

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



COUNTRY REPORT **Dominica**

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Caribbean Educational Research Centre

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Academic Performance: Home and School Factors

DOMINICA 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 Recently, there has been a movement towards evidence-informed policymaking to address these outdated practices.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 Dominica. 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 Dominica. The study was conducted in 2022 and was funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Objectives

This report aims to describe data collected in Dominica in 2022 on:

1. Primary and secondary school students' home environment.
2. Primary and secondary school students' attitudes toward 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 Grade 6 National Assessment (G6NA) for secondary school placement, grade retention and ability-based streaming.
7. The impact of COVID-19 on primary and secondary school students' attitudes toward learning and teachers' attitudes toward 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 Dominica's students, teachers, and principals in primary and secondary schools. The study targeted key factors affecting academic achievement, including school, personal, and home influences. Given the number of schools in Dominica 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

- 506 primary students
- 141 secondary students
- 40 primary teachers
- 51 secondary teachers
- six primary principals
- three secondary principals

Key Findings: Participant Profiles

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

Students

- The study included 506 primary students (50.5% female) aged 9 to 12. Over 93% had attended nursery school before primary school. This highlights widespread access to early childhood education, which is positive as nursery programmes are foundational in preparing students for primary school. These programmes should continue to be strengthened with a focus on socio-emotional and cognitive skills to ensure all students enter primary school with a solid foundation.
- Secondary data comprised 141 students (54% female) aged 11 to 18, with the majority between 13 and 16 years old.

Teachers

- Primary teachers were predominantly female, with nearly all having over a decade of teaching experience. Educational qualifications were mainly at the associate's degree level, with some higher degrees reported. This suggests a strong foundation in teaching experience but highlights the need for expanded professional development and opportunities for education-specific qualifications.
- Approximately 82% of secondary teachers were female, with an average of over 12 years of teaching experience. Most held bachelor's degrees, but only a small proportion had qualifications in education or advanced degrees. Teachers' diverse academic backgrounds in areas such as Economics, Fine Arts and Human Resources offer opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration, which could enrich instruction. However, this diversity also highlights a need for targeted training in subject-specific pedagogy, particularly Math and Science, to enhance teaching effectiveness.
- Overall, the teaching workforce at both levels is experienced, yet addressing gaps in attaining more advanced qualifications and training is crucial for continued professional growth and effectiveness.

Principals

- There was primarily female leadership among primary and secondary principals, with extensive teaching experience, averaging 28 years, in primary school and over 30 years in secondary schools. Primary principals had an average of six years of leadership experience across multiple schools, while secondary principals held longer tenures at their current schools. Educational qualifications ranged from associate to master's degrees, with formal training in school leadership or management common across both groups. The finding that school leaders are experienced and well-trained underscores the importance of continuous professional development to keep principals updated on modern management practices. Mentorship opportunities should be encouraged to allow seasoned principals to guide newer leaders, enhancing overall effectiveness. Additionally, the gender imbalance in leadership highlights the need to promote pathways for male teachers, ensuring diverse perspectives in school administration.

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.

- Maternal figures were present in 83% of primary and 80% of secondary students' home environments, while paternal figures were less common (48% for primary and 53% for secondary). Most mothers (60%) and fathers (65% for primary and 75% for secondary) worked full-time. Additionally, 20% of secondary students lived with grandparents, and over 40% lived with siblings or step-siblings. These findings emphasise the significant role of maternal caregivers and extended family in shaping home support. Parent workshops could focus on fostering balanced support systems, highlighting the role of fathers and other caregivers in creating enriching home environments.
- Internet access was nearly universal, with 90% of primary and 89% of secondary students having connectivity. Access to devices was widespread, including tablets (74% primary, 62% secondary), smartphones (55% primary, 80% secondary), laptops (37% primary, 60% secondary) and smart TVs (63% primary, 60% secondary). Despite this, only about half of primary and secondary students reported engaging in reading for leisure, and only 11% had more than 100 books at home. These findings underscored the need for programmes promoting reading through digital and traditional formats to improve literacy and critical thinking skills.
- Leisure activities were similar for primary and secondary students, with watching television and videos and listening to music being the most common. While 73% of primary students participated in extracurricular activities, 57% of secondary students reported participation. Expanding extracurricular opportunities for secondary students can support holistic development. Most secondary students (60%) travel to school by private transport, raising concerns about disparities in access to public transportation. Investigating barriers to public transport usage is recommended to ensure equitable school access.

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 shifts in engagement, discipline, school climate, and community involvement.

- Both primary and secondary students largely acknowledge the value of education for future success, with 92% of primary and 96% of secondary students believing school would help them gain employment or prepare for life. However, some students (14% primary, 43% secondary) expressed negative feelings, such as boredom or disliking school, which could undermine engagement. Introducing engaging, hands-on learning strategies across all grade levels is recommended to sustain interest and promote critical thinking.
- Primary students expressed stronger feelings of belonging and pride (53%) in their schools compared to secondary students (30%). Many secondary students (44%) reported difficulties in the peer relationships in their schools. Strengthening secondary school initiatives to foster belonging and inclusivity is essential.
- Classwork was positively perceived as hands-on and interesting by primary students (46%). Yet, secondary school students reported heavy reliance on textbook-based learning (35%), worksheets and lectures (29%), with only 44% describing their work as challenging or thought-provoking. Expanding active and innovative instructional methods could enhance engagement at all levels.
- School cleanliness and safety were concerns across levels, with 47% of primary and 45% of secondary students noting a lack of upkeep. Implementing school-wide cleanliness campaigns involving both students and staff could improve conditions.
- About one-fifth of primary students reported not having a trusted adult to talk with at school, and this increased at the secondary level (38%). Only about one-third (36%) of primary and secondary students reported that their parents feel welcome to come to the school, pointing to gaps in school-community relationships. Training teachers and staff to build stronger, trusting relationships with students and actively involving parents in school activities is recommended.

- Finally, students at both levels cited inconsistent application of school rules and unclear expectations. Reviewing and adjusting discipline protocols to ensure fairness and clarity will contribute to a more positive school culture.

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 utilised traditional and student-centred practices, frequently using textbook exercises, whole-class activities, and guided methods. Interactive approaches such as journal writing and research-based projects were less consistently implemented, and higher-order critical thinking activities like debates, role-play, and controversial discussions were rare. These findings highlight the need to encourage professional development for teachers in implementing activities that promote critical thinking and active learning, such as debates and project-based learning.
- Secondary teachers frequently relied on individual tasks, including textbook-based assignments (58%) and independent work (53%). Collaborative and reflective practices, such as peer partner learning (41%) and reflective discussions (37%), were used less consistently. Teachers often informed students of assessment objectives (67%) but inconsistently engaged them in setting classroom rules or shared responsibilities. These trends suggest a need to promote collaborative and reflective practices to balance the reliance on individual tasks and to adopt democratic practices, such as co-developing classroom rules and increasing peer-to-peer learning opportunities.

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 teachers recognised several strengths in principal leadership, including frequent encouragement of instructional time for skill development, participation in extracurricular

activities, and offering private compliments to teachers. However, inconsistencies were noted in reviewing student work, recognising student achievements, and creating professional growth opportunities. These gaps suggest a need for strengthened recognition programmes for teachers and students to foster motivation and structured opportunities for staff collaboration, such as sharing ideas during faculty meetings.

- Secondary teachers expressed concerns about limited principal involvement in curriculum review and data-driven decision-making, with only 20% reporting that assessment results were frequently used to inform curricular changes. Additionally, only 29% of teachers felt that the school goals and mission were effectively communicated. These findings emphasise the importance of increasing principal engagement in curriculum review and targeted training in effective communication strategies to ensure goal alignment and foster shared understanding among teachers and students.
- Both primary and secondary principals reported a solid commitment to leadership, as evidenced by practices such as setting school-wide goals, conducting classroom observations, and supporting professional development. Primary principals frequently used staff input and performance data to guide academic priorities, while secondary principals emphasised professional development and classroom-based feedback. However, variability existed in acknowledging teacher contributions and creating meaningful growth opportunities for staff. Fostering consistent recognition practices and expanding access to professional development programmes aligned with school objectives can enhance leadership effectiveness and support broader school development.

School Characteristics

- Primary principals identified student absenteeism as a significant challenge, though teacher absenteeism was less frequently reported. Secondary schools also reportedly face moderate levels of student and teacher absenteeism, potentially disrupting learning continuity. Targeted initiatives to reduce absenteeism, such as engagement programmes and family outreach efforts, are recommended to address this issue comprehensively at both levels.
- Facilities varied between primary and secondary schools. Primary schools typically had libraries, canteens, and playing fields but lacked specialised spaces like science or music rooms. In contrast, secondary schools were better equipped with computer and science labs

but lacked outdoor spaces. Investing in facilities for primary schools and outdoor spaces for secondary schools can enhance student engagement and support diverse learning needs.

- Reading policies were absent in half of the primary and nearly all secondary schools. While primary schools timetable leisure reading, secondary schools emphasise this activity less. Formalising reading policies across all schools, with timetables for leisure reading, is necessary to promote literacy.
- Although extracurricular activities were not formally timetabled in primary schools, they were included in timetables in two-thirds of secondary schools and governed by policies in both. Formalising extracurricular activity policies in primary and secondary schools can ensure equitable and consistent access to these activities.
- Most secondary students reported autonomy in selecting academic tracks, with few decisions influenced by parents or teachers. This autonomy underscores the need for enhanced academic track guidance, including counsellor training and resource provision, to help students make informed decisions aligned with their interests and potential.

Teachers' Views on School and Other Education-Related Issues

- Primary and secondary teachers generally expressed positive feelings about teaching. However, satisfaction was lower at their current schools, with only 68% of secondary teachers liking teaching in general and fewer consistently enjoying teaching at their current school. This variability suggests challenges in workplace satisfaction, which could impact retention and effectiveness. Initiatives to enhance teachers' satisfaction, such as professional development, recognition programmes, and improved school environments, are recommended to address this issue.
- Most primary teachers did not provide extra lessons, while 47% of secondary teachers occasionally offered them. Both teachers and principals across levels strongly supported compensating teachers for extra lessons. Formalising policies on extra lessons is necessary to ensure fairness and accessibility for students while addressing teachers' time and compensation needs.
- Teachers and principals strongly supported traditional practices like the G6NA and ability-based streaming. However, these practices may reinforce inequities, particularly ability-based streaming (favoured by 92% of secondary teachers), which may limit opportunities

for some students. Reassessing the use of streaming and exploring inclusive strategies that address diverse student needs is critical to promoting fairness.

- Support for grade retention was mixed, with two-thirds of primary principals opposing it and secondary educators more divided. This highlights an ongoing debate about the effectiveness of grade retention. Clear evidence-based guidelines on grade retention should be developed to align practices with students' developmental and academic outcomes.

The Impact of COVID-19 on Teaching and Learning

- The COVID-19 pandemic brought significant challenges and learning disruptions for primary and secondary students. While 83% of primary and 90% of secondary students attended classes during the lockdown, common challenges included unreliable internet, difficulties logging into online platforms, and limited access to appropriate devices. Only 44% of students across levels owned suitable devices for online schooling. These findings emphasise the need to invest in digital infrastructure and provide equitable access to devices to support participation in online learning.
- Despite these challenges, many students reported positive experiences with online learning, such as increased rest time, more family interactions, and the ability to work at their own pace. These benefits highlight the potential of hybrid learning models. Exploring hybrid approaches that integrate the flexibility of online learning with the structure of face-to-face classes could enhance student well-being and engagement.
- The transition between online and face-to-face learning posed significant difficulties, with 70% of primary students and nearly three-quarters of secondary students finding the shift challenging. Additionally, following safety protocols proved difficult for some students. Providing targeted guidance on managing transitions between learning modalities and adhering to safety protocols can help students navigate such shifts more effectively.
- Both primary (93%) and secondary (86%) teachers demonstrated resilience in fully engaging their students online during the COVID-19 lockdown, primarily using platforms such as Google Classroom and Zoom. However, challenges such as unstable internet (80% of primary teachers), device issues (50% of primary teachers) and managing parental interactions (60% of primary teachers) were widespread. Secondary teachers faced similar challenges, including shared devices and difficulties preparing lessons. Teachers relied almost entirely on personal resources, highlighting systemic gaps in preparedness.

Providing institutional access to devices, reliable internet, and training in technology use is essential to enhance resilience during future crises.

- A preference for hybrid teaching was evident, with 37.5% of primary and most secondary teachers favouring face-to-face and online instruction. This highlights the need for sustainable hybrid teaching frameworks that integrate the benefits of both modalities while addressing diverse student learning needs.
- While schools, ministries, and parents provided moderate support during the lockdown, according to teacher reports, gaps in collaboration and resource allocation were evident. Teachers noted the need for clearer communication and better guidance. Establishing strong communication systems involving all stakeholders can ensure consistent support for teachers in emergency contexts.
- Teaching online was stressful for many teachers, with 38% of primary teachers finding it very stressful and secondary teachers reporting moderate stress and difficulty balancing work and personal life. Despite this, 43% of primary and many secondary teachers indicated that the pandemic positively affected their teaching attitudes. Prioritising teacher well-being through mental health and stress management programmes and recognising their efforts are critical to maintaining morale and professional satisfaction in challenging situations. Addressing these systemic gaps and prioritising teacher support can enhance preparedness, satisfaction, and effectiveness in future educational disruptions.

Conclusion

This report provides a detailed analysis of the home, school, and systemic factors influencing student academic achievement in Dominica. It highlights the persistence of colonial-era practices and their misalignment with modern educational needs. The findings underscore the importance of fostering inclusive and evidence-based reforms to address gaps in teaching practices, school leadership, infrastructure, and resource allocation while promoting equity and engagement.

Students benefit from widespread access to early education but face challenges in engagement, literacy, and access to extracurricular activities. Teachers and principals bring extensive experience to their roles, but gaps in professional development, advanced qualifications, and collaborative practices suggest the need for targeted training and recognition. The impact of the

COVID-19 pandemic further highlights systemic vulnerabilities, including inequitable access to technology and the strain on teachers and students in adapting to hybrid learning models.

Addressing these challenges through strength and policies, professional development, resource allocation, and promoting inclusive and innovative practices can enhance educational outcomes in Dominica.

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 specific 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 Dominica. 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). 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 Dominica and the Caribbean region. The research presented here is part of a more extensive study investigating the home and school factors influencing student academic achievement in the Caribbean. Based on data from 2022, this report seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. Develop demographic profiles of Dominica's primary and secondary students, teachers and principals.
2. Provide descriptions of several factors that influence Dominica 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. In addition to the objectives above, the study 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 2014 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 et al., 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. (2022) 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. (2017) 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, Asodeh 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 et al. (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 (2019) 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 (2019) 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 Meulen, 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 Muluye (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 Dominica 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 Dominica and resource constraints, including all schools in the study was impractical. Therefore, a sampling plan 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 zone.	Two schools will be selected from each zone.
If schools are small, additional selections may be made.	The sample should encompass former grammar school(s).
The sample should include single-sex schools, including at least one girls' and one boys' school, where possible.	The sample should include single-sex schools, including at least one girls' 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 second and fourth form levels will be included.
Only students in the grade level preceding the level at which primary exit examinations are typically taken 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.	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: Dominican School Sample

DISTRICT	2022	
	Number of Primary Schools	Number of Secondary Schools
North	1	1
South	2	1
East	2	1
West	1	1
TOTAL	6	4

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

In 2022, data were collected from 506 primary school students from 6 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

Sex of Student	2022 (N=506)	
	n	%
Female	256	50.5
Male	258	49
TOTAL	504	99.6

Two hundred and fifty-six females and two hundred and fifty-eight males participated in the study at the primary school level.

Primary Students' Age

Table 4: Distribution of Primary Students by Age

Age of Student	2022 (N=506)	
	n	%
9	8	1.6
10	309	61.1
11	159	31.4
12	23	4.5
No Response	3	.6
TOTAL	506	100

While the ages of three students were not received, 61.1% of the primary school students were ten years old at the time of the data collection, while the others were nine (1.6%), eleven (31.4%) and twelve (4.5%) years old.

Enrolment in Nursery Before Primary School

Table 5: Distribution of Primary Students by Prior Nursery Enrolment

Prior Nursery Enrolment	2022 (N=506)	
	n	%
Yes	472	93.3
No	30	5.9
No Response	4	.8
TOTAL	506	100

Most primary school students (93.3%) attended nursery school before enrolment, while 5.9% did not attend nursery school before primary school.

Summary

The data were collected from 570 primary students, of whom 50.5% were females and 49% were males. These students' ages ranged from nine to twelve. More than 93% of these students attended nursery school before enrolling in primary school.

Secondary School Students

Data were collected from 141 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

Sex of Student	2022 (N=141)	
	n	%
Female	76	53.9
Male	65	46.1
TOTAL	141	100

Data was collected from 141 secondary students. The majority of the responses came from female students, who represented fifty-four percent (54%) of the total number of students.

Secondary Students' Form Level

Table 7: Distribution of Secondary Students by Form Level

Age of Student	2022 (N=141)	
	n	%
Form 2	54	38.3
Form 4	87	61.7
TOTAL	141	100

Thirty-eight percent (38%) of the students were from Form 2, while sixty-two percent (62%) were from Form 4.

Secondary Students' Age

Table 8: Distribution of Secondary Students by Age

Age of Student	2022 (N=141)	
	n	%
12	0	0
13	28	19.9
14	20	14.2
15	45	31.9
16	34	24.1
18	6	4.3
TOTAL	140	99.3

Most students (31.9%) who participated in this study were 15 years old.

Summary

The data were collected from 141 secondary school students, of whom fifty-four percent were females and forty-six percent were males. These students' ages ranged from eleven to eighteen, and most of the participants were between the ages of thirteen (13) and sixteen (16).

COUNTRY PROFILE: TEACHERS

Primary School Teachers

Data were collected from 40 primary school teachers across the six 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

Sex of Teacher	2022 (N=40)	
	n	%
Female	35	87.5
Male	4	10.0
No Response	1	2.5
TOTAL	40	100

Of the forty primary school teachers who participated in this study, approximately eighty-eight percent were females, ten percent were males, and one did not indicate their gender.

Primary Teachers' Years of Teaching Experience

Teachers reported their years in the teaching service; the results can be found in Table 10. The thirty-eight teachers who submitted their years of service had a mean of 11.64 years in the teaching profession and a standard deviation of 8.331. The minimum zero number of years does not imply any years of experience in the teaching profession but rather a period of less than one year.

Table 10: Number of Years Teaching for Primary Teachers

	2022 (N=40)				
	n	Min	Max	Mean	SD
No. Years in Teaching Profession	38	0	40	11.64	8.331

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

	2022 (N=40)				
	n	Min	Max	Mean	SD
No. Years at Current School	35	1	40	8.54	7.709

The maximum number of years in the profession and the number of years at the current school were the same. The maximum number of years at the current school was forty years. The calculated mean was 8.54 years with a standard deviation of 7.709.

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

Qualification	2022 (N=40)	
	N	%
Associate degree	30	75
Bachelor's Degree	2	5
Master's Degree	0	0
Doctorate (EdD)	0	0
Doctorate (PhD)	0	0
Other Qual (e.g. CSEC)	2	5

Seventy-five percent of the primary school teachers had an associate degree, and five percent had bachelor's degrees. While none of the teachers had master's or doctoral degrees, five percent indicated having other degrees and five percent indicated that they were currently pursuing associate 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

Education-Related Qualification	2022 (N=40)	
	n	%
Associate degree	20	50
Bachelor's Degree	1	2.5
Other Qual	1	2.5

In 2022, teachers with qualifications in non-education-related areas held degrees in areas such as French, Business Administration, and Electronics.

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

Professional Status	2022 (N=40)	
	n	%
Trained Graduate	10	25
Trained non-graduate	13	32.5
Untrained graduate	2	5
Untrained non-graduate	10	25
No Response	5	12.5
TOTAL	40	100

Twenty-five percent of the teachers were at the trained graduate level, approximately thirty-three percent were trained non-graduates, and one-quarter were untrained non-graduates.

Level Taught by Primary Teachers

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

Table 15: Level Taught by Primary Teachers

Level	2022 (N=40)	
	n	%
Infants (4 – 7 yrs)	12	30
Lr Juniors (7 – 9 yrs)	10	25
Upp Juniors (9 – 12 yrs)	9	22.5
Other (e.g. Equally Across different levels)	8	20
Missing	1	2.5
Total	40	100

Thirty percent of the teachers reported teaching at the infant's level, one quarter taught at the lower junior's level, and forty-three percent taught at the upper juniors or another level.

Summary

The study highlighted a predominance of females in the workforce, with nearly all respondents indicating teaching experience averaging over a decade. Most teachers had served at their current schools for several years, suggesting stability in school placements. Educational qualifications were concentrated at the associate degree level, with few teachers holding higher degrees and qualifications. Professional training varied, with a significant portion of teachers being trained graduates or trained non-graduates. These findings suggest a relatively experienced and stable teaching workforce, albeit with limited advanced academic qualifications, highlighting potential areas for professional development.

Secondary School Teachers

Data were collected from 51 secondary school teachers across the four 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. The distribution of sex, number of years teaching overall and at the current school, qualifications, professional status and subjects and levels taught can be found in Tables 16 to 23.

Secondary Teachers' Sex

Table 16: Distribution of Secondary Teachers by Sex

Sex of Teacher	2022 (N=51)	
	n	%
Female	42	83.4
Male	9	17.6
TOTAL	51	100

Approximately eighty-three percent of the fifty-one secondary school teachers who participated in this study were females, and eighteen percent were males.

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

	2022 (N=51)				
	n	Min	Max	Mean	SD
No. Years in Teaching Profession	51	0	33	12.33	8.625

The maximum number of years of teaching was 33 years, with a mean of 12.33 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. The number of years ranged from zero (0) to thirty-eight (38) years. The mean number of years was 11.98.

Table 18: Number of Years Teaching at Current School for Secondary Teachers

	2022 (N=51)				
	n	Min	Max	Mean	SD
No. Years at Current School	51	0	33	8.75	7.003

On average, the teachers surveyed have spent approximately nine years at their current school, with a mean of 8.75.

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

Qualification	2022 (N=51)	
	n	%
Associate's degree	0	0
Bachelor's Degree	18	35.2
Master's Degree	5	9.8
Other	0	0

Most of the teachers surveyed indicated that they have a Bachelor's degree, and approximately ten percent indicated that they have a master's degree.

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

Education-Related Qualification	2022 (N=51)	
	n	%
Associate degree	0	0
Bachelor's Degree	9	17.6
Master's Degree	2	3.9
Other Qual	0	0

Only about eighteen percent of the teachers have bachelor's degrees in education. Teachers, however, had qualifications in non-education-related areas, with degrees in areas such as Cultural Studies, Economics, Management, Fine Arts, History, Human Resources 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

Professional Status	2022 (N=51)	
	n	%
Trained Graduate	12	23.5
Trained non-graduate	15	29.4
Untrained Graduate	3	5.9
Untrained non-graduate	16	31.4
Other Professional Status	3	5.9
No Response	2	3.9
TOTAL	51	100

More than half of the teachers indicated that their professional status was that of trained teachers. Approximately 23.5% indicated that they were trained graduate teachers, while twenty-nine percent indicated their status as trained non-graduate teachers.

Subject Areas Taught by Secondary Teachers

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

Table 22: Subject Areas Taught by Secondary Teachers

Subject Area	2022 (N=51)	
	n	%
English	16	31.4
Mathematics	10	19.6
General Studies	4	7.8
Science	12	23.5
Business	3	13.5
Art & Craft	4	7.8
Physical Education	6	11.8
Other Subject	9	17.6

The most popular subjects taught by secondary teachers were English (31.4%) and Science (23.5%)

Level Taught by Secondary Teachers

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

Table 23: Level Taught by Secondary Teachers

Subject Area	2022 (N=51)	
	n	%
Lower Secondary (Forms 1-3)	28	54.9
Upper Secondary (Forms 4-5)	28	54.9
Other Level (Across Levels)	8	15.7

The percentage of teachers who taught lower and upper secondary were split evenly, with 54.9%.

Summary

Data were collected from fifty-one secondary school teachers across the four schools involved in the research in 2022. Approximately eighty-two percent of the forty-one secondary school teachers in this study were females, and eighteen percent were males. On average, the teachers surveyed have spent approximately nine years at their current school, with a mean of 8.75. However, it should be noted that the mean number of years as a secondary school teacher was 12.33

Most of the teachers surveyed indicated that they have a bachelor's degree. While approximately ten percent indicated that they have a master's degree, thirty-five percent indicated that they have a bachelor's degree.

Eighteen percent of the teachers have bachelor's degrees in education, while only ten percent have master's degrees in education. Teachers, however, had qualifications in non-education-related areas, with degrees in areas such as Cultural Studies, Economics, Management, Fine Arts, History, Human Resources and Computer Science.

More than half of the teachers indicated that their professional status was that of trained teachers. Approximately twenty-four percent indicated that they were trained graduate teachers, while twenty-nine percent indicated their status as trained non-graduate teachers. Most teachers taught Math and Science, and the same number of teachers indicated that they taught lower and upper forms.

COUNTRY PROFILE: PRINCIPALS

Primary School Principals

Data were collected from six 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=6)

Sex of Principal	n	%
Female	5	83.3
Male	1	16.7
TOTAL	6	100.0

Most principals who participated in the 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=6)

	n	Min	Max	Mean	SD
No. Years in Teaching Profession	6	16	37	28.00	8.34

All the principals had extensive experience in the teaching profession, from a minimum of 16 years to a maximum of 37 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=6)

	n	Min	Max	Mean	SD
No. Years as Principal	6	1	18	6.33	6.12

The six principals had a wide range of years of experience in the principal position.

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=6)

	n	Min	Max	Mean	SD
No. Years as Principal at Current School	6	1	7	4.33	2.34

The principals had been principals at the school they were currently at for fewer years than they had spent in the principal role, suggesting that some of them had experience as principals at more than 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=6)

Qualification	n	%
Associates Degree	1	16.7
Bachelor's Degree	3	50.00
Master's Degree	2	33.3
TOTAL	6	100.0

Half the principals held a bachelor's degree as their highest qualification, about one-third held a master's, and one principal held an associate's degree.

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=6)

Qualifications/training in school leadership/management?	n	%
Yes	5	83.3
No	1	16.7
TOTAL	6	100

Most principals had school leadership and management qualifications.

Table 30: Highest Level of Training in School Leadership/Management for Primary Principals (N=6)

School Leadership/Management Qualification	n	%
Associate degree	1	16.7
Bachelor's Degree	1	16.7
Master's Degree	2	33.3
Certificate	2	33.3

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

Summary

The data on primary school principals reveals a predominantly female leadership, with all participants having extensive teaching experience, averaging 28 years. Experience as principals varied widely, with an average of six years and many held positions at multiple schools. Educational qualifications among principals ranged from associate to master's degrees, with half holding at least a bachelor's degree. Most principals also had training in school leadership or management, spanning different levels of certification. These findings suggest a seasoned and well-qualified leadership cohort, underscoring the value of formal training in enhancing school management practices.

Secondary School Principals

Three principals returned a completed survey. Due to the small sample size, the results for this section are described but should not be generalised to the larger population of primary school principals in Dominica.

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=3)

Sex of Principal	n	%
Female	2	66.7
No Response	1	33.3
TOTAL	3	100.00

Both principals who responded to this question were female.

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=3)

	n	Min	Max	Mean	SD
No. Years in Teaching Profession	2	33	35	34	1.41

Both principals who responded to this question had over three decades of experience in the teaching profession.

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=3)

	n	Min	Max	Mean	SD
No. Years as Principal	2	4	5	4.5	0.71

Both principals who responded to this question had been principals for about the same time.

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=3)

	n	Min	Max	Mean	SD
No. Years as Principal at Current School	2	5	5	5	0.0

Both principals who responded had been principals at their current school for the same amount of time they had spent in the role, indicating they had only ever been principals at one school.

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=3)

Qualification	n	%
Master's Degree	2	66.7
No Response	1	33.3

Both responding principals' 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=3)

Education-Related Qualification	n	%
Master's Degree	2	66.7
No Response	0	33.3

Both responding principals held degrees in education-related areas: one in Educational Management and the other in Educational Measurement.

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=3)

Qualifications/training in school leadership/management?	n	%
Yes	2	66.7
No Response	1	33.3
TOTAL	3	100

Table 38: Highest Level of Training in School Leadership/Management for Secondary Principals (N=3)

Education-Related Qualification	n	%
Master's Degree	1	33.3
Bachelor's Degree	1	33.3
No Response	1	33.3
TOTAL	3	99.9

The principals in 2022 reported training in Educational Management.

Summary

Most secondary school principals were female, with extensive teaching experience averaging over three decades. Those who responded had served as principals for a similar duration, exclusively at their current schools. Both responding principals held Masters degrees, with qualifications focused on education-related areas such as educational management and measurement. Most principals also reported having training in school leadership and management at varying levels, underscoring the emphasis on formal preparation for administrative roles. These findings reflect a leadership group with significant experience and specialised training, which is critical for effective school management.

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 students' perspectives on important topics in education accurately.

Students' Home Environment

Primary and secondary students were asked about several factors influencing their home environments. These factors include family members living with them at home, items found in their 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 to them at home.

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

Family Member	2022 (N=506)	
	n	%
Mother (including stepmother or foster mother)	423	83.6
Father (including stepfather or foster father)	243	48
Brother(s) (including stepbrothers)	225	44.5
Sister(s) (including stepsisters)	215	42.5
Grandparent(s)	162	32.0
Others (e.g. cousin)	129	25.5

Most students (83.6%) lived with their mothers, 48% with their fathers, 44.5% with their brothers, and 42.5% with their sisters.

Table 40: Primary Students' Mothers' Employment Status

Mother employment status	2022 (N=506)	
	n	%
She is working full-time for pay	278	54.9
She is working part-time for pay	101	20
She is not working, but looking for a job	62	12.3
Other (e.g. home duties; retired)	41	8.1
No Response	24	4.7
TOTAL	506	100

54.9% of primary students' mothers worked full-time, while 20% worked part-time, and 12.3% were unemployed but were job-searching.

Table 41: Primary Students' Fathers' Employment Status

Father employment status	2022 (N=506)	
	n	%
He is working full-time for pay	330	65.2
He is working part-time for pay	86	17
He is not working, but looking for a job	22	4.3
Other (e.g. home duties; retired)	29	6.7
No Response	39	7.7
TOTAL	506	100

Most primary students' fathers (65.2%) worked for full-time pay, while 17% worked part-time, and 4.3% were unemployed but looking for jobs.

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. Most primary students (90.1%) had access to the internet at home, while 7.9% of students did not have access to the internet. Most primary students (74.3%) had access to electronic tablets, 63.6% had access to smart TVs, and 54.7% had access to smartphones. 37.4% of students had access to laptops, while 11.7% of students had access to desktop computers.

Table 42: Primary Students' Access to the Internet at Home

Regular internet access at home	2022 (N=506)	
	n	%
Yes	456	90.1
No	40	7.9
No Response	10	2
TOTAL	506	100

Table 43: Primary Students' Access to Electronic Devices at Home

Regular access to a device at home	2022 (N=506)	
	n	%
Smartphone	277	54.7
Electronic tablet	376	74.3
Laptop computer	189	37.4
Desktop computer	59	11.7
Smart TV	322	63.6
Other	28	5.5

Table 44: Primary Students' Access to Other Resources at Home

Regular access to	2022 (N=506)	
	n	%
A computer you can use for schoolwork	246	48.6
A desk to study at	244	48.2
A dictionary	376	74.3
A dishwasher (or washing machine)	295	58.3
A DVD player	159	31.4
A guest room	124	24.5
Internet access	410	81.0
Microwave oven	312	61.7
A musical instrument	191	37.7
A quiet place to study	256	50.6
A room of your own	289	57.1
Books of poetry	184	36.4
Books to help with your schoolwork	390	77.1
Classic literature (e.g. Roald Dahl; Dr Seuss)	115	22.7
Educational software	207	40.9
Puzzles and Educational toys	280	55.3
Technical reference books or manuals	175	34.6
Works of art (e.g., paintings)	281	55.5

Most primary students (81%) had access to the Internet at home. 77.1% had books to help them with their schoolwork, and 74.3% had access to a dictionary. Among the least recorded resources were access to classic literature (22.7%), a guest room (24.5%), and DVD players (31.4%).

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

Mode of travel	2022 (N=506)	
	n	%
Walking	203	40.1
By public transport (e.g. bus, minibus, route taxi)	110	21.7
By private vehicle (e.g. parent's car; with a friend)	130	25.7
Cycling (e.g. bicycle)	3	0.6
Other	11	2.2
TOTAL	457	90.3

Most students (40.1%) walk to school, 25.7% travel by private vehicle and 21.7% by public transport.

Primary Students' Leisure Activities

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

Table 46: Primary Students' Leisure Activities at Home

Leisure activity	2022 (N=506)	
	n	%
Watching TV	380	75.1
Creative writing (e.g. stories, poetry, cartoons)	144	28.5
Watching movies/videos on a device	336	66.4
Listening to music	325	64.2
Playing sports	267	52.8
Reading	258	51.0
Hanging out with friends	281	55.5
Using social media (e.g. Snapchat; Facebook; Twitter; Instagram)	224	44.3
Playing video games	369	72.9
Surfing the Internet	155	30.6
Other	23	4.5

The most popular leisure activities for primary students were watching TV (75.1%), playing video games (72.9%), watching movies or videos on a device (66.4%) and listening to music (64.2%).

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.

Thirty six percent of primary students read non-fiction paper format only, 27.3% read fiction novels in paper format only and 21.3% read comics in paper format only. 20.9% of primary students had between 0 and 10 books in their homes, 26.3% had between 11 and 25 books, 24.5% had between 26 and 100 books, 11.3% had between 101 and 200 books, and 7.3% had between 201 and 500 books.

Table 47: Primary Students' Reading Material and Format

Reading material and format	2022 (N=506)	
	n	%
Novels (Fiction): Paper format ONLY	138	27.3
Novels (Fiction): Electronic format ONLY	76	15
Novels (Fiction): BOTH Paper & Electronic	44	8.7
Other books (e.g. Non-fiction): Paper format ONLY	182	36.0
Other books (e.g. Non-fiction): Electronic format ONLY	56	11.1
Other books (e.g. Non-fiction): BOTH Paper & Electronic	34	6.7
Magazines: Paper format ONLY	83	16.4
Magazines: Electronic format ONLY	49	9.7
Magazines: BOTH Paper & Electronic	15	3
Comics: Paper format ONLY	108	21.3
Comics: Electronic format ONLY	69	13.6
Comics: BOTH Paper & Electronic	19	3.8
Newspapers: Paper format ONLY	77	15.2
Newspapers: Electronic format ONLY	26	5.1
Newspapers: BOTH Paper & Electronic	10	2
Other	38	7.5

Table 48: Number of Books in Primary Students' Homes

No. of books	2022 (N=506)	
	n	%
0 – 10	106	20.9
11 – 25	133	26.3
26 – 100	124	24.5
101 – 200	57	11.3
201 – 500	37	7.3
More than 500	46	9.1
No Response	3	.6
TOTAL	506	100

Table 49: Primary Students' Who Are Read to at Home

Does someone read to you at home?	2022 (N=506)	
	n	%
Yes	250	49.4
No	248	49
No Response	8	1.6
TOTAL	506	100

49.4% of primary students were read to at home, while 49% were not read to at home.

Table 50: Person Who Reads to Primary Students at Home

The person who reads to the student	2022 (N=506)	
	n	%
Father (including stepfather or foster father)	108	21.3
Mother (including stepmother or foster mother)	219	43.3
Brother(s) (including stepbrother)	56	11.1
Sister(s) (including stepsister)	76	15
Other relatives (e.g. grandparents; cousins; aunts, uncles)	115	22.7
Other(s) (e.g. friends)	0	0

43.3% of students indicated that their mother read to them at home, 21.3% indicated that their father read to them, and 22.7% indicated that other relatives read to them at home. Other individuals who read to primary students include friends and neighbours.

Table 51: Primary Students' Perception of Reading as a Gender-Specific Activity

Reading is an activity that is for	2022 (N=506)	
	n	%
Girls only	22	4.3
Boys only	14	2.8
Both girls and boys	467	92.3
No Response	3	.6
TOTAL	506	100

Most primary students (92.3%) indicated that reading is for both boys and girls.

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, and students who responded that they do not participate in extracurricular activities were asked to provide a reason for this.

Table 52: Primary Students' Participating in Extra-Curricular Activities

Participate in extra-curricular activities	2022 (N=506)	
	n	%
Yes	369	72.9
No	127	25.1
No Response	10	2
TOTAL	506	100

Most students (72.9%) indicated that they participate in extracurricular activities, while 25.1% indicated that they do not. Primary students reported engaging in a range of activities, including sports, crafts, and dancing. Students who reported not participating in extracurricular activities gave various reasons, including health issues and the distance between their homes and the school.

Summary

Approximately eighty-three percent of primary students' home environment included a maternal figure, while forty-eight percent had a paternal figure. Sixty percent of the students reported that their mothers worked full-time, and sixty-five percent of the fathers worked full-time. Ninety percent of the students had access to the internet in their homes, with seventy-four percent having access to electronic tablets, sixty-three percent having access to smart TVs, and fifty-five percent having access to smartphones. Despite having access to such devices, the percentage of students

who reported reading fiction and nonfiction books, magazines and comics in electronic or both paper and electronic format, did not exceed fifty percent. Additionally, only eleven percent of the students had more than one hundred books at home. Ninety-two percent of the students believe reading is for girls and boys, and eighty-three percent said someone read to them at home. The three most popular leisure activities were watching television, videos or movies on a device, and listening to music. Seventy-three percent of the primary school students took part in extra-curricular activities.

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

Family Member	2022 (N=141)	
	n	%
Mother (including stepmother or foster mother)	113	80.1
Father (including stepfather or foster father)	75	53.2
Brother(s) (including stepbrothers)	68	48.2
Sister(s) (including stepsisters)	59	41.8
Grandparent(s)	30	21.3
Others (e.g. cousin)	22	15.6

Most students (80.1%) indicated living with their mothers, 53.2% with their fathers, 48.2% with their brothers, and 41.8% with their sisters.

Table 54: Secondary Students' Mothers' Employment Status

Mother employment status	2022 (N=141)	
	n	%
She is working full-time for pay	88	62.4
She is working part-time for pay	11	7.8
She is not working, but looking for a job	14	9.9
Other (e.g. home duties; retired)	17	12.1
No Response	11	7.8
TOTAL	141	100

Most students indicated that their mothers were working for full-time pay (62.4%), while 12.1% were occupied otherwise, 9.9% were unemployed but looking for a job, and 7.8% worked part-time.

Table 55: Secondary Students' Fathers' Employment Status

Father employment status	2022 (N=141)	
	n	%
He is working full-time for pay	80	56.7
He is working part time for pay	26	18.4
He is not working, but looking for a job	6	4.3
Other (e.g. home duties; retired)	16	11.3
No Response	13	9
TOTAL	141	100

Most secondary students indicated that their fathers were employed full-time (56.7%), 18.4% indicated that they were working for part-time pay, and 4.3% indicated that their fathers were unemployed but were looking for jobs.

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

Regular internet access at home	2022 (N=141)	
	n	%
Yes	125	88.7
No	15	10.6
No Response	0	0
TOTAL	141	100

Most secondary students (88.7%) had access to the internet at home.

Table 57: Secondary Students' Access to Electronic Devices at Home

Regular access to a device at home	2022 (N=141)	
	n	%
Smartphone	114	80.9
Electronic tablet	88	62.4
Laptop computer	86	63.5
Desktop computer	12	8.5
Smart TV	61	43.3
Other	4	2.8

80.9% of students regularly had access to smartphones, 63.5% had access to laptops, 62.4% had access to electronic tablets, and 43.3% had access to smart TVs.

Table 58: Secondary Students' Access to Other Resources at Home

Regular access to	2022 (N=141)	
	n	%
A computer you can use for schoolwork	87	61.7
A desk to study at	64	45.4
A dictionary	125	88.7
A dishwasher (or washing machine)	69	48.9
A DVD player	29	20.6
A guest room	20	14.2
Internet access	124	87.9
Microwave oven	60	42.6
A musical instrument	46	32.6
A quiet place to study	70	49.6
A room of your own	86	61
Books of poetry	58	41.1
Books to help with your schoolwork	124	87.9
Classic literature (e.g. Roald Dahl; Dr Seuss)	67	47.5
Educational software	57	40.4
Technical reference books or manuals	50	35.5
Works of art (e.g., paintings)	63	44.7

Secondary students indicated they regularly had access to a dictionary (88.7%), the internet, and books to help with schoolwork (87.9%).

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

Mode of travel	2022 (N=141)	
	n	%
Walking	51	20.5
By public transport (e.g. bus, minibus, route taxi)	81	32.5
By private vehicle (e.g. parent's car; with a friend)	96	38.6
Cycling (e.g. bicycle)	3	1.2
Other	4	1.6
No Response	14	5.6
TOTAL	249	100

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

Leisure activity	2022 (N=141)	
	n	%
Watching TV	93	66
Creative writing (e.g. stories, poetry, cartoons)	32	22.7
Watching movies/videos on a device	116	82.3
Listening to music	125	88.7
Playing sports	71	50.4
Reading	73	51.8
Hanging out with friends	74	52.5
Using social media (e.g. Snapchat; Facebook; Twitter; Instagram)	114	80.9
Playing video games	77	54.6
Surfing the Internet	87	61.7
Other	25	17.7

Among the highest leisure activities were listening to music (88.7%), watching movies/videos on a device (82.3%) and using social media (80.9%). Other reported leisure activities include cooking, playing games, dancing, creating videos, doing homework, drawing, eating, gardening, playing piano, sleeping, riding bicycles, studying, swimming and playing with pets.

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.

Table 61: Secondary Students' Reading Material and Format

Reading material and format	2022 (N=141)	
	n	%
Novels (Fiction): Paper format ONLY	14	9.9
Novels (Fiction): Electronic format ONLY	33	23.4
Novels (Fiction): BOTH Paper & Electronic	14	9.9
Other books (e.g. Non-fiction): Paper format ONLY	18	12.8
Other books (e.g. Non-fiction): Electronic format ONLY	25	17.7
Other books (e.g. Non-fiction): BOTH Paper & Electronic	15	10.6
Magazines: Paper format ONLY	41	16.5
Magazines: Electronic format ONLY	14	9.9
Magazines: BOTH Paper & Electronic	9	6.4
Comics: Paper format ONLY	10	7.1
Comics: Electronic format ONLY	28	19.9
Comics: BOTH Paper & Electronic	8	5.7
Newspapers: Paper format ONLY	17	12.1
Newspapers: Electronic format ONLY	6	4.3
Newspapers: BOTH Paper & Electronic	1	.7
Other	5	3.5

Most students reported reading fictional novels in electronic format (23.4%), comics in electronic format (19.9%) and non-fiction books in electronic format only (17.7%). Among the lowest-ranked reading materials were newspapers, both electronic and paper (0.7%), newspaper electronic format (4.3%) and comics, both paper and electronic (5.7%). Other reported reading materials include daily devotionals, documentaries, messages, Manga, poetry, school textbooks and books.

Table 62: Number of Books in Secondary Students' Homes

No. of books	2022 (N=141)	
	n	%
0 – 10	31	22
11 – 25	36	25.5
26 – 100	37	26.2
101 – 200	16	11.3
201 – 500	9	6.4
More than 500	7	5
No Response	5	3.5
TOTAL	141	100

Most students (26.2%) indicated that they had 26-100 books in their homes, 25.5% indicated that they had 11-25 books in their homes, and 22% indicated that they had 0-100 books in their homes.

Table 63: Secondary Students' Read to at Home When in Primary School

Did someone read to you at home when you were in primary school?	2022 (N=141)	
	n	%
Yes	97	68.8
No	44	31.2
No Response	0	0
TOTAL	141	100

68.8% of students indicated that someone read to them in primary school.

Table 64: Person Who Read to Secondary Students at Home when in Primary School

The person who read to the student	2022 (N=141)	
	n	%
Father (including stepfather or foster father)	33	23.4
Mother (including stepmother or foster mother)	83	58.9
Brother(s) (including stepbrother)	21	14.9
Sister(s) (including stepsister)	35	24.8
Other relatives (e.g. grandparents; cousins; aunts, uncles)	47	33.3
Other(s) (e.g. friends)	16	11.3

58.9% of students indicated that their mother read to them when they were in primary school, while 33.3% indicated that other relatives read to them when they were in primary school. Other individuals who read to secondary students include aunts, friends, best friends, grandmothers, and neighbours.

Table 65: Secondary Students' Perception of Reading as a Gender-Specific Activity

Reading is an activity that is for	2022 (N=141)	
	n	%
Girls only	3	2.1
Boys only	0	0
Both girls and boys	138	97.9
No Response	0	0
TOTAL	141	100

Most students (97.9%) indicated that reading is an activity for both boys and girls.

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

Participate in extra-curricular activities	2022 (N=141)	
	n	%
Yes	81	57.4
No	58	41.1
No Response	2	1.4
TOTAL	141	100

57.4% of students participated in extracurricular activities, while 41.1% did not. Students in 2022 reported engaging in various activities, including athletics, basketball, cricket, cheerleading, choir, debate, fencing, football, golf, Interact Club, and netball. Students who reported not participating in extracurricular activities in 2022 gave various reasons, including health problems, after-school activities taking up studying time, extra classes after school, not liking playing sports, being too shy, and not being interested.

Summary

Approximately eighty percent of secondary students' home environments included a maternal figure predominantly, with only fifty-three percent having a paternal figure. Over forty percent of the students reported living with brothers (or stepbrothers) and sisters (or stepsisters). Approximately twenty percent of students live with their grandparents. Approximately sixty percent of the students reported that their mothers worked full-time, and fifty-seven percent of the fathers worked full-time. Approximately sixty percent of students said they travel to school by private transport.

Many students indicated that they had access to the internet at home. Approximately eighty-nine percent of the students had access to the internet in their homes, with over eighty percent having access to a smartphone. Approximately sixty percent of students indicated they had a computer

they could use for schoolwork. Over 60% of students had access to a laptop and smart TV. About sixty-two percent had access to an electronic tablet and nine percent to a desktop computer.

Other resources identified at home included:

1. Approximately eighty- nine percent of students indicated that they had a dictionary at home.
2. Over forty-eight students indicated that their homes had dishwashers or washing machines and books to help with homework.
3. Approximately forty percent of students indicated that their homes contain works of art, musical instruments, educational software, and classic literature.
4. Approximately forty-two percent of students indicated that their home has a microwave.

It should be noted that the secondary students from Dominica spent most of their leisure time listening to music (89%), watching movies (82.3%), watching TV (66%), using social media (80.9%), and surfing the internet (61.7%). Only fifty-seven percent of students indicated that they participate in extracurricular activities, while only about fifty-two percent of students reported reading in their leisure time.

Despite having access to electronic devices, the percentage of students who reported reading fiction and nonfiction books, magazines and comics in both paper and electronic format, did not exceed ten percent. It was significant to note that more students indicated that they read more non-fiction novels and newspapers in paper format than electronic (twenty- five percent)

In addition, only eleven percent of the students indicated they had more than one hundred books at home. Ninety-eight percent of the students believe reading is for both girls and boys. Also, approximately sixty-eight percent of the students indicated that someone at home read to them at primary school and that their mother/stepmother/foster mother was the one who predominantly read to them (fifty-eight percent).

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

Statement	2022 (N=506)				
	Responses (%)				
	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know	No Response	Total
Going to school will help me get a good job when I am older.	92.1	1.8	3.8	2.4	100
School is fun.	67.6	14.8	14.2	3.4	100
I wish we didn't have to go to school at all.	17.2	64.2	14.2	4.3	100
I would rather stay at home than go to school.	19.2	53.8	21.1	5.9	100
I would rather go to the doctor or dentist than go to school.	12.3	68.4	15.8	3.6	100
Learning new things at school is fun.	82.4	6.3	7.5	3.8	100
In school all we ever do is work, work, work.	47.2	40.9	8.3	3.6	100
School will help me know many things.	88.3	4	4.2	3.6	100
School will help me think better.	83	4.5	9.9	2.6	100
School will get me prepared for the future.	80.	4.7	11.7	3.6	100
School is boring.	22.1	59.5	15.6	2.8	100
I don't like school.	14.4	65.6	14.4	5.5	100
I like to do schoolwork.	54.7	25.9	15.8	3.6	100
I will never use what I learn at school.	11.1	72.7	10.3	5.9	100
School is like a prison.	28.1	51.8	15.2	4.9	100
I would rather be at school than playing video games	46.8	31.8	17	4.3	100
I hate to do schoolwork.	18.2	61.7	15.6	4.5	100
I would rather be at school than at home watching T.V.	49.6	31.2	14.8	4.3	100
I don't need school to get a job.	14	74.7	8.5	2.8	100
I like all the different things we do at school.	79.4	9.5	7.3	3.8	100
What I learn at school is good for my brain.	88.3	3.8	5.9	2.	100
School is important for everyone.	86.2	4.5	6.7	2.6	100
I will never use what I learn at school	11.1	72.7	10.3	5.9	100
I would rather be at home alone than at school.	21.1	62.8	12.8	3.2	100

Summary

Ninety-two percent of the primary school students believed school would help them gain employment. Although, fourteen percent of the students believed that schooling was not necessary

to gain employment. Sixty-seven percent of them found school fun, but seventeen percent wished they did not have to attend school entirely. Fourteen percent of the students did not like school, and nineteen percent preferred to stay at home rather than attend school. Forty-seven percent of students perceived school as strictly about getting work done. Despite this perception, eighty-two percent of the students enjoyed learning new things at school, and eighty percent believed that school was helpful in preparation for the future.

Primary Students' Perception of the School Environment

One of the research objectives was 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 selected the option that best reflected 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. For this report, the percentage of students selecting each option for each item is presented in Table 68, offering an overview of the proportions of primary school students' responses. Some students circled more than one response, which was classified as "ambivalent" in the table below.

Table 68: Primary Students' Responses on School Climate Survey

Statement	2022 (N=506)
	Responses (%)
From what I can tell, this school is	
A great place for people to visit.	64
An okay place for people to visit.	30.6
Not a place people want to visit.	4.7
In my experience, at this school	
Everything works or gets fixed quickly.	37
A few things are broken, but mostly things here work.	52.2
A lot of things are broken.	9.5
Ambivalent	.4
When I look around at this school I see	
Lots of colour and kids' work is up everywhere.	49.2
Some colour and kids' work is up in some places.	34.6
Mostly blank walls.	14.6
Ambivalent	.4
Most of the students at this school	
Help the teachers and other kids make the school clean and nice to look at.	40.9

Keep the school clean because we would get in trouble if we did not.	32.6
Don't keep the school pretty and clean even when teachers tell us to.	24.3
Ambivalent	.6
My teacher spends time with other teachers	
Planning, talking and teaching together often.	50.2
Talking mostly at recess or school events.	29.4
Only at lunch or not at all.	18
Ambivalent	.4
When I am at school, I feel like	
The teachers, classmates, and I are like a family.	53.4
I am part of a good school, but not really a family.	36.6
No one cares about me at this school.	8.7
Ambivalent	.2
At this school	
Students all get along no matter what they look like or where they are from.	32.8
Students who are alike or friends get along.	33.6
A lot of students don't get along.	32.8
Ambivalent	.2
The popular students at this school	
Are nice to the other students.	31.4
Are nice to the other popular students.	18.8
Think they are better and are often mean to others.	42.9
Ambivalent	.4
In my class	
We make a lot of the decisions along with the teacher.	32.2
The teacher lets us choose sometimes.	41.7
The teacher makes all the decisions.	32.9
Ambivalent	.2
In my class	
There are lots of classroom jobs and we all take turns doing them.	34.4
There are a few jobs for students in the class.	37.5
Students only do classroom jobs because they have to or have gotten in trouble.	23.7
Ambivalent	.2
School events such as games, plays, performances, meetings, or conferences are attended by	
Lots of people.	54
Some people who care about that event.	33.2
Not many people.	10.5
Ambivalent	.4
At this school, I feel safe	
Everywhere in the school.	47.4
Only in my classroom.	24.3
Some days and not other days.	26.1
Ambivalent	.2
At this school	

Many students are in leadership roles in and out of class.	26.5
A few students are picked by the teachers to be leaders.	45.8
There are few or no students in leadership roles.	25.1
Ambivalent	.2
At this school	
The students and teachers from different classrooms work together on many projects.	30.4
The students work together on projects in their class.	49
Students do not work together on projects.	17.8
Ambivalent	1
In my class, the rules	
Are clear and help the kids get along.	36.8
Are clear and keep the kids from misbehaving.	37
Are not clear and the kids are afraid of doing something to make the teacher angry.	24.5
Ambivalent	.6
When students break rules	
The teacher gives them a fair consequence and helps them understand why.	43.9
The teacher gives consequences sometimes.	30
The teacher gets upset at the students publicly.	23.7
Ambivalent	.3
In my judgment, I would say that	
I am learning to be more responsible every day because of my teacher.	59.7
I am learning to do what the teacher wants.	18.2
I feel like if I did what I wanted to do, I would get in trouble.	20
Ambivalent	.2
I would say that	
I can see clear evidence that my teacher respects and cares about me.	40.5
When I show my teacher respect, he/she shows me respect.	34.4
I try to respect my teacher, but sometimes I feel like I am not respected.	22.3
Ambivalent	.8
In my class	
Things run smoothly because the teacher makes things very clear.	41.9
Things run pretty well because the teacher has a lot of control.	26.9
A lot of the time things do not run smoothly.	29.2
Ambivalent	.2
When it comes to grades and assignments	
What it takes to get a good grade is very clear to me.	52.2
Most of the time I understand what is expected.	28.5
Often, I am confused as to why I get the grades I do.	17.6
Ambivalent	.4
What is important in my class is	
How much we try and the effort we put into our work.	52.2
Getting right answers and good grades.	29.6
Doing what makes the teacher happy.	15.8
Ambivalent	.2

I would describe the work in my class as	
Active, hands-on and interesting.	46
Interesting but mostly out of the book.	28.9
Mostly worksheets and the teacher talking.	21.9
Ambivalent	.8
The work in my class	
Makes me think and challenges me.	52.4
Is mostly about remembering what the teacher or textbook says	31.2
Is mostly about keeping us all busy	12.6
Ambivalent	1.6
At this school when a student uses mean language	
Other students point out to them that it is not right.	36.4
Sometimes they get in trouble from an adult.	42.1
Usually nothing happens to them, so they keep doing it.	18.2
Ambivalent	1.4
At this school	
I trust and can talk to most of the adults.	41.9
There are one or two adults that I can trust to talk to, but not many.	36
I do not feel like I can be honest with the adults at the school.	19.6
On the playground	
We have peer mediators and/or “Peacemakers” that help the students solve their own problems.	34.2
We have peer mediators and/or “Peacemakers,” but they mostly just get kids in trouble.	22.1
There are only adults to supervise.	38.7
Ambivalent	.4
The best way to describe how I feel about this school is	
I am very proud to be a student here.	47
I like this school.	32.8
This school is okay, but I would rather be at another school.	17.2
Ambivalent	.8
My parents	
Feel welcome to come to the school.	46.4
Mostly just come to school for events that are expected such as parent-teacher conferences.	33.4
Don’t come to the school very often.	17.4
Ambivalent	.8
At this school	
We have lots of guests, visitors, and volunteers.	45.7
We have a few guests, visitors and volunteers.	35
There are not many guests, visitors or volunteers.	17.2
Ambivalent	.2

Summary

Sixty-four percent of the students felt that their school was a great place to visit, and thirty-seven percent believed that everything worked well or got fixed quickly. Forty-nine percent of the

students acknowledged that many colours and children's work were on display at their school. Forty-one percent of the students indicated that teachers and students helped keep the school clean and pleasant to look at.

Fifty-one percent of the students felt they were part of a family with their teachers and classmates, and fifty-three percent felt like teachers at that school planned and worked together. Thirty-three percent of the students also indicated that students in their school got along with each other, oblivious of physical features and origin. Thirty-one percent of students believed that popular students at their school were nice to others, and fifty-three percent of the students were proud to belong to their school.

Thirty percent of the students acknowledged their involvement in the decision-making process at their school with the teachers, while forty-two percent indicated the existence of numerous class jobs and duties that they got a turn to partake in. Forty-seven percent of the students felt safe everywhere in their school, and sixty percent believed that things ran smoothly because teachers made their expectations abundantly clear. Fifty-two percent of the students revealed they knew exactly what was required to get good grades in assignments and other tasks. Fifty-two percent of the students suggested that class work was active, hands-on and interesting.

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

Statement	2022 (N=141)				
	Responses (%)				
	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know	No Response	Total
Going to school will help me get a good job when I am older.	78.7	8.5	9.2	3.5	100
School is fun.	40.4	31.2	26.2	2.1	100
I wish we didn't have to go to school at all.	24.8	56.7	17	1.4	100
I would rather stay at home than go to school.	24.8	58.2	14.9	2.1	100
I would rather go to the doctor or dentist than go to school.	9.9	75.2	12.1	2.8	100

Learning new things at school is fun.	81.6	3.5	12.8	2.1	100
In school all we ever do is work, work, work.	61.7	29.1	7.1	2.1	100
School will help me know many things.	82.3	8.5	7.1	2.1	100
School will help me think better.	67.4	16.3	13.5	2.8	100
School will get me prepared for the future.	75.2	8.5	13.5	2.8	100
School is boring.	42.6	27.7	26.2	3.5	100
I don't like school.	25.5	51.1	20.6	2.8	100
I like to do schoolwork.	28.4	44	24.1	3.5	100
I will never use what I learn at school.	5.7	72.3	20.6	1.4	100
School is like a prison.	53.9	30.5	13.3	1.2	100
I would rather be at school than playing video games	39.8	39.0	12.8	2.8	100
I hate to do schoolwork.	27.7	48.2	21.3	2.8	100
I would rather be at school than at home watching T.V.	46.1	36.9	15.6	1.4	100
I don't need school to get a job.	18.4	66	14.2	1.4	100
I like all the different things we do at school.	59.6	17.7	18.4	4.3	100
What I learn at school is good for my brain.	73	5.7	17	4.3	100
School is important for everyone.	78	12.1	7.8	2.1	100
I would rather be at home alone than at school.	32.6	51.8	13.5		100

Summary

In 2022, of the 23 statements about school, most secondary students responded positively to the positive statements about school. Thirteen of the fifteen positive statements received over 67 percent of students agreeing to the statements. Approximately ninety- six percent of the students indicated that “going to school will help me get a good job when I am older”, and about ninety-four percent of students indicated that “school will help me know many things” and “school will help prepare for the future.”

It should be noted that for the eight negative statements about school, most students generally disagreed with most of them, except approximately fifty-one percent of the students indicated that “School is like a prison” and forty-three percent indicated that “School is boring.”

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

Statement	2022 (N=141)
	Responses (%)
From what I can tell, this school is	
A great place for people to visit.	29.8
An okay place for people to visit.	60.3
Not a place people want to visit.	7.8
In my experience, at this school	
Everything works or gets fixed quickly.	9.2
A few things are broken, but mostly things here work.	65.2
A lot of things are broken.	22.7
When I look around at this school I see	
Lots of colour and kids' work is up everywhere.	20.6
Some colour and kids' work is up in some places.	52.5
Mostly blank walls.	22.7
Most of the students at this school	
Help the teachers and other kids make the school clean and nice to look at.	16.3
Keep the school clean because we would get in trouble if we did not.	33.3
Don't keep the school pretty and clean even when teachers tell us to.	45.4
My teacher spends time with other teachers	
Planning, talking and teaching together often.	48.9
Talking mostly at recess or school events.	38.3
Only at lunch or not at all.	4.3
When I am at school, I feel like	
The teachers, classmates, and I are like a family.	22.7
I am part of a good school, but not really a family.	53.9
No one cares about me at this school.	15.6
At this school	
Students all get along no matter what they look like or where they are from.	17
Students who are alike or friends get along.	44
A lot of students don't get along.	32.6
The popular students at this school	
Are nice to the other students.	28.4
Are nice to the other popular students.	14.2
Think they are better and are often mean to others.	46.1

In my class	
We make a lot of the decisions along with the teacher.	37.6
The teacher lets us choose sometimes.	41.8
The teacher makes all the decisions.	12.1
In my class	
There are lots of classroom jobs and we all take turns doing them.	12.1
There are a few jobs for students in the class.	39.7
Students only do classroom jobs because they have to or have gotten in trouble.	36.2
School events such as games, plays, performances, meetings, or conferences are attended by	
Lots of people.	35.5
Some people who care about that event.	38.3
Not many people.	14.9
At this school, I feel safe	
Everywhere in the school.	29.8
Only in my classroom.	14.2
Some days and not other days.	46.1
At this school	
Many students are in leadership roles in and out of class.	28.4
A few students are picked by the teachers to be leaders.	42.6
There are few or no students in leadership roles.	19.1
At this school	
The students and teachers from different classrooms work together on many projects.	29.1
The students work together on projects in their class.	53.2
Students do not work together on projects.	7.8
In my class, the rules	
Are clear and help the kids get along.	29.8
Are clear and keep the kids from misbehaving.	39.7
Are not clear and the kids are afraid of doing something to make the teacher angry.	20.6
When students break rules	
The teacher gives them a fair consequence and helps them understand why.	36.2
The teacher gives consequences sometimes.	33.3
The teacher gets upset at the students publicly.	21.3
In my judgment, I would say that	
I am learning to be more responsible every day because of my teacher.	49.6
I am learning to do what the teacher wants.	10.6
I feel like if I did what I wanted to do, I would get in trouble.	26.2
I would say that	
I can see clear evidence that my teacher respects and cares about me.	36.9
When I show my teacher respect, he/she shows me respect.	31.2
I try to respect my teacher, but sometimes I feel like I am not respected.	20.6
In my class	
Things run smoothly because the teacher makes things very clear.	29.8
Things run pretty well because the teacher has a lot of control.	30.5
A lot of the time things do not run smoothly.	27

When it comes to grades and assignments	
What it takes to get a good grade is very clear to me.	29.8
Most of the time I understand what is expected.	41.8
Often, I am confused as to why I get the grades I do.	17
What is important in my class is	
How much we try and the effort we put into our work.	45.4
Getting right answers and good grades.	38.3
Doing what makes the teacher happy.	5
I would describe the work in my class as	
Active, hands-on and interesting.	34.8
Interesting but mostly out of the book.	24.1
Mostly worksheets and the teacher talking.	29.1
The work in my class	
Makes me think and challenges me.	44.7
Is mostly about remembering what the teacher or textbook says	34.8
Is mostly about keeping us all busy	9.9
At this school when a student uses mean language	
Other students point out to them that it is not right.	18.4
Sometimes they get in trouble from an adult.	44.7
Usually nothing happens to them, so they keep doing it.	24.8
At this school	
I trust and can talk to most of the adults.	19.1
There are one or two adults that I can trust to talk to, but not many.	38.3
I do not feel like I can be honest with the adults at the school.	29.1
On the playground	
We have peer mediators and/or "Peacemakers" that help the students solve their own problems.	27.7
We have peer mediators and/or "Peacemakers," but they mostly just get kids in trouble.	12.1
There are only adults to supervise.	39.7
The best way to describe how I feel about this school is	
I am very proud to be a student here.	30.5
I like this school.	40.4
This school is okay, but I would rather be at another school.	16.3
My parents	
Feel welcome to come to the school.	36.2
Mostly just come to school for events that are expected such as parent-teacher conferences.	34.8
Don't come to the school very often.	17.7
At this school	
We have lots of guests, visitors, and volunteers.	22
We have a few guests, visitors and volunteers.	44.7
There are not many guests, visitors or volunteers.	22

Summary

Sixty percent of the secondary students described their school as an okay place for people to visit, while sixty-five percent indicated that few things are broken in the school. However, forty-five percent of students indicated that most students do not keep the school pretty and clean, even when the teacher tells them to.

It should be noted that fifty-three percent of the students indicated that they feel part of a good school but not really a family. Approximately forty-four percent of students indicated students who are alike or friends get along; however, thirty-three percent of students indicated that a lot of students do not get along. Approximately forty-six percent of students indicated that the popular students think they are better and are often mean to others.

Forty percent of students indicated that the rules are clear and keep the kids from misbehaving. At the same time, thirty-six percent indicated that the teachers give them a fair consequence and helps them to understand why when the rules are broken. Thirty percent of the students further indicated that things run well because the teacher has a lot of control.

Approximately forty-five percent of students indicated that what is important in their class is how much the students try and the effort put into their work. Twenty-four of the students describe the work in their class as interesting, but mainly from the textbooks. Thirty-four percent of the students indicate that the work in the class is mostly about remembering what the teacher or textbook says. While forty-four percent indicated the work makes them think and challenges them.

Approximately forty-five percent of the students indicated that when students use mean language, sometimes they get in trouble from an adult. Approximately thirty-eight percent of the students indicated that “There are one or two adults that I can trust to talk to, but not many”. Only about thirty percent of the students indicated that they are proud to be a student of their school. Only, about thirty-six percent of the students indicate that their parents feel welcome to come to the school. While forty – four percent of the students indicated that at the school they have a few visitors, guest 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.

Primary Teachers' Classroom Practices

Primary Teachers' Frequency of Using Technology for Various Purposes

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

Approximately forty-eight percent of the teachers reported that they often access lessons from the internet and ninety-three percent got information for lessons using the technology. However, fifty percent of teachers never used digital cameras to enhance lessons, nearly sixty-three percent never used scanners, and forty-three percent never used LCD projectors to engage their students in lessons. Moreover, forty-percent of the primary teachers never engaged their students in online discussion using resources such as blogs.

Table 71: Primary Teachers' Frequency of Use of Technology for Specific Purposes

Purpose of using Technology	2022 (N=40)					
	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	47.5	27.5	22.5	2.5	0	100
Create instructional materials	67.5	25	2.5	0	5	100
Design multimedia presentations (e.g. PowerPoint)	35	30	25	7.5	2.5	100
Engage students in online discussion (e.g., blogs, chat rooms, social networking sites)	15	10	27.5	40	7.5	100
Formulate tests for students.	90	7.5	0	2.5	0	100
Get information from the Internet for use in lessons	92.5	5	2.5	0	0	100
Have students use the internet for researching subject content	0	42.5	12.5	2.5	0	100
Post homework assignments online	40	37.5	20	0	2.5	100

Prepare homework assignments	75	15	10	0	0	100
Produce handouts for students	25	50	20	2.5	2.5	100
Record student grades	87.5	5.0	5.0	0	2.5	100
Send lesson information, assignments and other communication to students by email	32.5	25	12.5	22.5	7.5	100
Share material, ideas and/or information with other teachers	42.5	30	17.5	5	5	100
Use digital cameras to enhance lessons	12.5	12.5	20	50	5	100
Use LCD projectors to present lessons	7.5	12.5	35	42.5	2.5	100
Use scanners to prepare for lessons	2.5	5	22.5	62.5	7.5	100
Use skill games to reinforce concepts taught	50	32.5	15	0	2.5	100
Use software for remediation of basic skills	25	25	27.5	15	7.5	100
Use software to teach concepts	30	37.5	12.5	12.5	7.5	100
Use videos or DVS to teach concepts	70	17.5	2.5	10	0	100

Teachers were provided with a list of factors that impact the frequency of technology use in teaching and learning and 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.

Table 72: Factors Affecting the Use of Technology by Primary Teachers

Purpose of using Technology	2022 (N=40)					
	Extent of Influence (% of sample)					
	To a Great Extent	To a Moderate Extent	A Little Bit	Not At All	No Response	TOTAL
Not enough computers available	17.5	30	22.5	30	0	100
Unreliable computers	25	20	32.5	22.5	0	100
Internet not easily accessible	40	25	17.5	15	2.5	100
Lack of good instructional software	15	22.5	32.5	20	10	100
Inadequate training opportunities	20	20	27.5	32.5	0	100
Lack of administrative support	5	10	32.5	47.5	5	100
Lack of support regarding ways to integrate technology into the curriculum	7.5	27.5	30	32.5	2.5	100
Lack of technical support or advice	10	22.5	30	35	2.5	100
Lack of relevant computer skills	12.5	15	27.5	40	5	100
Inadequate amount of computer peripherals	20	20	27.5	27.5	5	100
Lack of knowledge in ways to integrate technology to enhance the curriculum	7.5	15	27.5	45	5	100
Use of technology not integrated into curriculum documents	25	15	27.5	27.5	5	100

Eighteen percent of teachers found that insufficient availability of computers and forty-percent reported internet access not being easy greatly impacted the frequency with which technology was used in teaching and learning. Only fifteen percent reported that lack of good instructional software also had a great impact. While forty percent acknowledged that internet not being easily accessible had a great impact, eight percent believed that lack of knowledge in ways to integrate technology to enhance the curriculum have a great impact. Forty percent indicated that lack of relevant computer skills did not have an impact at all, but rather twenty percent reported that inadequate amount of computer peripherals had a great impact on the frequency of technology use.

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 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 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.

Table 73: Primary Teachers' Reported Student Engagement in Activities

Activity	2022 (N=40)					
	Frequency of Engagement (%)					TOTAL
	Often 8+times	Sometimes 3-7 times	Seldom 1-2 times	Never	No Response	
Worked on projects that took a week or longer	12.5	60	22.5	5	0	100
Worked in small groups to come up with solutions or approaches to problems.	17.5	27.5	40	12.5	2.5	100
Engaged in a writing activity in which they were expected to explain their thinking or reasoning at some length	40	40	17.5	0	0	100
Suggested or helped plan classroom activities	22.5	42.5	22.5	10	2.5	100
Worked individually answering questions in textbooks or worksheets	82.5	15	0	0	2.5	100
Led discussions	42.5	30	20	5	2.5	100
Gave presentations	37.5	42.5	12.5	5	2.5	100

Worked in small groups to complete an assignment	25	25	30	15	5	100
Worked on their own assignment at their own desks.	92.5	5	0	2.5	0	100
Wrote in a journal	32.5	15	25	22.5	5	100
Participated in interactive/hands-on classroom activities	72.5	22.5	5	0	0	100
Conducted research for projects via the Internet	52.5	30	10	5	2.5	100
Worked on individual tasks for portfolios	27.5	17.5	30	20	5	100
Engaged in whole-class activities	90	7.5	0	0	2.5	100
Demonstrated their work to others (teachers/students)	65	27.5	2.5	0	5	100

Table 74: Primary Teachers' Reported Use of Democratic Instructional Practices

Practice	2022 (N=40)				
	Frequency of Use (%)				
	Never Uses	Uses	Unsure / Not Applicable	No Response	TOTAL
Used didactic questions (Who? What? Where? When? How?)	0	97.5	0	2.5	100
Used demonstrations	0	95	0	5	100
Used guided methods (e.g. Guided reading)	0	97.5	0	2.5	100
Used shared methods (e.g. Shared writing)	5	85	0	10	100
Used journals	17.5	77.5	0	5	100
Used learning logs	25	57.5	7.5	10	100
Used research projects	10	85	2.5	2.5	100
Used learning centres	22.5	67.5	2.5	7.5	100
Used learning contracts	32.5	52.5	7.5	7.5	100
Used differentiated instruction	0	92.5	0	7.5	100
Used problem-solving approaches	0	92.5	2.5	5	100
Used case-based method	10	77.5	7.5	5	100
Used reflective discussions	2.5	95	0	2.5	100
Used simulations	10	77.5	5	7.5	100
Used field observation	15	75	5	5	100
Used role play	0	95	0	5	100
Used service learning	15	52.5	10	22.5	100
Used cooperative and collaborative learning	0	97.5	0	2.5	100
Used controversial discussions	17.5	72.5	5	5	100
Used debates	40	50	2.5	7.5	100
Used peer partner learning	5	90	0	5	100

Told the students the objectives of an assessment activity	7.5	87.5	2.5	2.5	100
Allowed the students to rate their own work before you graded it	20	72.5	2.5	5	100
Allowed the students to engage in peer assessment activities	15	80	2.5	2.5	100
Taught students' strategies for reading in your subject area	2.5	90	5	2.5	100
Gave time for reading books of own choice	2.5	90	2.5	5	100
Allowed choice of reading material	0	92.5	0	7.5	100
Provided support for struggling readers in your classroom	0	95	0	5	100
Encouraged students to read for pleasure	0	95	0	5	100
Encouraged students to read for information	0	95	0	5	100
(Re)Wrote instructional materials to facilitate diverse reading ability in the classroom	5	85	2.5	7.5	100
Assigned grade- and ability-appropriate open-ended mathematics problems for students to solve	2.5	80	12.5	5	100
Encouraged students to talk about the mathematics that they are learning in the classroom	2.5	77.5	12.5	7.5	100
Led the students in grade and ability-appropriate investigations of mathematics concepts	5	72.5	12.5	10	100
Allowed students to submit mathematics projects and investigations using different modes	7.5	70	15	7.5	100
Allowed students to explain phenomena scientifically	17.5	60	15	7.5	100
Allowed students to evaluate and design scientific enquiry	12.5	70	10	7.5	100
Allowed students to interpret data and evidence scientifically	10	67.5	10	12.5	100
Rewarded positive behaviours with incentives (e.g. stars, stickers)	0	85	5	10	100
Used physical restraint for misbehaving students	45	42.5	2.5	10	100
Threatened to send students out of the classroom if they do not behave	45	45	2.5	7.5	100
Sent home notes to parents about students' good behaviour	20	72.5	2.5	5	100
Called parents about students' misbehaviour	15	80	0	5	100
Worked with students to establish a code of classroom behaviour and consequences for infractions	2.5	90	2.5	5	100

Summary

Primary teachers reported varying levels of student engagement in activities ranging from project-based work and collaborative problems surveyed to independent assignments and hands-on tasks. While traditional practices like textbook exercises and whole-class activities were frequent, more interactive approaches, such as journal writing and research-based projects, showed less consistent

use. Teachers widely employed democratic instructional practices, such as guided and differentiated methods, reflective discussions, and peer assessment, emphasizing student participation and collaboration. However, debates, role play, and controversial discussions were less common and aligned with higher-order critical thinking and active learning. These findings highlight a balance between traditional and student-centred approaches, with opportunities to expand democratic and engagement-driven practices in the primary classroom.

Secondary Teachers' Classroom Practices

Secondary Teachers' Frequency of Using Technology for Various Purposes

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

Table 75: Secondary Teachers' Frequency of Use of Technology for Specific Purposes

Purpose of using Technology	2022 (N=51)					
	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	35.3	29.4	21.6	7.8	5.9	100
Create instructional materials	70.6	21.6	2	0	5.9	100
Design multimedia presentations (e.g. PowerPoint)	60.8	21.6	9.8	5.9	2	100
Engage students in online discussion (e.g., blogs, chat rooms, social networking sites)	35.3	21.6	17.6	19.6	5.9	100
Formulate tests for students.	74.5	19.6	3.9	0	2	100
Get information from the Internet for use in lessons	74.5	19.6	2	0	3.9	100
Have students use the internet for researching subject content	70.6	15.7	9.8	2	2	100
Post homework assignments online	68.6	21.6	5.9	2	2	100
Prepare homework assignments	70.6	19.6	5.9	2	2	100
Produce handouts for students	62.7	19.6	15.7	0	2	100
Record student grades	86.3	9.8	0	0	3.9	100
Send lesson information, assignments and other communication to students by email	43.1	33.3	13.7	3.9	5.9	100
Share material, ideas and/or information with other teachers	56.9	33.3	3.9	3.9	2	100
Use digital cameras to enhance lessons	25.5	13.7	23.5	35.3	2	100
Use LCD projectors to present lessons	9.8	21.6	21.6	43.1	3.9	100

Use scanners to prepare for lessons	5.9	31.4	19.6	41.2	2	100
Use skill games to reinforce concepts taught	35.3	41.2	15.7	3.9	3.9	100
Use software for remediation of basic skills	21.6	27.5	35.3	7.8	7.8	100
Use software to teach concepts	27.5	37.3	21.6	7.8	5.9	100
Use videos or DVDs to teach concepts	51	21.6	5.9	17.6	3.9	100

Approximately seventy percent of the teachers reported that they often use technology to obtain information for lessons, while eighty-six percent indicated that they use technology to record students' grades. Teachers' third most common uses of technology were to create instructional materials and formulate tests, with approximately seventy percent of teachers indicating this. About twenty percent of teachers never engage their students in online discussions through blogs and chat rooms.

Teachers were provided with a list of factors that impact the frequency of technology use in teaching and learning and 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.

Table 76: Factors Affecting the Use of Technology by Secondary Teachers

Influence	2022 (N=51)					
	Extent of Influence (% of sample)					
	To a Great Extent	To a Moderate Extent	A Little Bit	Not at All	No Response	TOTAL
Not enough computers available	47.1	19.6	13.7	13.7	5.9	100
Unreliable computers	35.3	35.3	13.7	11.8	3.9	100
Internet not easily accessible	45.1	29.4	15.7	5.9	3.9	100
Lack of good instructional software	21.6	23.5	35.3	15.7	3.9	100
Inadequate training opportunities	9.8	21.6	37.3	29.4	2	100
Lack of administrative support	7.8	19.6	41.2	27.5	3.9	100
Lack of support regarding ways to integrate technology into the curriculum	3.9	31.4	37.3	25.5	2	100
Lack of technical support or advice	3.9	37.3	27.5	29.4	2	100
Lack of relevant computer skills	5.9	21.6	35.3	35.3	2	100
Inadequate amount of computer peripherals	17.6	25.5	27.5	25.5	3.9	100
Lack of knowledge in ways to integrate technology to enhance the curriculum	5.9	11.8	47.1	33.3	2	100
Use of technology not integrated into curriculum documents	13.7	15.7	37.3	29.4	3.9	100

The most significant factor affecting technology use was the lack of adequate computers at forty-seven percent and the accessibility of the internet, as about forty-five percent of teachers indicated that the internet was not easily accessible.

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

Activity	2022 (N=51)					
	Frequency of Engagement (%)					TOTAL
	Often 8+times	Sometimes 3-7 times	Seldom 1-2 times	Never	No Response	
Worked on projects that took a week or longer	17.6	51	25.5	3.9	2	100
Worked in small groups to come up with solutions or approaches to problems.	23.5	37.3	25.5	5.9	7.8	100
Engaged in a writing activity in which they were expected to explain their thinking or reasoning at some length	35.3	35.3	23.5	3.9	2	100
Suggested or helped plan classroom activities	15.7	45.1	25.5	11.8	2	100
Worked individually answering questions in textbooks or worksheets	58.8	35.3	2	2	2	100
Led discussions	17.6	45.1	29.4	5.9	2	100
Gave presentations	25.5	43.1	29.4	0	2	100
Worked in small groups to complete an assignment	31.4	37.3	27.5	2	2	100
Worked on their own assignment at their own desks.	52.9	25.5	9.8	9.8	2	100
Wrote in a journal	9.8	5.9	21.6	56.9	5.9	100
Participated in interactive/hands-on classroom activities	33.3	33.3	19.7	7.8	5.9	100

Conducted research for projects via the Internet	49	27.5	17.6	3.9	2	100
Worked on individual tasks for portfolios	21.6	29.4	29.4	15.7	3.9	100
Engaged in whole-class activities	58.8	31.4	3.9	3.9	2	100
Demonstrated their work to others (teachers/students)	33.3	43.1	17.6	3.9	2	100

Table 78: Secondary Teachers' Reported Use of Democratic Teaching Practices

Activity	2022 (N=51)						
	Frequency of Use (%)						
	Unsure	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	No Response	TOTAL
Used didactic questions (Who? What? Where? When? How?)	0	0	2	15.7	78.4	3.9	100
Used demonstrations	0	0	2	23.5	72.5	2	100
Used guided methods (e.g. Guided reading)	0	0	2	27.5	68.6	2	100
Used shared methods (e.g. Shared writing)	2	2	3.9	39.2	49	3.9	100
Used journals	3.9	43.1	29.4	15.7	5.9	2	100
Used learning logs	5.9	37.3	27.5	21.6	3.9	3.9	100
Used research projects	0	7.8	7.8	49	33.3	2	100
Used learning centres	3.9	31.4	21.6	29.4	5.9	7.8	100
Used learning contracts	5.9	41.2	29.4	13.7	2	7.8	100
Used differentiated instruction	3.9	3.9	5.9	41.2	41.2	3.9	100
Used problem-solving approaches	0	2	7.8	21.6	66.7	2	100
Used case-based method	3.9	15.7	23.5	27.5	25.5	3.9	100
Used reflective discussions	0	11.8	17.6	37.3	29.4	3.9	100
Used simulations	0	9.8	21.6	31.4	33.3	3.9	100
Used field observation	3.9	27.5	27.5	25.5	13.7	2	100
Used role play	2	21.6	21.6	29.4	19.6	5.9	100
Used service learning	11.8	19.6	25.5	27.5	5.9	9.8	100
Used cooperative and collaborative learning	0	3.9	15.7	27.5	49	3.9	100
Used controversial discussions	5.9	17.6	21.6	33.3	17.6	3.9	100
Used debates	2	37.3	11.8	25.5	19.6	3.9	100
Used peer partner learning	2	5.9	13.7	35.3	41.2	2	100
Told the students the objectives of an assessment activity	3.9	3.9	5.9	17.6	66.7	2	100
Allowed the students to rate their own work before you graded it	0	19.6	29.4	39.2	9.8	2	100
Allowed the students to engage in peer assessment activities	2	3.9	21.6	43.1	27.5	2	100
Taught students' strategies for reading in your subject area	2	15.7	25.5	15.7	39.2	2	100
Provided support for struggling readers in your classroom	5.9	5.9	21.6	23.5	41.2	2	100
Encouraged students to read for pleasure	7.8	7.8	9.8	19.6	52.9	2	100

Encouraged students to read for information	5.9	2	3.9	23.5	60.8	3.9	100
(Re)Wrote instructional materials to facilitate diverse reading ability in the classroom	0	7.8	13.7	37.3	37.3	3.9	100
Rewarded positive behaviours with incentives (e.g. stars, stickers)	0	7.8	17.6	33.3	39.2	2	100
Used physical restraint for misbehaving students	3.9	62.7	13.7	9.8	2	7.8	100
Threatened to send students out of the classroom if they do not behave	0	15.7	25.5	37.3	17.6	3.9	100
Sent home notes to parents about students' good behaviour	5.9	39.2	19.6	23.5	9.8	2	100
Called parents about students' misbehaviour	0	31.4	25.5	27.5	7.8	7.8	100
Worked with students to establish a code of classroom behaviour and consequences for infractions	0	3.9	21.6	37.3	33.3	3.9	100

Teachers indicated that they often worked individually, answering questions in textbooks and worksheets, working on their own assignments at their own desks, and engaging in whole-class activities. They also sometimes suggested or helped plan classroom activities led discussions, gave presentations, and demonstrated their work to others. Additionally, they never wrote in a journal.

Summary

Approximately fifty-three percent of the teachers reported that they often allowed students to work on assignments on their own. At the same time, fifty-eight percent indicated that students are often allowed to work individually, answer questions in textbooks or worksheets, and engage in whole-class activities.

Encouraging students to read for information was often done, with sixty-one percent of teachers indicating this. About forty-three percent of the teachers sometimes allowed demonstration of work to teachers and peers. About forty-one percent of teachers used peer-partner learning, sixty-seven percent often used guided methods, and thirty-seven percent sometimes used reflective discussions.

Approximately thirty-seven percent of the teachers indicated that they 1. Sometimes, I worked with students to establish a code for classroom behaviour and consequences for infractions; 2. Forty-nine percent indicated they often use shared methods, 3. cooperative or collaborative learning, and 4. Sixty-seven percent often told students the objectives of an assessment activity.

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. 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.

Primary Teacher Perspectives on School Leadership

Table 79 outlines the distribution of teacher responses in 2022. The option with the largest proportion of the sample is in bold font.

Table 79: Primary Teachers' Responses on PIMRS Short Form 2022 (N=40)

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	3.1	3.1	12.5	25	21.9	34.4	100
Use data on student performance when developing the school's academic goals	0	9.4	21.9	18.8	15.6	34.4	100
Develop goals that are easily understood and used by teachers in the school	0	9.4	21.9	25	9.4	34.4	100
Communicate the school's mission effectively to members of the school community	0	6.3	18.8	15.6	25	34.4	100
Refer to the school's academic goals when making curricular decisions with teachers	0	3.1	18.8	25	18.8	34.4	100
Ensure that the classroom priorities of teachers are consistent with the goals and direction of the school	3.1	6.3	15.6	25	15.6	34.4	100
Review student work products when evaluating classroom instruction	3.1	6.3	28.1	18.8	9.4	34.4	100
Make clear who is responsible for coordinating the curriculum across grade levels (e.g., the principal, vice principal, or teacher-leaders)	6.3	9.4	12.5	21.9	15.6	34.4	100
Draw upon the results of school-wide testing when making curricular decisions	3.1	3.1	28.1	18.8	12.5	34.4	100

Participate actively in the review of curricular materials	6.3	12.5	18.8	25	3.1	34.4	100
Meet individually with teachers to discuss student progress	6.3	12.5	18.8	18.8	9.4	34.4	100
Use tests and other performance measure to assess progress toward school goals	0	18.8	12.5	12.5	21.9	34.4	100
Encourage teachers to use instructional time for teaching and practicing new skills and concepts	3.1	0	12.5	18.8	31.3	34.4	100
Take time to talk informally with students and teachers during recess and breaks	3.1	9.4	15.6	21.9	15.6	34.4	100
Attend/participate in extra- and co-curricular activities	3.1	3.1	12.5	18.8	28.1	34.4	100
Compliment teachers privately for their efforts or performance	6.3	6.3	15.6	12.5	25	34.4	100
Acknowledge teachers' exceptional performance by writing memos for their personnel files	0	18.8	21.9	12.5	12.5	34.4	100
Create professional growth opportunities for teachers as a reward for special contributions to the school	3.1	15.6	15.6	18.8	12.5	34.4	100
Lead or attend teacher in-service activities concerned with instruction	3.1	15.6	12.5	28.1	6.3	34.4	100
Set aside time at faculty meetings for teachers to share ideas or information from in-service activities	3.1	6.3	18.8	18.8	18.8	34.4	100
Recognise superior student achievement or improvement by seeing in the office the students with their work	9.4	12.5	15.6	15.6	12.5	34.4	100
Contact parents to communicate improved or exemplary student performance or contributions	6.3	6.3	21.9	15.6	15.6	34.4	100

Summary

Primary teachers' perspectives on school leadership revealed varied principal engagement with practices supporting instructional and organisational goals. Teachers highlighted areas of strength, such as principals frequently encouraging the use of instructional time for skill development, participating in extracurricular activities, and privately complementing teachers' efforts. However, areas like reviewing student work, creating professional growth opportunities, and recognising students' achievements were less consistently practised. The findings suggest room for improvement in aligning leadership actions with clearly communicated academic goals and fostering collaboration among staff to enhance school-wide progress and teacher development.

Secondary Teachers' Perspectives on School Leadership

The same tool used to gain information on primary teachers' perspectives of their school's leadership was used for secondary teachers: the teacher's short form of the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS; Hallinger & Wang, 2015). Table 80 outlines the distribution of responses from teachers in 2022. The option with the most significant sample proportion is in bold font.

Table 80: Secondary Teachers' Responses on PIMRS Short Form 2022 (N=51)

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	11.8	37.3	29.4	7.8	13.7	100
Use data on student performance when developing the school's academic goals	2	13.7	39.2	21.6	11.8	11.8	100
Develop goals that are easily understood and used by teachers in the school	3.9	9.8	43.1	19.6	11.8	11.8	100
Communicate the school's mission effectively to members of the school community	3.9	15.7	29.4	25.5	9.8	15.7	100
Refer to the school's academic goals when making curricular decisions with teachers	2	15.7	39.2	19.6	11.8	11.8	100
Ensure that the classroom priorities of teachers are consistent with the goals and direction of the school	3.9	7.8	43.1	23.5	9.8	11.8	100
Review student work products when evaluating classroom instruction	3.9	11.8	49	15.7	7.8	11.8	100
Make clear who is responsible for coordinating the curriculum across grade levels (e.g., the principal, vice principal, or teacher-leaders)	2	7.8	23.5	33.3	21.6	11.8	100
Draw upon the results of school-wide testing when making curricular decisions	2	13.7	39.2	19.6	13.7	11.8	100
Participate actively in the review of curricular materials	2	11.8	33.3	23.5	13.7	15.7	100
Meet individually with teachers to discuss student progress	9.8	21.6	35.3	15.7	5.9	11.8	100
Use tests and other performance measure to assess progress toward school goals	7.8	15.7	31.4	21.6	9.8	13.7	100
Encourage teachers to use instructional time for teaching	2	3.9	33.3	27.5	21.6	11.8	100

and practicing new skills and concepts							
Take time to talk informally with students and teachers during recess and breaks	11.8	17.6	27.5	7.8	23.5	11.8	100
Attend/participate in extra- and co-curricular activities	5.9	13.7	29.4	13.7	25.5	11.8	100
Compliment teachers privately for their efforts or performance	3.9	19.6	19.6	17.6	23.5	15.7	100
Acknowledge teachers' exceptional performance by writing memos for their personnel files	5.9	19.6	41.2	13.7	3.9	15.7	100
Create professional growth opportunities for teachers as a reward for special contributions to the school	9.8	17.6	29.4	17.6	7.8	17.6	100
Lead or attend teacher in-service activities concerned with instruction	7.8	15.7	41.2	15.7	9.8	9.8	100
Set aside time at faculty meetings for teachers to share ideas or information from in-service activities	7.8	3.9	27.5	31.4	19.6	9.8	100
Recognise superior student achievement or improvement by seeing in the office the students with their work	7.8	15.7	31.4	19.6	15.7	9.8	100
Contact parents to communicate improved or exemplary student performance or contributions	5.9	5.9	39.2	21.6	13.7	13.7	100

Summary

Regarding how the principal communicates the school's most important goals to key stakeholders such as teachers, parents, students, etc., approximately thirty-seven percent of secondary teachers expressed that their principal sometimes develops a focused set of annual school-wide goals. While, Forty-three percent of teachers indicated that the goals developed by their principals were sometimes easily understood. However, approximately twenty-nine percent of teachers reported that their principals sometimes communicated the school's mission effectively to members of the school community. Regarding the coordination and control of instruction and curriculum, it should be noted that approximately thirty-three percent of secondary teachers reported that their principals sometimes participate actively in the review of curricular materials. Additionally, only twenty percent of these teachers indicated that their principals frequently draw upon the results of school-wide testing when making curricular decisions regarding the principal's 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 sixteen percent of the teachers indicated that their

principals frequently lead or attend teacher in-service activities concerned with instruction. Additionally, about twenty-nine percent reported that their principals sometimes created professional growth opportunities for teachers as a reward for exceptional contributions to the school. Interestingly, only ten percent of teachers reported that their principals almost always use tests and other performance measures to assess progress toward school goals. While only approximately thirty-nine percent reported that their principals sometimes contacted parents to communicate improved or exemplary student performance or contributions. Additionally, thirty-five percent of teachers indicated that their principals sometimes meet individually with teachers to discuss student progress. While, only twenty-four percent of teachers expressed that their school principal almost always compliments teachers privately for their efforts or performance and thirty-one percent indicated that their principals frequently set aside time at faculty meetings for teachers to share ideas or information from in-service activities.

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=6)

Behavioural Statement	Frequency of Occurrence over the Academic Year (% of principals)					
	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	0.0	0.0	83.3	16.7	0.0
Frame the school's goals in terms of staff responsibilities for meeting them	0.0	0.0	33.3	50.0	16.7	0.0
Use needs assessment or other formal and informal methods to secure staff input on goal development	0.0	0.0	33.3	33.3	16.7	16.7

Use data on student performance when developing the school's academic goals	0.0	0.0	16.7	50.0	33.3	0.0
Develop goals that are easily understood and used by teachers in the school	0.0	0.0	16.7	66.7	16.7	0.0
COMMUNICATE THE SCHOOL GOALS						
Communicate the school's mission effectively to members of the school community	0.0	0.0	16.7	66.7	16.7	0.0
Discuss the school's academic goals with teachers at faculty meetings	0.0	0.0	16.7	33.3	50.0	0.0
Refer to the school's academic goals when making curricular decisions with teachers	0.0	0.0	33.3	50.0	16.7	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	33.3	16.7	50.0	0.0	0.0
Refer to the school's goals or mission in forums with students (e.g., in assemblies or discussions)	0.0	16.7	16.7	50.0	16.7	0.0
SUPERVISE & EVALUATE INSTRUCTION						
Ensure that the classroom priorities of teachers are consistent with the goals and direction of the school	0.0	0.0	33.3	50.0	16.7	0.0
Review student work products when evaluating classroom instruction	0.0	0.0	50.0	33.3	16.7	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	16.7	33.3	50.0	0.0
Point out specific strengths in teacher's instructional practices in post-observation feedback (e.g., in conferences or written evaluations)	0.0	0.0	16.7	33.3	50.0	0.0
Point out specific weaknesses in teacher instructional practices in post-observation feedback (e.g., in conferences or written evaluations)	0.0	0.0	16.7	33.3	50.0	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	0.0	83.3	16.7	0.0
Draw upon the results of school-wide testing when making curricular decisions the school's curricular objectives	0.0	0.0	16.7	50.0	33.3	0.0
Monitor the classroom curriculum to see that it covers the school's curricular objectives	0.0	0.0	0.0	83.3	16.7	0.0

Assess the overlap between the school's curricular objectives and the school's achievement tests	0.0	0.0	0.0	66.7	33.3	0.0
Participate actively in the review of curricular materials	0.0	0.0	33.3	50.0	16.7	0.0
MONITOR STUDENT PROGRESS						
Meet individually with teachers to discuss student progress	0.0	0.0	16.7	50.0	33.3	0.0
Discuss academic performance results with the faculty to identify curricular strengths and weaknesses	0.0	0.0	16.7	50.0	33.3	0.0
Use tests and other performance measure to assess progress toward school goals	0.0	0.0	0.0	83.3	16.7	0.0
Inform teachers of the school's performance results in written form (e.g., in a memo or newsletter)	16.7	0.0	16.7	50.0	16.7	0.0
Inform students of school's academic progress	0.0	0.0	16.7	66.7	16.7	0.0
PROTECT INSTRUCTIONAL TIME						
Limit interruptions of instructional time by public address announcements	0.0	0.0	0.0	66.7	33.3	0.0
Ensure that students are not called to the office during instructional time	0.0	16.7	16.7	66.7	0.0	0.0
Ensure that tardy and truant students suffer specific consequences for missing instructional time	16.7	16.7	50.0	16.7	0.0	0.0
Encourage teachers to use instructional time for teaching and practicing new skills and concepts	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.7	83.3	0.0
Limit the intrusion of extra- and co-curricular activities on instructional time	0.0	16.7	0.0	16.7	50.0	16.7
MAINTAIN HIGH VISIBILITY						
Take time to talk informally with students and teachers during recess and breaks	0.0	16.7	16.7	50.0	16.7	0.0
Visit classrooms to discuss school issues with teachers and students	0.0	0.0	0.0	83.3	16.7	0.0
Attend/participate in extra- and co-curricular activities	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	50.0	0.0
Cover classes for teachers until a late or substitute teacher arrives	0.0	0.0	16.7	0.0	83.3	0.0
Tutor students or provide direct instruction to classes	0.0	0.0	66.7	16.7	16.7	0.0
PROVIDE INCENTIVES FOR TEACHERS						
Reinforce superior performance by teachers in staff meetings, newsletters, and/or memos	0.0	0.0	66.7	33.3	0.0	0.0
Compliment teachers privately for their efforts or performance	0.0	0.0	33.3	16.7	50.0	
Acknowledge teachers' exceptional performance by writing memos for their personnel files	0.0	0.0	66.7	33.3	0.0	0.0

Reward special efforts by teachers with opportunities for professional recognition	0.0	33.3	50.0	16.7	0.0	0.0
Create professional growth opportunities for teachers as a reward for special contributions to the school	0.0	50.0	33.3	16.7	0.0	0.0
PROMOTE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT						
Ensure that in-service activities attended by staff are consistent with the school's goals	0.0	16.7	16.7	50.0	16.7	0.0
Actively support the use in the classroom of skills acquired during in-service training	0.0	0.0	16.7	50.0	16.7	16.7
Obtain the participation of the whole staff in important in-service activities	0.0	0.0	0.0	66.7	33.3	0.0
Lead or attend teacher in-service activities concerned with instruction	0.0	0.0	16.7	50.0	33.3	0.0
Set aside time at faculty meetings for teachers to share ideas or information from in-service activities	0.0	0.0	33.3	16.7	50.0	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	50.0	16.7	33.3	0.0
Use assemblies to honour students for academic accomplishments or for behaviour or citizenship	0.0	0.0	16.7	33.3	50.0	0.0
Recognize superior student achievement or improvement by seeing in the office the students with their work	0.0	33.3	50.0	16.7	16.7	0.0
Contact parents to communicate improved or exemplary student performance or contributions	0.0	33.3	33.3	33.3	0.0	0.0
Support teachers actively in their recognition and/or reward of student contributions to and accomplishments in class	0.0	0.0	16.7	50.0	33.3	0.0

Summary

Primary school principals demonstrated a strong focus on framing and communicating school goals, frequently using data and staff input to guide academic priorities. Their leadership practices emphasise consistency, instructional goals, regular classroom observations, and curricular alignment. Principals actively supported professional development, ensuring training aligned with school objectives and encouraging the application of new skills in classrooms. While they consistently provided feedback to teachers and recognised your achievements through formal and informal means, there was variability in their use of incentives for staff and students. These

findings reflect a commitment to instructional leadership, with room for growth in fostering broader participation and recognition practices.

Principal's Perspectives on Secondary School Leadership

Secondary school principals were also administered the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS; Hallinger & Wang, 2015). Table 82 shows the distribution of principal responses to each statement.

Table 82: Secondary Principals' Leadership Practices (N=3)

Behavioural Statement	Frequency of Occurrence over the Academic Year (% of principals)					
	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	0.0	0.0	33.3	66.7	0.0
Frame the school's goals in terms of staff responsibilities for meeting them	0.0	33.3	0.0	0.0	66.7	0.0
Use needs assessment or other formal and informal methods to secure staff input on goal development	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
Use data on student performance when developing the school's academic goals	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
Develop goals that are easily understood and used by teachers in the school	0.0	0.0	0.0	66.7	33.3	0.0
COMMUNICATE THE SCHOOL GOALS						
Communicate the school's mission effectively to members of the school community	0.0	0.0	33.3	0.0	66.7	0.0
Discuss the school's academic goals with teachers at faculty meetings	0.0	0.0	0.0	66.7	33.3	0.0
Refer to the school's academic goals when making curricular decisions with teachers	0.0	0.0	0.0	33.3	66.7	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)	66.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	33.3	0.0
Refer to the school's goals or mission in forums with students (e.g., in assemblies or discussions)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
SUPERVISE & EVALUATE INSTRUCTION						
Ensure that the classroom priorities of teachers are consistent with the goals and direction of the school	0.0	0.0	33.3	66.7	0.0	0.0

Review student work products when evaluating classroom instruction	0.0	0.0	33.3	0.0	33.3	33.3
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	0.0	33.3	66.7	0.0
Point out specific strengths in teacher's instructional practices in post-observation feedback (e.g., in conferences or written evaluations)	0.0	0.0	0.0	33.3	66.7	0.0
Point out specific weaknesses in teacher instructional practices in post-observation feedback (e.g., in conferences or written evaluations)	0.0	0.0	0.0	33.3	66.7	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	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
Draw upon the results of school-wide testing when making curricular decisions the school's curricular objectives	0.0	0.0	33.3	33.3	33.3	0.0
Monitor the classroom curriculum to see that it covers the school's curricular objectives	0.0	0.0	33.3	33.3	33.3	0.0
Assess the overlap between the school's curricular objectives and the school's achievement tests	0.0	0.0	33.3	66.7		0.0
Participate actively in the review of curricular materials	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
MONITOR STUDENT PROGRESS						
Meet individually with teachers to discuss student progress	0.0	0.0	33.3	0.0	66.7	0.0
Discuss academic performance results with the faculty to identify curricular strengths and weaknesses	0.0	0.0	0.0	66.7	33.3	0.0
Use tests and other performance measure to assess progress toward school goals	0.0	0.0	0.0	66.7	33.3	0.0
Inform teachers of the school's performance results in written form (e.g., in a memo or newsletter)	0.0	0.0	0.0	66.7	33.3	0.0
Inform students of school's academic progress	0.0	0.0	33.3	33.3	33.3	0.0
PROTECT INSTRUCTIONAL TIME						
Limit interruptions of instructional time by public address announcements	0.0	0.0	0.0	66.7	33.3	0.0
Ensure that students are not called to the office during instructional time	0.0	33.3	33.3	33.3	0.0	0.0
Ensure that tardy and truant students suffer specific	0.0	0.0	0.0	66.7	33.3	0.0

consequences for missing instructional time						
Encourage teachers to use instructional time for teaching and practicing new skills and concepts	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
Limit the intrusion of extra- and co-curricular activities on instructional time	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
MAINTAIN HIGH VISIBILITY						
Take time to talk informally with students and teachers during recess and breaks	0.0	0.0	33.3	66.7	0.0	0.0
Visit classrooms to discuss school issues with teachers and students	0.0	0.0	0.0	66.7	33.3	0.0
Attend/participate in extra- and co-curricular activities	0.0	0.0	0.0	33.3	66.7	0.0
Cover classes for teachers until a late or substitute teacher arrives	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
Tutor students or provide direct instruction to classes	0.0	66.7	0.0	33.3	0.0	0.0
PROVIDE INCENTIVES FOR TEACHERS						
Reinforce superior performance by teachers in staff meetings, newsletters, and/or memos	0.0	0.0	33.3	33.3	33.3	0.0
Compliment teachers privately for their efforts or performance	0.0	33.3	0.0	33.3	33.3	0.0
Acknowledge teachers' exceptional performance by writing memos for their personnel files	0.0	33.3	0.0	0.0	33.3	33.3
Reward special efforts by teachers with opportunities for professional recognition	0.0	33.3	0.0	0.0	33.3	33.3
Create professional growth opportunities for teachers as a reward for special contributions to the school	0.0	33.3	33.3	0.0	33.3	0.0
PROMOTE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT						
Ensure that in-service activities attended by staff are consistent with the school's goals	0.0	0.0	0.0	66.7	33.3	0.0
Actively support the use in the classroom of skills acquired during in-service training	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
Obtain the participation of the whole staff in important in-service activities	0.0	0.0	0.0	33.3	66.7	0.0
Lead or attend teacher in-service activities concerned with instruction	0.0	0.0	0.0	33.3	66.7	0.0
Set aside time at faculty meetings for teachers to share ideas or information from in-service activities	0.0	0.0	0.0	33.3	33.3	33.3
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	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0

Use assemblies to honour students for academic accomplishments or for behaviour or citizenship	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
Recognize superior student achievement or improvement by seeing in the office the students with their work	0.0	0.0	33.3	33.3	33.3	0.0
Contact parents to communicate improved or exemplary student performance or contributions	0.0	0.0	66.7	0.0	33.3	0.0
Support teachers actively in their recognition and/or reward of student contributions to and accomplishments in class	0.0	0.0	0.0	66.7	33.3	0.0

Summary

Secondary principals reported strong engagement with leadership practices emphasising goal setting, instructional support, and student achievement. Most principals consistently framed school goals using staff input and performance data, ensuring alignment with academic objectives. Their practices included frequent classroom observations, constructive feedback to teachers, and curriculum monitoring. Principals actively supported professional development, emphasising in service activities and applying new instructional strategies. Efforts to recognise sooner accomplishments were evident, often involving formal rewards and assemblies. However, variability existed in acknowledging teacher contributions and creating professional growth opportunities, highlighting areas for further enhancement in leadership practices.

School Characteristics

Data were compiled and analysed using descriptive statistics to create a profile of the schools in the sample. These results are based on principal reports, and principal response rates were very low, so the findings cannot be generalised to the broader population.

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

Number of students	2022 (N=6)			
	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Female	21	44	30.0	9.06
Male	26	334	88.0	120.90

Table 84: Primary School Personnel

Number of personnel	2022 (N=6)			
	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Teachers (Female)	5	16	8.17	4.07
Teachers (Male)	0	7	2.83	2.71
Librarians	0	1	.75	0.5
Guidance Counsellors	0	1	.33	0.58
Ancillary Staff	2	13	5.5	4.14

The principals reported no other staff members.

Student and Teacher Absenteeism in Primary Schools

Absenteeism is a concern in Dominica's schools. 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=6)

	%			
	No Challenge at All	A Moderate Challenge	A Big Challenge	No Response
Student Absenteeism	0	66.7	16.7	16.7
Teacher Absenteeism	50.0	33.3	0.0	16.7

While over 80% of the principals reported that student absenteeism was challenging, only one-third indicated that teacher absenteeism was challenging.

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

School facility	2022 (N=6)			
	Present & In Use	Present & Not in Use	Not Present	No Response
Library	83.3	0.0	16.7	0.0
Computer Lab	33.3	0.0	66.7	0.0
Canteen	66.7	0.0	33.3	0.0
Sickbay	50.0	0.0	50.0	0.0
Playing Field	50.0	0.0	50.0	0.0
Hard Courts	50.0	0.0	50.0	0.0
Science Labs	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
Art Rooms	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
IA Rooms	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
HE Rooms	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
Music Room	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
Special subject rooms (e.g. math room, geography room)	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0

All facilities present were in use. None of the principals reported having science labs, art, Industrial Arts, Home Economics, Music, or Special Subject rooms.

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=6)

Class organisation	n	%
Mixed Ability Grouping	6	100
TOTAL	6	100

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

Table 88: Number and Length of Lessons in Primary School (N=6)

Lesson variable	Min	Max	Mean	SD
No. in a day	5	7	5.83	0.75
Length (mins)	35	50	41.7	5.16

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=6)

School has a reading policy?	n	%
Yes	3	50
No	3	50
TOTAL	6	100
Timetabled reading for leisure?	n	%
Yes	6	100
TOTAL	5	100

Half of the principals reported that their school did not have reading policies, and all reported that they timetabled 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=6)

School has a policy on extracurricular and/or cocurricular activities?	n	%
No	6	100
TOTAL	6	100
Timetabled extracurricular and/or co-curricular activities?	n	%
Yes	5	83.3
No	1	16.7
TOTAL	6	100

All of the principals reported that their school did not have a policy for extra- and/or co-curricular activities; however, just over 80% reported that such activities were timetabled.

Summary

Primary principals in Dominica identified student absenteeism as a notable challenge, while teacher absenteeism was less frequently reported as an issue. Facilities varied across schools, with libraries, canteens, and playing fields commonly available, but none reported having specialised

rooms like science labs or music rooms. All classrooms were organised as mixability groups, with less and lengths averaging about 42 minutes. While half of the schools lacked reading policies, all timetabled leisure reading, emphasising promoting reading habits. Although no schools had formal policies on extracurricular activities, most included them in their timetables, suggesting informal recognition of their importance for holistic education.

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=2)

Number of students	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Female	150	162	156	8.49
Male	44	211	145.3	89.03

Table 92: Secondary School Personnel (N=3)

Number of Personnel	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Teachers (Female)	19	30	25.33	5.67
Teachers (Male)	15	18	16.5	2.12
Librarians	0	0	0.0	0.0
Guidance Counsellors	1	2	1.5	.7
Ancillary Staff	5	14	9.5	6.36

The principals reported no other staff members.

Student and Teacher Absenteeism in Secondary Schools

Absenteeism is a concern in Dominica's schools. 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=3)

Issue	%			
	No Challenge at All	A Moderate Challenge	A Big Challenge	No Response
Student Absenteeism	0	33.3	33.3	33.3
Teacher Absenteeism	0	66.7	0	33.3

Two-thirds of principals indicated that teacher absenteeism posed a moderate challenge, while one-third said student absenteeism posed a moderate challenge and one-third a big 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.

Table 94: Secondary School Facilities Present and in Use (N=3)

School facility	%			
	Present & In Use	Present & Not in Use	Not Present	No Response
Library	66.7	33.3	0.0	0.0
Computer Lab	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Canteen	66.7	0.0	33.3	0.0
Sickbay	33.3	0.0	66.7	0.0
Playing Field	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
Hard Courts	66.7	0.0	33.3	0.0
Science Labs	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Art Rooms	66.7	0.0	33.3	0.0
IA Rooms	66.7	0.0	0.0	33.3
HE Rooms	0.0	0.0	33.3	66.7
Music Room	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
Special subject rooms (e.g. math room, geography room)	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0

All the facilities present were in use, except for one principal, who reported a library not being used. All principals reported having computer labs and science labs in use, and none of the principals reported having a playing field, music room, or special subject rooms.

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=3)

Class organisation	n	%
Ability Grouping	1	33.3
Mixed Ability Grouping	1	33.3
No Response	1	33.3
TOTAL	3	99.9

The principals were split evenly between ability grouping and mixed ability grouping. One principal did not respond.

Table 96: Number and Length of Lessons in Secondary School (N=3)

Lesson variable	Min	Max	Mean	SD
No. in a day	5	6	5.67	.58
Length (mins)	40	50	43.3	5.77

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=3)

School has a reading policy?	n	%
Yes	1	33.3
No	1	33.3
No Response	1	33.3
TOTAL	3	99.9
Timetabled reading for leisure?		
No	3	100.0
TOTAL	3	100.0

Only one principal responded that their school had a reading policy, and none of the schools had timetabled reading for leisure time.

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	2	66.7
No	1	33.3
TOTAL	3	99.9
Timetabled extracurricular and/or co-curricular activities?	n	%
No	3	100.0
TOTAL	3	100.0

Two of the three principals indicated that their school had a policy on extracurricular or co-curricular activities. However, none of the principals indicated that their school had timetabled extracurricular activities.

Secondary Students' Academic Track

Secondary students were asked to indicate their academic track and whether 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. Secondary students were also asked to indicate their planned career choices. The distribution of responses on these items can be seen in Tables 99 to 101.

Table 99: Secondary Students' Academic Track

Current Academic Track	2022 (N=?)	
	n	%
Arts (e.g. Languages, Literature, History, Geography)	10	7.1
Business (e.g. Accounts, Business, Management)	17	12.1
Science (e.g. Biology, Chemistry, Physics)	10	7.1
Technical and Vocational (e.g. Building Technology, Building drawing; Home management; textiles; food & beverage technology)	28	12.1
Visual & Performing Arts (e.g. Art; Theatre; Music; Dance)	6	4.3
Cross Discipline	65	45.1
No Response	5	3.5
TOTAL	141	100

The most popular track was cross-disciplinary, with about forty-five percent of students indicating this. Several students reported multiple academic tracks, including TVET and Science.

Table 100: Secondary Students' Choosing Their Academic Track

Is your current academic track your choice?	2022 (N=?)	
	n	%
Yes	121	85.8
No	14	9.9
No Response	6	4.3
TOTAL	141	100

Most students indicated that their current academic track was their decision.

Table 101: Person Who Chose Secondary Students' Academic Track

If someone other than you chose your academic track, the decision was made by:	2022 (N=?)	
	n	%
The teachers at the school	4	2.8
My mother	13	9.2
My father	5	3.5
Other	11	7.8

Less than ten percent of the students indicated that their teacher, mother, father, or other individual was involved in the selection process regarding their academic track.

Summary

Secondary school principals in Dominica reported moderate challenges with student and teacher absenteeism, with some response variability. Facilities were generally well utilised, with all schools having computer and science labs, but lacking playing fields, music rooms or special subject rooms. Class structures varied between ability grouping and mixability grouping, and lesson lengths averaged approximately 43 minutes. Reading policies were uncommon, and none of the school's timetabled leisure reading, indicating limited institutional emphasis on this activity. Two-thirds of principals reported having policies on extracurricular activities, though none had them formally timetabled. The cross-disciplinary academic track among students was the most popular, with the majority reporting that their track choice was self-selected. Instances where others made the decision, such as parents or teachers, were relatively rare. These findings underline a need for stronger support for extracurricular and reading initiatives and enhanced academic track selection guidance.

Factors with Indirect Influences: Views on Common Educational Practices

This section explores the primary and secondary teachers' and principals' perspectives on several common educational practices in Dominica. These issues include feelings about teaching, extra lessons, the Dominica Grade Six National Assessment, 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

I like teaching in general	2022 (N=40)	
	n	%
Sometimes True	12	30
Always True	28	70
No Response	0	0
TOTAL	40	100

Seventy percent of the teachers always like teaching, and one-third reported that their liking for teaching fluctuates.

Primary Teachers' Feelings about Current School

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

Table 103: Primary Teachers' Feelings About Their Current School

I like teaching at this school	2022 (N=40)	
	n	%
Never True	0	0
Sometimes True	17	42.5
Always True	22	55
No Response	1	2.5
TOTAL	40	100

While fifty-five percent of the teachers always enjoy teaching at their school, approximately forty-three percent enjoy teaching at their school sometimes.

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

I provide extra lessons for students in my class outside of school hours	2022 (N=40)	
	n	%
Never True	22	55
Sometimes True	9	22.5
Always True	7	17.5
No Response	2	5
TOTAL	40	100

While fifty-five percent of the teachers never provided extra lessons outside school hours, approximately twenty-three percent provided lessons sometimes, and nearly eighteen percent always provided extra lessons.

Table 105: Primary Teachers' Perceptions of Parent's Willingness to Pay for Extra Lessons

Parents at this school are willing to pay for extra lessons for their children	2022 (N=40)	
	n	%
Never True	11	27.5
Sometimes True	19	47.5
Always True	6	15
No Response	4	10
TOTAL	40	100

More than one-quarter of the teachers reported that parents were never willing to pay for extra lessons, forty-eight percent reported that parents were sometimes willing to pay, and fifteen percent indicated that parents were always willing.

Table 106: Primary Teachers' Perceptions of Teachers Being Paid to Provide Extra Lessons Outside of School

Teachers should be paid for extra lessons.	2022 (N=40)	
	n	%
Yes	36	90
No	2	5
No Response	2	5
TOTAL	40	100

While ninety percent of the teachers believed that teachers should be paid for extra lessons, five percent did not agree, and five percent did not respond.

Primary Teachers' Attitudes Toward the Grade Six National Assessment

Teachers in the sample were asked to express their support for specific practices embedded within the current Dominican education system. One such practice involves using the Grade Six National Assessment 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 Grade Six National Assessment for Secondary School Placement

Using the Grade Six National Assessment for secondary school placement	2022 (N=40)	
	n	%
I support this	29	72.5
I do not support this	5	12.5
Not Applicable/No Opinion	5	12.5
No Response	1	2.5
TOTAL	40	100

Seventy-three percent of the teachers supported the Grade Six National Assessment being used for secondary school placement. In comparison, thirteen percent did not support it, thirteen percent had no opinion, and about three percent did not respond. While this practice aims to provide a standardised measure for secondary school placement, it is imperative to acknowledge that certain groups of students, including those from under-resourced communities and students with special educational needs, may be disadvantaged by this practice.

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

Streaming classes according to ability	2022 (N=40)	
	n	%
I support this	37	92.5
I do not support this	1	2.5
Not Applicable/No Opinion	1	2.5
No Response	1	2.5
TOTAL	40	100

Table 109: Primary Teachers' Support for Grade Retention

Grade Retention	2022 (N=40)	
	n	%
I support this	25	62.5
I do not support this	12	30
Not Applicable/No Opinion	2	5
No Response	1	2.5
TOTAL	40	100

Almost ninety-three percent of the teachers reported that they agreed to streaming class practices, one teacher did not support it, about three percent had no opinions, and one did not respond. Further investigations should be conducted to determine the reasons behind the teachers' support for ability-based streaming, as it may lead to inequities, reinforce stereotypes, or limit opportunities for some students. Sixty-three percent of the teachers supported grade retention practices, thirty percent did not support them, and five percent had no opinions.

Summary

Primary teachers expressed positive feelings about teaching, with most always enjoying the profession, though fewer reported consistently enjoying teaching at their current schools. Regarding extra lessons, most teachers did not provide additional instruction outside school hours, though nearly one-quarter offered them occasionally, and a small proportion consistently did so. Teachers largely believed that they should be compensated for these lessons. Support for the

G6NA as a placement tool was strong. Teachers overwhelmingly favoured ability-based streaming, though this practice may perpetuate inequities and a majority supported grade retention. These attitudes suggest a need for further exploration of teacher views to address potential challenges and foster equitable educational practices.

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

Several current issues in education in Dominica were investigated, including feelings about teaching, extra lessons, the Dominica Grade Six National Assessment, 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.

Table 110: Secondary Teachers’ Feelings About Teaching

I like teaching in general	2022 (N=51)	
	n	%
Never True	2	3.9
Sometimes True	12	23.5
Always True	35	68.6
No Response	2	3.9
TOTAL	51	100

Approximately sixty- eight percent of teachers indicated that they like teaching as they responded always true to the statement “I like teaching in general”.

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. When asked whether they liked teaching at their current school, most secondary school candidates reported “always true” to the statement, “I like teaching at the school.”

Table 111: Secondary Teachers' Feelings About Their Current School

I like teaching at this school	2022 (N=51)	
	n	%
Never True	4	7.8
Sometimes True	16	31.4
Always True	29	56.9
No Response	2	3.9
TOTAL	37	100

Secondary 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 secondary school sample are presented in Tables 112 to 114.

Table 112: Secondary Teachers' Provision of Extra Lessons Outside of School Time

I provide extra lessons for students in my class outside of school hours	2022 (N=51)	
	n	%
Never True	18	35.3
Sometimes True	24	47.1
Always True	7	13.7
No Response	2	3.9
TOTAL	51	100

Approximately forty-seven percent of the teachers indicated that it is sometimes true that they provide extra lessons.

Table 113: Secondary Teachers' Perceptions of Parent's Willingness to Pay for Extra Lessons

Parents at this school are willing to pay for extra lessons for their children	2022 (N=51)	
	n	%
Never True	20	39.2
Sometimes True	26	51
Always True	2	3.9
No Response	3	5.9
TOTAL	51	100

Approximately thirty-nine percent of secondary school teachers reported that parents are never 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

Teachers should be paid for extra lessons	2022 (N=51)	
	n	%
Yes	48	94.1
No	1	2
No Response	3	5.9
TOTAL	51	100

Almost all secondary school teachers (94.1%) supported teachers being paid for extra lessons.

Secondary Teachers' Attitudes Toward the Grade Six National Assessment

Teachers in the sample were asked to express their support for specific practices embedded within the current education system. One such practice involves using the Grade Six National Assessment results 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 Grade Six National Assessment for Secondary School Placement

Using the Grade Six National Assessment for secondary school placement	2022 (N=51)	
	n	%
I support this	35	68.6
I do not support this	13	25.5
Not Applicable/No Opinion	2	3.9
No Response	1	2
TOTAL	51	100

More than half of the secondary school teachers (68.6%) supported using national assessments at the Grade Six level for secondary school placement.

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

Streaming classes according to ability	2022 (N=51)	
	N	%
I support this	47	92.2
I do not support this	2	3.9
No Response	1	2
TOTAL	51	100

Ninety-two percent of secondary school teachers supported streaming classes according to ability, while four percent did not.

Table 117: Secondary Teachers' Support for Grade Retention

Grade Retention	2022 (N=51)	
	N	%
I support this	26	51
I do not support this	11	21.6
Not Applicable/No Opinion	12	23.5
No Response	2	3.9
TOTAL	51	100

Fifty-one percent of the secondary school teachers supported grade retention practices, and approximately twenty percent did not.

Summary

Teachers generally had a favourable view of teaching, as approximately 68% of teachers indicated that they liked teaching in general. Additionally, twenty-three secondary school teachers reported that they sometimes like teaching at the school.

Only about forty-seven percent of the teachers said they sometimes provide extra lessons. However, most of the secondary school teachers (94.1%) indicated their support of teachers being paid for extra lessons. They further indicated that parents are sometimes willing to pay for lessons, as only approximately fifty-one percent of the parents indicated this.

In terms of the national exit examinations for grade six, more than half of the secondary school teachers (68.6%) indicated their support for using national assessments at the Grade Six level for secondary school placement. Ninety-two percent of secondary school teachers supported streaming classes according to ability.

Notably, while about half of the secondary school teachers supported grade retention practices, one quarter did not.

Primary Principals' Views on Other Education-Related Issues

Several current issues in education in Dominica were investigated from primary principals' perspectives, including feelings about extra lessons, the Dominica Grade 6 National Assessment (G6NA), 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. Table 118 presents the principals' responses in the primary school sample.

Table 118: Primary Principals' Perceptions of Teachers Being Paid to Provide Extra Lessons Outside of Regular School Hours (N=6)

Teachers should be paid for extra lessons	n	%
Yes	6	100
TOTAL	6	100

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

Primary Principals' Attitudes Toward the Grade 6 National Assessment

Principals in the sample were asked to express their support for specific practices embedded within the current Dominican education system. One such practice involves using the results of the G6NA 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 G6NA for Secondary School Placement (N=6)

Using the G6NA for secondary school placement	n	%
I support this	5	83.3
I do not support this	1	16.7
No Response	6	100.0

Over 80% percent of the principals did not have an opinion on using the G6NA examination for secondary school placement, and only one 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=6)

Streaming classes according to ability	n	%
I support this	5	83.3
I do not support this	1	16.7
TOTAL	6	100

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

Grade Retention	n	%
I support this	1	16.7
I do not support this	4	66.7
No Response	1	16.7
TOTAL	6	100

All principals reported supporting streaming, but two-thirds of the principals reported not supporting grade retention practices.

Summary

Primary school principals unanimously agreed that teachers should be compensated for providing extra lessons outside regular school hours. Most principals supported using the G6NA for secondary school placement, though one expressed dissent. While the majority endorsed ability-based streaming, reflecting alignment with traditional practices, two-thirds opposed grade retention, signalling a preference for promoting students despite academic challenges. These responses highlight mixed attitudes towards practices impacting student progression.

Secondary Principals' Views on Other Education-Related Issues

We also sought secondary principals' perspectives on extra lessons, the Grade 6 National Assessment (G6NA), 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=3)

Teachers should be paid for extra lessons	n	%
Yes	3	100
TOTAL	3	100

All three principals indicated support for teachers in receiving payment for extra lessons.

Secondary Principals' Attitudes Toward the Grade 6 National Assessment

Principals in the sample were asked to express their support for specific practices embedded within the current Dominican education system. One such practice involves using the results of the G6NA 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 G6NA for Secondary School Placement (N=3)

Using the G6NA for secondary school placement	n	%
I support this	3	100
TOTAL	3	100

All principals supported using the G6NA 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=3)

Streaming classes according to ability	n	%
I support this	2	66.7
No Response	1	33.3
TOTAL	3	100

Both responding principals supported this.

Table 125: Secondary Principals' Support for Grade Retention (N=3)

Grade Retention	n	%
I support this	1	33.3
Not Applicable/ No Opinion	1	33.3
No Response	1	33.3
TOTAL	3	100

One out of the three principals indicated support for grade retention.

Summary

Secondary principals unanimously supported paying teachers for extra lessons outside of regular school hours and expressed full endorsement for using the G6NA. For secondary school placement, two-thirds supported ability-based streaming, while opinions on grade retention were more divided, with only one principal expressing clear support. These attitudes reflect alignment with traditional assessment and instructional practices, but mixed views on grade retention suggest ongoing debate about its effectiveness in addressing student needs.

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	75	14.8
I accessed classes online during the lockdown	422	83.4
No Response	3	.6
TOTAL	506	100

Most students (83.4%) attended classes during the COVID-19 lockdown.

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

Methods of access to lessons	n	%
I had no access to lessons	53	88.9
I had access to lessons on the radio	17	3.4
I had access to lessons on television	42	8.3
My teachers sent me worksheets to do	332	65.6
Other	69	13.6

Most students (88.9%) had no access to lessons during the lockdown. However, 65.6% of students were sent worksheets by their teachers. 8.3% of students had access to lessons on television, while 3.4% had access to lessons on the radio. 13.6% of students had access to lessons through online platforms.

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	354	70
No	117	23.1
No Response	35	6.9
TOTAL	506	100

Seventy percent of students experienced challenges during online schooling, while 23.1% of students did not experience any challenges.

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

Challenges in online schooling	n	%
Didn't own a device	62	12.3
Device did not always work	130	25.7
No access to internet	45	9.1
Internet always dropping out	162	32
Had to share a device	75	14.8
Did not know how to use the learning platform (Google Classroom, Teams)	81	16
Trouble logging in to meeting spaces (e.g., Zoom)	235	46.4
Other	506	100

46.4% of students had trouble logging in to meeting spaces, 32% indicated that the internet was always dropping out, 25.7% of students indicated that their devices did not always work, 16% indicated that they did not know how to use the learning platform, and 14.8% indicated that they had to share a device.

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

Challenges shifting to online schooling	n	%
Difficulty keeping up with my schoolwork	241	47.6
Difficulty organizing my time (e.g., getting to classes on time)	168	33.2
Not able to get extra help with schoolwork from teachers	105	20.8
Not feeling like doing schoolwork	110	21.7
Difficulty finding a quiet place to work	241	47.6

47.6% of students found it challenging to keep up with their schoolwork and find a quiet workplace. 33% of students indicated that they experienced difficulty organising their time, 22% did not feel like doing schoolwork, and 21% were not able to receive additional help with schoolwork from teachers.

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	366	72.3
No	111	21.9
No Response	29	5.7
TOTAL	506	100

72.3% of students indicated that they had positive experiences attending school online, while 22% of students did not have any positive experiences.

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

Positive experiences in online schooling	n	%
More time with family	264	52.2
More time for other activities	199	39.3
Not having to travel to school	162	32
More rest time	187	37
Staying in bed longer in the morning before having to get up for school	200	39.5
Others (Please state below)	21	4.2

52% of students indicated that they spent more time with family, 40% indicated that they enjoyed staying in bed longer in the morning before having to get up for school, 39% had more time for other activities, 37% had more rest time, and 32% enjoyed not having to travel to school.

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	193	38.1
Online only	99	19.6
Some face-to-face and some online	197	38.9
No Response	12	2.4

38% of students preferred face-to-face and hybrid schooling, while 20% preferred online school only.

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.	135	26.7
Home visits from teachers	44	8.7
One-on-one sessions with teachers when necessary	80	15.8
Additional time for completing classwork and assignments	168	33.2
Direction to online learning resources to support my learning	150	29.6

33% of students indicated that they had additional time for completing classwork assignments, 30% received direction to online learning resources to support their learning, 27% did not receive any additional support from school teachers, 16% and one-on-one sessions with teachers when necessary and 9% had home visits from teachers.

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	271	53.6
Moderately satisfied	91	18
Barely satisfied	57	11.3
Not satisfied at all	62	12.3
No Response	25	4.9
TOTAL	506	100

54% of students indicated they were very satisfied with the support they received from their school for online schooling. 18% indicated they were moderately satisfied, 12% indicated they were not satisfied, and 11% indicated they were barely satisfied.

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.	87	17.2
I got an appropriate device of my own	224	44.3
One-on-one sessions with teachers when necessary	79	15.6
Additional time for completing classwork and assignments	107	21.1
Direction to online learning resources to support my learning	102	20.2

44.3% of students had an appropriate device during online schooling. 20% of students received directions to online learning resources to support their learning and additional time for completing homework assignments.

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	281	55.5
Moderately satisfied	101	20
Barely satisfied	49	9.7
Not satisfied at all	49	9.7
No Response	26	5.1
TOTAL	506	100

56% of students were very satisfied with the support that they received from their home for online schooling, 20% indicated that they were moderately satisfied, and 10% indicated that they were barely satisfied and not satisfied at all with the support that they received from their home during 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	272	53.8
Often	80	15.8
Sometimes	109	21.5
Seldom	13	2.6
Never	13	2.6
No Response	19	3.8
TOTAL	506	100

More than half of the students (53.8%) indicated that they always had the technology they needed, 22% indicated that they sometimes had the technology they needed, and 16% often had the technology they needed.

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.	169	33.4
It was sometimes hard for me to follow the safety rules.	154	30.4
It was seldom hard for me to follow the safety rules.	40	7.9
It was never hard for me to follow the safety rules.	124	24.5
No Response	19	3.8
TOTAL	506	100

33% of students indicated that it was always hard for them to follow the safety rules, 30% indicated that it was sometimes hard for them to follow the safety rules, and 25% indicated that it was never hard for them to follow the safety rules.

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.	166	32.8
Changing from face-to-face school to online school was somewhat hard for me.	56	11.1
Changing from face-to-face school to online school was a little hard for me.	128	25.3
Changing from face-to-face school to online school was not hard at all for me.	134	26.5
No Response	22	4.3
TOTAL	506	100

33% of students indicated that changing from face-to-face to online school was very hard for them, 27% indicated that it was not hard at all, and 25% indicated that it was a little hard.

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.	99	19.6
The COVID-19 pandemic has had a fairly good effect on how I feel about school.	76	15
The COVID-19 pandemic has had no effect on how I feel about school.	119	23.5
The COVID-19 pandemic has had a fairly bad effect on how I feel about school.	64	12.6
The COVID-19 pandemic has had a very bad effect on how I feel about school.	122	24.1
No Response	26	5.1
TOTAL	506	100

24% of students indicated that the pandemic had a very bad effect and had no effect on how they felt about school. 20% indicated that the pandemic had a very good effect on how they felt about school, and 13% indicated that the pandemic had a fairly bad effect on how they felt about school.

Summary

Most students (83.4%) attended classes during the COVID-19 lockdown. However, eighty-nine percent of students indicated no access to lessons during the pandemic. Seventy percent of students experienced challenges during online schooling. Most students experienced challenges logging in to online spaces, with forty-eight percent of students finding it difficult to keep up with their school work and find a quiet workplace.

Seventy-two percent of students indicated that they had positive experiences attending school online. These positive experiences included spending time with family and staying in bed longer in the morning before having to prepare for school. Thirty-eight percent of students preferred face-to-face and hybrid modalities of attending school. Students received support during the pandemic by receiving additional time to complete assignments and were very satisfied with the support that they received from their school during online schooling. Additionally, forty-four percent of students had an appropriate device of their own during online schooling, with fifty-six percent of students being very satisfied with the support that they received from their home during the COVID-19 pandemic, and fifty-four percent of students always had the technology that they needed to access online school.

Thirty-three percent of students indicated that it was always hard to follow the safety rules and that changing from online to face-to-face classes was hard for them. At the same time, twenty-four percent of students indicated that the pandemic had a bad effect and simultaneously had no effect on how they felt about school.

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	10	7.1
I accessed classes online during the lockdown	127	90.1
No Response	4	2.8
TOTAL	141	100

Ninety percent of students attended classes online during the lockdown.

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

Methods of access to lessons	n	%
I had no access to lessons	8	5.7
I had access to lessons on the radio	3	2.1
I had access to lessons on television	7	5
My teachers sent me worksheets to do	74	52.5
Other	31	22
TOTAL	141	100

53% of students accessed lessons through worksheets sent by their teachers. Less than 5% of students accessed lessons from the radio and television, and only 6% of students had no access to online lessons.

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	121	85.8
No	12	8.5
No Response	8	5.7
TOTAL	141	100

Most students (86%) experienced challenges during online school, and 9% of students did not experience challenges

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

Challenges in online schooling	n	%
Didn't own a device	33	23.4
Device did not always work	66	46.8
No access to internet	30	21.3
Internet always dropping out	87	61.7
Had to share a device	24	17
Did not know how to use the learning platform (Google Classroom, Teams)	27	19.1
Trouble logging in to meeting spaces (e.g., Zoom)	72	51.1
Other	9	6.4

62% of students indicated that their internet always dropped out, 51.1% experienced challenges logging into meeting spaces, and 47% indicated that their devices did not always work.

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

Challenges shifting to online schooling	n	%
Difficulty keeping up with my schoolwork	79	56
Difficulty organizing my time (e.g., getting to classes on time)	65	46.1
Not able to get extra help with schoolwork from teachers	47	33.3
Not feeling like doing schoolwork	66	46.8
Difficulty finding a quiet place to work	55	39
Other	1	.7

56% of students indicated that they had difficulty keeping up with their schoolwork, while 6% of students indicated that they experienced difficulty organising their time and did not feel like doing schoolwork.

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	100	70.9
No	28	19.9
No Response	13	9.2
TOTAL	141	100

One hundred students reported having positive experiences while attending online school.

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

Positive experiences in online schooling	n	%
More time with family	54	38.3
More time for other activities	59	41.8
Not having to travel to school	55	39
More rest time	76	53.9
Staying in bed longer in the morning before having to get up for school	71	50.4
Others (Please state below)	4	2.8

54% of students indicated that they had more rest time during online schooling. In comparison, 50% indicated they stayed in bed longer before getting up for school, and 42% indicated they had more time for other activities.

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	67	47.5
Online only	12	8.5
Some face-to-face and some online	52	36.9
No Response	10	7.1
TOTAL	141	100

48% of students prefer face-to-face only, while 37% prefer a hybrid method of attending school.

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.	38	27
Home visits from teachers	12	8.5
One-on-one sessions with teachers when necessary	33	23.4
Additional time for completing classwork and assignments	60	42.6
Direction to online learning resources to support my learning	38	27
Other	3	2.1

43% of students indicated that they received additional time for completing class work and assignments, while 23% indicated that they had one-on-one sessions with teachers when necessary.

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	29	20.6
Moderately satisfied	64	45.4
Barely satisfied	22	15.6
Not satisfied at all	9	6.4
No Response	17	12.1
TOTAL	141	100

Most students (45.4%) were moderately satisfied with the support they received from school during 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.	22	15.6
I got an appropriate device of my own	62	44
One-on-one sessions with teachers when necessary	23	16.3
Additional time for completing classwork and assignments	55	39
Direction to online learning resources to support my learning	37	26.2
Other	2	1.4

44% of students indicated that they had an appropriate device of their own, and 39% indicated that they had additional time for completing classwork and assignments.

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	48	34
Moderately satisfied	44	31.2
Barely satisfied	22	15.6
Not satisfied at all	12	8.5
No Response	15	10.6
TOTAL	141	100

Most students indicated they were very satisfied with the support they received at home for online schooling.

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	53	37.6
Often	38	27
Sometimes	27	19.1
Seldom	8	5.7
No Response	15	10.6
TOTAL	141	100

Most students indicated they always had access to the technology needed during online schooling.

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.	22	15.6
It was sometimes hard for me to follow the safety rules.	49	34.8
It was seldom hard for me to follow the safety rules.	19	13.5
It was never hard for me to follow the safety rules.	35	24.8
No Response	16	11.3
TOTAL	141	100

Most students indicated that it was sometimes hard to follow the safety rules when attending face-to-face school during COVID-19.

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.	29	20.6
Changing from face-to-face school to online school was somewhat hard for me.	36	25.5
Changing from face-to-face school to online school was a little hard for me.	39	27.7
Changing from face-to-face school to online school was not hard at all for me.	23	16.3
No Response	14	9.9
TOTAL	141	100

Most students indicated that it was a little and somewhat difficult for them to switch from face-to-face to online school.

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.	13	9.2
The COVID-19 pandemic has had a fairly good effect on how I feel about school.	37	26.2
The COVID-19 pandemic has had no effect on how I feel about school.	31	22
The COVID-19 pandemic has had a fairly bad effect on how I feel about school.	21	14.9
The COVID-19 pandemic has had a very bad effect on how I feel about school.	22	15.6
No Response	17	12.1
TOTAL	141	100

Most students indicated that the COVID-19 pandemic had a fairly good effect on how they feel about school.

Summary

Ninety percent of students attended classes online during the lockdown, and 53% indicated they accessed lessons by receiving teacher worksheets. Eighty-six of students indicated that they

experienced challenges during online schooling. Some of these challenges included their internet constantly dropping out, challenges logging into meeting spaces, and their devices not always working. Most students also struggled to keep up with their schoolwork when adjusting to online schooling. Most students expressed that they had positive experiences while attending school online. Some of these positive experiences include having more rest time during online schooling, being able to stay in bed longer in the morning before getting up for school and having more time for other activities.

Students indicated that they preferred face-to-face and hybrid modalities of teaching. Most students indicated that they received support from their school by receiving additional time to complete classwork and assignments and were moderately satisfied with the support they received from school during online schooling. Forty-four percent of students indicated that they had an appropriate device of their own and were very satisfied with the support they received from their homes during online schooling. Most students indicated they always had access to the technology needed during online schooling.

During COVID-19, most students indicated that it was sometimes hard to follow the safety rules when attending school face-to-face and that changing from face-to-face to online school was a little hard. Most students indicated that the COVID-19 pandemic had a fairly good effect on how they feel about school.

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=40)

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	40	100
No Response	0	0
TOTAL	40	100

Table 159: Primary Teachers' Method of Engagement/Teaching During Lockdown (N=40)

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	0	0
I used (or directed my students to) lessons on television	0	0
I sent my students worksheets to do	22	55
I used other means to engage my students	5	12.5
No Response	13	32.5
TOTAL	40	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=40)

Did you experience challenges doing schooling online?	n	%
Yes	37	92.5
No	3	7.5
No Response	0	0
TOTAL	40	100

Table 161: Primary Teachers' Challenges in Online Schooling (N=40)

Challenges in online schooling	n	%
Preparing lessons for online teaching	10	25
Creating appropriate assessment activities to gauge learning in the online setting	18	45
Didn't own a device	5	12.5
Device did not always work	20	50
No access to internet	3	7.5
Internet always dropping out (unstable)	32	80
Had to share a device	5	12.5
Did not know how to use the learning platform (Google Classroom, Teams)	4	10
Trouble logging in to meeting spaces (e.g., Zoom)	4	10
Dealing with parents in the online setting	24	60
Other challenge	7	17.5

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=40)

In which one of the following modalities do you prefer to engage your students?	n	%
Face-to-face only	19	47.5
Online only	2	5
Some face-to-face and some online	15	37.5
No Response	4	10
TOTAL	40	100

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=40)

Which of the following learning platforms have you used to engage your students?	n	%
Google Suite/Google Classroom	39	97.5
Edmodo	1	2.5
Moodle	1	2.5

Table 164: Communication Applications Used by Primary Teachers (N=40)

Which of the following communication applications have you used to engage your students?	n	%
Zoom Conferencing	10	25
Google Meet	38	95
Microsoft Teams	0	0
WhatsApp Messaging	22	55
Other	0	0

Table 165: Devices Used by Primary Teachers for Online Schooling (N=40)

Which of the following devices have you used for online schooling?	n	%
A desktop computer	2	5
A laptop computer	35	87.5
A tablet	10	25
A smartphone	19	47.5

Table 166: Sources of Devices Used by Primary Teachers for Online Schooling (N=40)

Who provided the device(s) that you used for online schooling?	n	%
I used my own throughout the entire period of online schooling	40	100
I used my own at first, but then the school assigned me a device	0	0
I used my own at first, but then the Ministry of Education assigned me a device	0	0
I used my own at first, but then I got one from elsewhere	0	0
No Response	0	0
TOTAL	40	100

Table 167: Source of Internet Access for Primary Teachers during Online Schooling (N=40)

How have you accessed Internet services for online schooling?	n	%
At home	40	100
At the school	28	70
From a neighbour	0	0
From a community hotspot	0	0

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=40)

What additional support did you provide for your students during online schooling?	n	%
I did not provide any additional support for my students.	1	2.5
I paid home visits to some students	5	12.5
I offered one-on-one sessions with students when necessary	11	27.5
I gave additional time for completing classwork and assignments	35	87.5
I directed students to online resources to support their learning	32	80

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.

Table 169: Primary Teachers' Perspectives on Various Aspects of Online Schooling (N=40)

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?	7.5	2.5	10	30	17.5	25
How supportive were your students' parents during online learning?	5	7.5	12.5	37.5	22.5	10
	0 Not at All Stressful	1	2	3	4	5 Very Stressful
How stressful did you find teaching online?	7.5	0	7.5	25	17.5	37.5
	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?	2.5	12.5	15	17.5	30	17.5
	0 Not at All Conducive	1	2	3	4	5 Very Conducive
How conducive was your home environment for teaching online?	0	0	20	10	40	27.5
	0 Not at All Comfortable	1	2	3	4	5 Very Comfortable
How comfortable were you with using technology in online teaching?	0	0	5	22.5	32.5	32.5
	0 Extremely Poor	1	2	3	4	5 Very Good
How would you rate your students' learning in the online environment?	2.5	25	32.5	27.5	7.5	2.5
How would you rate your students' attendance for online classes?	10	12.5	10	32.5	22.5	7.5
How would you rate your students' participation?	5	10	17.5	32.5	20	10
	0 Not at All Motivated	1	2	3	4	5 Very Motivated
How motivated were you to teach online?		5	22.5	30	30	7.5
	0 Not at All Satisfied	1	2	3	4	5 Very Satisfied
How satisfied were you with your online teaching activities during the pandemic?	2.5	10	17.5	32.5	17.5	17.5

Table 170: Ease of Following Safety Protocols for Primary Teachers during COVID-19 (N=40)

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	32.5
It was seldom hard for me to follow the safety rules.	14	35
It was never hard for me to follow the safety rules.	12	30
No Response	1	2.5
TOTAL	40	100

Table 171: Ease of Changing from Face-to-Face to Online for Primary Teachers (N=40)

Statements that BEST applies	n	%
Changing from face-to-face school to online school was very hard for me.	6	15
Changing from face-to-face school to online school was somewhat hard for me.	17	42.5
Changing from face-to-face school to online school was a little hard for me.	6	15
Changing from face-to-face school to online school was not hard at all for me.	9	22.5
No Response	2	5
TOTAL	40	100

Table 172: Impact of COVID-19 on Primary Teachers' Attitude to Teaching (N=40)

Statements that BEST applies	n	%
The COVID-19 pandemic has had a very good effect on how I feel about teaching.	4	10
The COVID-19 pandemic has had a fairly good effect on how I feel about teaching.	13	32.5
The COVID-19 pandemic has had no effect on how I feel about teaching.	7	17.5
The COVID-19 pandemic has had a fairly bad effect on how I feel about teaching.	10	25
The COVID-19 pandemic has had a very bad effect on how I feel about teaching.	3	7.5
No Response	3	7.5
TOTAL	40	100

Summary

Primary teachers fully engaged their students online during the COVID-19 lockdown, primarily using Google Classroom and Google Meet, with 55% supplementing with worksheets. Challenges were widespread, with 92.5% reporting difficulties such as unstable internet (80%), device issues (50%), and managing parental interactions (60%). Teachers relied entirely on personal devices and home internet. Despite these challenges, 87.5% provided additional support, such as extended deadlines and directing students to online resources. Face-to-face teaching remained the preferred modality for 47.5% of teachers, though 37.5% favoured hybrid approaches. Teachers expressed

mixed feelings about online teaching, with 37.5% finding it very stressful and 42.5% noting difficulty transitioning from face-to-face to online instruction. The pandemic had varied impacts on teachers' attitudes toward teaching, with 42.5% reporting positive effects but 32.5% indicating negative experiences. These findings highlight the resilience of teachers but underscore the need for enhanced digital infrastructure, training, and support.

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=51)

How did you engage/teach your students during the COVID-19 lockdown?	n	%
I did not engage/teach my students during the lockdown	2	3.9
I engaged/taught my students online during the lockdown	44	86.3
TOTAL	51	100

Most teachers (86.3%) engaged their students during the COVID-19 lockdown.

Table 174: Secondary Teachers' Method of Engagement/Teaching During Lockdown (N=51)

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	0	0
I used other means to engage my students	0	0
No Response	51	100
TOTAL	51	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=51)

Did you experience challenges doing schooling online?	n	%
Yes	45	88.2
No	2	3.9
TOTAL	47	92.2

88.2% of teachers experienced challenges doing online schooling.

Table 176: Secondary Teachers' Challenges in Online Schooling (N=51)

Challenges in online schooling	n	%
Preparing lessons for online teaching	18	35.3
Creating appropriate assessment activities to gauge learning in the online setting	21	41.2
Didn't own a device	11	21.6
Device did not always work	18	35.3
No access to internet	7	13.7
Internet always dropping out (unstable)	27	52.9
Had to share a device	11	21.6
Did not know how to use the learning platform (Google Classroom, Teams)	8	15.7
Trouble logging in to meeting spaces (e.g., Zoom)	10	19.6
Dealing with parents in the online setting	18	35.3
Other challenge	9	17.6

52.9% of teachers indicated that they had to share a device, 41.2% indicated that they created appropriate assessment activities to gauge learning in the online setting, and 35.3% indicated that they: 1. Prepared lessons for online teaching, 2. Their device did not always work, and 3. Dealt with parents in the online setting.

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=51)

In which one of the following modalities do you prefer to engage your students?	n	%
Face-to-face only	14	27.5
Some face-to-face and some online	32	62.7
Online only	2	3.9
TOTAL	48	94.1

Most teachers (62.7%) preferred a hybrid teaching method.

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=51)

Which of the following learning platforms have you used to engage your students?	n	%
Google Suite/Google Classroom	46	90.2
Moodle	2	3.9
Edmodo	3	5.9
Other	3	5.9

Most teachers (90.2%) used Google Suite/Google Classroom to engage their students.

Table 179: Communication Applications Used by Secondary Teachers (N=51)

Which of the following communication applications have you used to engage your students?	n	%
Zoom Conferencing	28	54.9
Google Meet	45	88.2
Microsoft Teams	1	2
WhatsApp Messaging	26	51

88.2% of teachers used Google Meet to engage their students.

Table 180: Devices Used by Secondary Teachers for Online Schooling (N=51)

Which of the following devices have you used for online schooling?	n	%
A desktop computer	7	13.7
A laptop computer	43	84.3
A tablet	13	25.5
A smartphone	34	66.7
Other	1	3.9

84.3% of teachers used a laptop computer for online schooling.

Table 181: Sources of Devices Used by Secondary Teachers' for Online Schooling (N=51)

Who provided the device(s) that you used for online schooling?	n	%
I used my own throughout the entire period of online schooling	37	72.5
I used my own at first, but then the school assigned me a device	0	0
I used my own at first, but then the Ministry of Education assigned me a device	3	5.9
No Response	10	19.6
TOTAL	51	100

72.5% of teachers used their devices throughout the entire period of online schooling.

Table 182: Source of Internet Access for Secondary Teachers' during Online Schooling (N=51)

How have you accessed Internet services for online schooling?	n	%
At home	44	86.3
At the school	23	45.1
From a neighbour	1	2
From a community hotspot	0	0

86.3% of teachers accessed the internet from their homes for online schooling.

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=51)

What additional support did you provide for your students during online schooling?	n	%
I did not provide any additional support for my students.	7	13.7
I paid home visits to some students	4	7.8
I offered one-on-one sessions with students when necessary	16	31.4
I gave additional time for completing classwork and assignments	32	62.7
I directed students to online resources to support their learning	35	68.6
Other	1	2

68.6% of teachers directed students to online resources to support their learning, while 62.7% gave additional time for completing classwork and assignments.

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.

Table 184: Secondary Teachers' Perspectives on Various Aspects of Online Schooling (N=51)

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?	15.7	7.8	21.6	39.2	2	2
How supportive were your students' parents during online learning?	2	19.6	25.5	33.3	5.9	3.9
	0 Not at All Stressful	1	2	3	4	5 Very Stressful
How stressful did you find teaching online?	2	7.8	25.5	9.8	11.8	33.3
	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?	5.9	13.7	15.7	21.6	19.6	13.7
	0 Not at All Conducive	1	2	3	4	5 Very Conducive
How conducive was your home environment for teaching online?	0	2	7.8	23.5	25.5	29.4
	0 Not at All Comfortable	1	2	3	4	5 Very Comfortable
How comfortable were you with using technology in online teaching?	0	0	7.8	29.4	19.6	31.4
	0 Extremely Poor	1	2	3	4	5 Very Good
How would you rate your students' learning in the online environment?	0	17.6	39.2	31.4	0	2
How would you rate your students' attendance for online classes?	2	23.5	37.3	21.6	3.9	2
How would you rate your students' participation?	2	15.7	37.3	21.6	9.8	3.9
	0 Not at All Motivated	1	2	3	4	5 Very Motivated
How motivated were you to teach online?	2	3.9	7.8	47.1	19.6	9.8
	0 Not at All Satisfied	1	2	3	4	5 Very Satisfied
How satisfied were you with your online teaching activities during the pandemic?	3.9	7.8	21.6	39.2	9.8	7.8

39.2% of teachers indicated that their school or Ministry of Education was supportive during online schooling, while 33.3% of parents were supportive. 25.5% of teachers indicated that teaching online was stressful, while 21.6% indicated that they could balance work and personal life while

teaching online. 25.5% of teachers indicated their homes were conducive to online schooling, and 29.4% indicated that they were comfortable using the technology during online schooling. 47.1% indicated they were very motivated to teach online, while 39.2% indicated they were moderately satisfied with their online teaching activities during the pandemic.

Table 185: Ease of Following Safety Protocols for Secondary Teachers during COVID-19 (N=51)

Statements that BEST applies	n	%
It was always hard for me to follow the safety rules.	2	3.9
It was sometimes hard for me to follow the safety rules.	13	25.5
It was seldom hard for me to follow the safety rules.	13	25.5
It was never hard for me to follow the safety rules.	19	37.3
TOTAL	51	100

37.3% of teachers indicated that following the safety rules was never hard for them, while 25.5% indicated that it was ‘sometimes hard’ and ‘seldom hard’.

Table 186: Ease of Changing from Face-to-Face to Online for Secondary Teachers (N=51)

Statements that BEST applies	n	%
Changing from face-to-face school to online school was very hard for me.	5	9.8
Changing from face-to-face school to online school was somewhat hard for me.	20	39.2
Changing from face-to-face school to online school was a little hard for me.	8	15.7
Changing from face-to-face school to online school was not hard at all for me.	13	25.5
TOTAL	46	90.2

39.2% of teachers indicated that it was somewhat hard for them to switch from face-to-face to online school, while 25.5% indicated that it was not hard at all.

Table 187: Impact of COVID-19 on Secondary Teachers' Attitude to Teaching (N=51)

Statements that BEST applies	n	%
The COVID-19 pandemic has had a very good effect on how I feel about teaching.	4	7.8
The COVID-19 pandemic has had a fairly good effect on how I feel about teaching.	17	33.3
The COVID-19 pandemic has had no effect on how I feel about teaching.	11	21.6
The COVID-19 pandemic has had a fairly bad effect on how I feel about teaching.	11	21.6
The COVID-19 pandemic has had a very bad effect on how I feel about teaching.	3	5.9
No Response	5	8.9
TOTAL	51	100

33.3% of teachers indicated that the COVID-10 pandemic had a fairly good effect on how they felt about teaching. In comparison, 21.6% indicated that they had no effect and had a fairly bad effect on how they felt about teaching during the pandemic.

Summary

Most teachers (86.3%) engaged their students during the COVID-19 lockdown. However, 88.2% of teachers experienced challenges during online schooling. These challenges include sharing a device, creating appropriate assessment activities, preparing lessons, devices not always working, and dealing with parents online. Most teachers indicated that they prefer a hybrid teaching method, with most teachers using Google Suite/Google Classroom and Zoom as the learning platforms used to engage their students during online schooling. Most teachers used their laptop computers as their devices during online schooling and accessed internet access from their homes. Teachers indicated that they directed their students to resources to support their learning and gave additional time for completing classwork and assignments.

Teachers indicated that their schools or ministries and the parents of their students were moderately supportive of them during online schooling. Most teachers indicated that teaching online was very stressful, but they moderately balanced work and personal life and were moderately motivated to teach during this period. However, They also reported that they were satisfied with their online teaching activities during the pandemic.

Additionally, teachers indicated that their homes were conducive to online learning and were very comfortable using the technology for online teaching. They moderately rated their students' learning experience, online class attendance, and participation during online learning.

Most teachers indicated that following the safety rules during the pandemic was never difficult and that changing from face-to-face to online teaching was somewhat difficult for them. They also indicated that the pandemic had a fairly good effect on how they felt about teaching.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This report explores the interconnected factors shaping student academic achievement in Dominica, including the roles of home environments, school practices, leadership, and the broader systemic influences that have persisted since the colonial era. While evidence of progress, such as widespread access to early childhood education, reflects positive strides and inclusivity, significant challenges hinder the development of an equitable and effective education system.

Despite a stable and experienced teaching workforce, gaps in advanced qualifications and subject-specific pedagogical training - particularly in critical areas like Math and Science - underscore the importance of professional development and capacity building. Similarly, school leaders demonstrate strong commitment and extensive experience but face challenges in curriculum engagement, communication, and recognition of teachers' and students' practices that are crucial for fostering collaborative school environments.

Students' home environments show varying levels of support, with maternal figures playing a central role and extended family contributing significantly to caregiving. However, disparities in paternal involvement and the underutilisation of resources like books for literacy development point to the need for targeted interventions to foster balance and enrich home support systems. The nearly universal access to the internet and digital devices represents an opportunity to integrate technology into learning more effectively. However, the low engagement with reading materials indicates the need to promote digital and traditional literacy practices.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought systemic vulnerabilities to light, including inequitable access to technology and inconsistencies in the support provided to teachers and students during the transition to online and hybrid learning models. Teachers displayed resilience in adapting to online instruction. However, they reported high levels of stress and insufficient institutional support, highlighting the importance of preparing schools for future disruptions through better resource allocation, training, and mental health support. Students face similar challenges, with many struggling to adapt to the transition between learning modalities, underscoring the need for adaptive and flexible educational frameworks that prioritise student well-being. The findings also

reflect tensions in traditional educational practices, such as using the Grade 6 National Assessment (G6NA), ability-based streaming, and grade retention. While these practices are widely supported, their potential to reinforce inequities necessitates a careful re-evaluation based on empirical evidence to ensure they align with modern principles of equity and inclusivity.

Additionally, school characteristics such as absenteeism, disparities in facilities, and the absence of formal reading and extracurricular policies further illustrate the need for systematic reform; the lack of specialised spaces in primary schools and outdoor facilities in secondary schools limits opportunities for diverse and holistic learning experiences. Addressing these gaps through investments in infrastructure and the formalisation of policies can support consistent and equitable access to quality education.

This report serves as a foundational step toward understanding the multifaceted factors influencing academic achievement in Dominica. Its insights provide a valuable basis for evidence-informed policy-making to modernise the education system to meet the needs of students and teachers alike. The forthcoming report 1b will build on these findings by examining the predictive potential of these factors, offering further guidance to stakeholders, and seeking to design policies and programs that support improved educational outcomes. Together, these efforts represent a critical opportunity to transform the education system into one capable of equipping Dominica's students with the skills and opportunities necessary to thrive in a dynamic global environment.

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 specific 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 Dominica. 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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