers indicated they could balance work and personal life well.

Interestingly, forty-four (44) percent of the teachers indicated that they were very comfortable using the technology; however, only eleven (11) percent indicated that they were very motivated to teach online and indicated that their homes were conducive to online teaching.

Table 184: Secondary Teachers' Perspectives on Various Aspects of Online Schooling (N=18)

Features	Ratings (%)					
	0 Not at All Supportive	1	2	3	4	5 Very Supportive
How supportive was your school or Ministry of Education with respect to teaching online?	5.6	16.7	11.1	44.4	16.7	0
How supportive were your students' parents during online learning?	5.6	22.2	22.2	33.3	16.7	0
	0 Not at All Stressful	1	2	3	4	5 Very Stressful
How stressful did you find teaching online?	0	11.1	0	38.9	5.6	44.4
	0 Not at All Well	1	2	3	4	5 Very Well
How well were you able to balance work and personal life while teaching online?	0	11.1	22.2	33.3	16.7	16.7
	0 Not at All Conducive	1	2	3	4	5 Very Conducive
How conducive was your home environment for teaching online?	22.2	5.6	16.7	27.8	16.7	11.1
	0 Not at All Comfortable	1	2	3	4	5 Very Comfortable
How comfortable were you with using technology in online teaching?	0	0	11.1	22.2	22.2	44.4
	0 Extremely Poor	1	2	3	4	5 Very Good
How would you rate your students' learning in the online environment?	0	27.8	33.3	27.8	11.1	0
How would you rate your students' attendance for online classes?	16.7	22.2	22.2	33.3	5.6	0
How would you rate your students' participation?	11.1	22.2	27.8	33.3	5.6	0
	0 Not at All Motivated	1	2	3	4	5 Very Motivated
How motivated were you to teach online?	5.6	5.6	16.7	44.4	16.7	11.1
	0 Not at All Satisfied	1	2	3	4	5 Very Satisfied
How satisfied were you with your online teaching activities during the pandemic?	5.6	0	27.8	44.4	16.7	5.6

Table 185: Ease of Following Safety Protocols for Secondary Teachers during COVID-19 (N=18)

Statements that BEST applies	n	%
It was sometimes hard for me to follow the safety rules.	6	33.3
It was seldom hard for me to follow the safety rules.	5	27.8
It was never hard for me to follow the safety rules.	7	38.9
TOTAL	18	100

Table 186: Ease of Changing from Face-to-Face to Online for Secondary Teachers (N=18)

Statements that BEST applies	n	%
Changing from face-to-face school to online school was very hard for me.	1	5.6
Changing from face-to-face school to online school was somewhat hard for me.	5	27.8
Changing from face-to-face school to online school was a little hard for me.	10	55.6
Changing from face-to-face school to online school was not hard at all for me.	2	11
TOTAL	18	100

Table 187: Impact of COVID-19 on Secondary Teachers' Attitude to Teaching (N=18)

Statements that BEST applies	n	%
The COVID-19 pandemic has had a very good effect on how I feel about teaching.	1	5.6
The COVID-19 pandemic has had a fairly good effect on how I feel about teaching.	4	22.2
The COVID-19 pandemic has had no effect on how I feel about teaching.	5	27.8
The COVID-19 pandemic has had a fairly bad effect on how I feel about teaching.	4	23.5
The COVID-19 pandemic has had a very bad effect on how I feel about teaching.	3	16.7
No Response	1	5.6
TOTAL	18	100

Summary

The Covid-19 pandemic impacted secondary school teachers in various ways. During this period, having support was crucial, but only about seventeen (17) percent of the teachers felt that their school or ministry of education was very supportive. Thirty percent of the teachers reported that students' parents were only moderately supportive. Furthermore, about forty-four (44) percent of the teachers reported that online teaching was highly stressful during the pandemic. A mere seventeen (17) percent of the teachers indicated that they were able to balance work and personal life very well. Interestingly, forty-four (44) percent of the teachers indicated they were very comfortable using the technology; however, only eleven (11) percent indicated that they were very motivated to teach online and indicated that their homes were conducive for online teaching. On

average, more than half (56%) of the teachers felt that the transition from face-to-face to online was a little hard, while twenty-eight (28) percent indicated that the pandemic did not affect how they felt about teaching. During the lockdown, most of the teachers indicated that they experienced challenges doing schooling online, with eighty- nine (89) percent of teachers indicating this. The three most popular challenges identified by the teachers were creating appropriate assessment activities to gauge learning in the online setting (about 67%), the internet always dropping out (unstable) (50%), and their device did not always work (about 44%). Although the most popular method of engagement was to send their students worksheets to do, as more than half of the teachers indicated this (about 56%), teachers did engage students online. To engage the students, almost all of the teachers indicated that they used Google Suite/Google Classroom (about 94%). Moodle (about 6%) and Edmodo (about 11%) were the least popular methods. Additionally, the three most popular communication applications that teachers reported using were Google Meet (about 89%), zoom conferencing (about 78%) and WhatsApp (about 72%). It should be noted that approximately sixty-seven percent of teachers used their own devices for online schooling. Finally, most teachers indicated that their preferred modality to engage students was a blend of face-to-face and online.

Conclusion

Education in St Lucia faces ongoing challenges rooted in outdated colonial-era practices, resource inequities, and a need for more inclusive policies. This study's findings underscore critical areas for intervention to create a fair, inclusive and relevant educational environment. Addressing disparities in early childhood education, technology access, and academic resources can lay a foundation for equitable growth. Efforts to expand early childhood program accessibility, provide technological resources and reassess the Caribbean Primary Exit Examination will help to create more equitable opportunities for St Lucian students. Additionally, an inclusive approach, with gender-balanced recruitment for teachers and leaders, fostering supportive school climates, and removing barriers to extra-curricular participation, can better support diverse needs. Emphasising relevance by aligning educational practices with current societal demands, integrating technology and adopting modern pedagogies will prepare students for today's workforce. Through these transformative steps, St Lucia can establish a more equitable, inclusive and future-ready education system.

What's Next...

In the pre-COVID (2017) and post-COVID (2022/2024) periods, data were collected from primary and secondary students, teachers and school principals from Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean to investigate certain home and school factors that known to influence academic achievement, both at the individual level and school level. This report focused on the data collected in St Lucia. It provides a descriptive summary of the responses from the various participant groups in this country that shed light on the home and school factors investigated and, in some cases, discusses implications.

A follow-up to this report is imminent. The follow-up report will examine the relationship between home and school factors summarised in this current report and academic achievement at the school level. Using primarily correlational analysis, we will explore, for example, the link between:

- school leadership and students' attitudes to school and learning
- school leadership and teachers' instructional practices
- students' home literacy behaviour and school achievement

- students' attitudes to school and learning and school achievement
- students' perceptions of their school and school achievement

Such issues will be explored for the pre- and post-COVID periods.

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