

## ANGLICAN SCHOOLS DIVISION REPORT TO SYNOD 2013

### **The Diocese and Education**

The Anglican Church helped to pioneer formal education in Jamaica from as early as the 1700s and has remained unrivalled in its ownership and control of educational institutions ranging from early childhood through to tertiary (Satchel, Veront, 2008).

The involvement of the Diocese began when missionaries were invited by the Planters to “give religious instructions” to the enslaved. The buildings erected then served as schoolhouses as well as churches and these later came to be known as elementary schools. Serving parallel to these were private schools which were set up through endowments or funds from the wealthy, most of whom were Anglican. The schools, which later became known as Trust schools, were mostly all Anglican in outlook and ethos. The benefactors stipulated that the schools should be headed by Anglican Priests and some even had chapels built on the properties e.g. Jamaica College and Hampton and Munro High Schools. Of the 218 school bequests made between 1667–1736, only a few remain and, more notably, 7 of these still have Anglican connections. Currently, also one school, Westwood High in Trelawny, shares operational interest with the Anglican church and 3 other denominations.

Sometime after the arrival in Jamaica of Bishop Lipscombe in 1824 the government ceased its funding of elementary schools so much of the financial burden to fund and direct the operations of these schools rested on the Anglican Church.

The Diocese increased its contribution to education in earnest after slavery while setting up Secondary schools in major towns. The Anglican Church continued its involvement with the elementary schools and ventured into teacher training with its first Teacher Training College established in Spanish Town. The Anglican Church was also involved in the setting up of The MICO, now The MICO University College, in 1835 whose first Principal was the Rev J.M. Trew (Anglican) while Bishop Nuttall was Chairman for 34 years. The Church still retains a place on the Board of Governors. The Shortwood Teachers' College was established by Bishop Nuttall (Anglican) as an answer to the need to have formally trained female teachers. Bishop Nuttall chaired the Board of Governors while the Rev. Samuel Butcher (Methodist) acted as the first Principal for a short time. Church Teachers' College was established on the approval of Synod 1963 to train Anglican teachers to staff Anglican Schools.

Presently the Anglican Church owns and controls the largest number of church affiliated educational institutions. These include:

- o 82 – Early Childhood / Basic Schools
- o 10 – Preparatory Schools
- o 5 – Infant Schools
- o 6 – Primary Schools with Infant Departments
- o 43 – Primary Schools
- o 55 – Junior High and All Age Schools
- o 11 – High Schools
- o 1 – Tertiary Institution

### **School Governance**

The effectiveness of a school is tasked to its Board of Governors. Presently most of our School Boards are appointed although there is difficulty sometimes in finding suitable and willing persons to fill the positions. If our schools are the Church's mission to the nation then the members of the church should elect to serve and do all in their power to make the Anglican schools among the best in the island. Our schools need visionaries, planners, strategists, persons with broad networks and access to facilities and information, to be part of its governance. The Diocese owes a debt of gratitude to those persons who continue to serve and give of themselves many times at great cost to them.

The Division has had several board training sessions in an effort to enhance and strengthen the performance of the board members. Some of the areas of training include:

- Governance and the Regulations
- Communicating Effectively with the Various Stakeholders
- Interviewing Techniques to Get the Right Fit
- Managing School Finances
- Mistakes School Boards Should Avoid
- Important Records That Should Be Kept and By Whom
- Ecclesiastical Responsibilities To The Church
- New Developments in Education
  - The Jamaica Teaching Council
  - The Inspectorate

Attendance at seminars was quite good and the evaluations favourable. Presenters were drawn from the Private Sector, the Ministry of Education, the Clergy and the Jamaica Teachers' Association.

Observation has revealed, however, that some School Boards need to be more involved in not only creating the Vision of schools but also in its realisation. Additionally, some should be more involved in the creation of and/or be more knowledgeable of the School's Improvement Plan (SIP) to enable them to frequently and effectively track and monitor their schools' progress. Deficiencies are also observed in the proper accountability of finances, time, and the products of the schools. More forward planning needs to be done particularly in the areas of upcoming vacancies for Principals and other staff members and not wait on the appointed time.

Boards should ensure also that teachers and especially new principals are evaluated before three terms are up.

Also to note is that there is poor dissemination of information to Church House. This is particularly true of the Primary schools which often times communicate only when there are problems. Plans should be made even for one-day retreats to ensure that Board and Staff members and other stakeholders can meet to plan and have a clear understanding of the direction of the school and the strategies and activities to achieve them.

## **PERFORMANCE OF OUR INSTITUTIONS**

### **BASIC SCHOOLS**

A fulsome report cannot be made on the teaching/learning areas of many of our Basic Schools. Some schools that were visited seemed quite settled while others are in urgent need of repair and upgrading. Because of the latter, it is advisable that the Sponsoring Bodies pay particular attention to the inflows of grants and donations to the schools. Proper accounting for operations is not done and the churches are therefore called upon to make up the differences when the monies diverted to cover operational expenses could be used towards infrastructure and other developmental upgrades for the schools.

During the coming year all Basic schools should be visited to stake and reinforce the Church's claim to its properties. All our churches need to take charge of their schools as some of the principals are declaring them to be community schools despite the fact that our churches continue to foot the bills for utilities and other things.

The Division facilitated training for the Basic school teachers of Region I.

The topics included:

- Handling School Finances
- Some Strategies for Teaching and Learning of Early Childhood Students
- Discipline and How to Properly Instil It
- Professionalism of the Teacher

The teachers were very receptive and appreciative and have requested that the training be continued.

### **Primary and Preparatory Schools**

The Diocese is appreciative of the schools that are performing acceptably. Some of the staff members are quite innovative in their various approaches to getting the students to learn. Many of the schools have taken part in national events and competitions and performed creditably.

The most notable problem with many of our small primary schools is that they consistently underperform in all areas and it would appear that not enough effort is being made to address this. Discussion with some Principals and teachers leave one feeling depressed as the idea is given that **nothing better can be expected of these children. It cannot be allowed to continue as it seems that some children in a few Anglican schools are educated for ‘persistent poverty’.** The teachers in these schools enjoy being in their comfort zone or spend their time upgrading themselves while leaving the students behind. While one is not against teacher upgrading, it must follow that these upgrades directly and positively impact our students. When graduate teachers have small classes and the students are failing at the Primary level, something is wrong.

Many of the schools where teachers have multi-grade classes are areas of disaster. Special training and monitoring must be done to correct this problem. It is recommended that the Church Teachers’ College be approached to give help in this area. The multi-grade teacher though, must organize and use resources such as time, learning material and teaching aids to ensure that all students progress at their grade levels; this is the critical challenge of multi-grade teaching. But this situation should not be frowned upon as it offers great opportunities to teachers and students in single grade schools as students there also are of different ages and abilities, language and competencies. The single grade teachers can promote more effective and efficient learning if they use multi-grade techniques to take care of these differences within the classroom. It is being strongly purported that multi-grade teaching techniques can be used effectively for teaching in single classroom situations. There should therefore, be no excuse for low performance.

The recent Grade Six Achievement Test (GSAT) results show that some of the students from our schools were awarded scholarships. They are listed below:

<u><b>Names</b></u>	<u><b>Schools</b></u>	<u><b>Designated Schools</b></u>
Rogers Mathews-Pierve Palmer, Tatyana	St. Hugh’s Preparatory Allman Town Primary	Campion College Immaculate Conception
Bond, Amanda Stewart, Hanna	St. Hugh’s Primary Central Branch All Age	Campion College Wolmer’s High for Girls
Saunders, Alstear	Central Branch All Age	Jamaica College

<u><b>Names</b></u>	<u><b>Schools</b></u>	<u><b>Designated Schools</b></u>
Hines, Lean	St. Alban’s Primary	Merl Grove High
Smith, Clement	St. Alban’s Primary	Excelsior High
Shen, Kai-Lan	The Queen’s Preparatory	Campion College
Decambre, Jason	The Queen’s Preparatory	Campion College

## **High Schools**

In an effort to give a rounded education to our students, our high schools continue to take part in events as part of the school's co-curricular activities.

Recently the Minister of Education stated his disappointment with the results of the nation's schools in the recent CSEC examination. The Division undertook an analysis of the performance of the Anglican schools in this examination. Ranking the schools on the basis of their overall passes the top three schools are Glenmuir High ranked number one with 98% out of every 100 entries achieving a passing grade. Bishops High and St Hilda's Diocesan High are ranked numbers 2 and 3 respectively. For Bishop's High 93% of the entries achieved passing grades and in the case of St Hilda's that statistic was 92%. The data shows Glenmuir being the only school having passes above 90% in both subjects, St Hilda's Diocesan High and Bishop Gibson High and St Hugh's High each having passes above 90% in English Language. For Mathematics, however, the passes range from a low of 62% for Bishop Gibson High to a high of 75% for St. Hugh's High. Interestingly, St. Jago, which had 80% passes in English Language, had 89% passes in Mathematics. In most of the schools the students passed between 7 to 9 subjects while one student at De Carteret passed 12 subjects. The results showed that their overall performance, but for two, performed well above the national average in the indicator subjects of Mathematics and English Language. The students had many distinctions in these and other subjects. The Diocese congratulates the staff at the various schools while at the same time imploring the students to aim for higher percentages in the indicator subjects.

At the CAPE level many of the students passed 3 to 4 subjects and more. There are some who received scholarships to Ivy League Universities abroad and to our own University of the West Indies.

## **Church Teachers' College**

Church Teachers' College (CTC), our only Tertiary institution, now has two campuses, the second one being in Brown's Town, St. Ann. All subjects are now offered at the Bachelor's level and the college now offers, in conjunction with Temple University, a Master's degree in Mathematics, and a PhD in Educational Leadership.

## **Technology in Schools**

Our schools are aware of the importance of technology in the modern educational system. Many of our institutions even from the Basic school level have had access to even one computer. Work must continue in this area in an effort to help to prepare our young people for continued education and global interaction.



### **Accessibility to Schools**

The over 200 schools owned by the Diocese of Jamaica and the Cayman Islands are scattered over the entire island in some of the most hazardous and hard to reach places. Since the Diocese must take responsibility for the performance of these institutions, the following are recommendations for administrative and functional changes:

- Increase of personnel in the division.
- Encourage retired educators to help with the monitoring of schools in some areas.
- When the Director has to travel out to the country to visit several schools maybe over 2 days, provision be made for overnighting, or the provision of a driver should be considered.

### **SCHOOL CHAPLAINS**

Not all of our High Schools had Chaplains during the past academic year due to resignations and transfers. The number of Lay Chaplains in primary schools has not increased this year due to staff shortage in the department. Those who are active must be commended as the job they perform is of paramount importance to the schools in which they operate. Chaplains provide the connection between the church and its schools and they also look after the spiritual health of the institutions. It cannot be overemphasized how important it is that this service be expanded.

### **Schools' Environment and Safety**

Students and teachers spend approximately 7 hours daily from Monday through Friday at single shift schools, so the schools' environment should be appealing and provide a level of safety for all. Some of our schools are lacking in this area as their surroundings are unattractive and, more importantly, their safety is compromised. The Diocese should not be faced with a lawsuit for lack of security so all stakeholders of schools should work together to change the situation where these occur. More schools need to have presentable compounds and emphasis needs to be placed on building the environmental awareness of the students and staff.

### **The Division's Involvement**

The Division through the Director has been involved in other educational matters such as:

- Compulsory Education for Girls Who Become Pregnant

The Woman's Centre, an agency of the government, invited a group of faith-based owners of public schools to discuss the captioned topic. The suggestion was that when girls become pregnant in schools their places should be kept in the schools. The meeting disagreed with this suggestion but recommended that places could be found for the young ladies in other schools and the school from which she came could do the same for other

girls as was done previously. There was also concern about the student-fathers and their needs. An answer could not be given right away on the former as the matter would have to be discussed with the respective churches.

Other highlights of the year include:

- The Director represented the churches on the committee that prepared the draft document to be presented to Cabinet on the Jamaica Teaching Council.
- The preparation of a manual for guidance in the employment of new principals. The Director represented churches and was also part of Trainer of Trainers group that examined the manual of Board members.
- The church through the Director is also a member of the 2-year old Education Ecumenical Committee (EEC) made up of churches that own public schools. This Lobby group monitors education policy and anything that affects schools as well as have meetings with the Minister of Education on issues concerning education.

The following are recommendations for administrative, policy and functional operations for consideration to address some of the chronic issues highlighted in this report in the immediate to long term:

### **Recommendations**

- If the Diocese is serious about the achievements of its schools and not merely with the number of schools it owns and controls, more people are needed to track, monitor and provide guidance for teachers in the field. Retired Anglican Educators is an immediate answer to this.
- There is also need for at least one other person in the School's Division at Church House to undertake the administrative and functional support role of the Division.
- There needs to be an overarching policy that covers all of Anglican education to be inclusive of staffing, administrative, instructive and operational set by the Diocese.
- There could be contact/association with other Directors of Schools in the Province, to share best practices and approaches.
- Clergy training should include an understanding of the role of church school in the Church's mission.
- Establish a working party to explore specific issues affecting rural schools and draft recommendations and strategies to address them.
- The Diocese should find creative ways to set aside funds to help some needy schools for example, every child attending to a church school could be asked to make an annual contribution to the fund.

- There needs to be more focus by the Diocese on the culture, performance and the ethos of its schools; the schools should show that they are Anglican.
- Chaplains should be more involved at **all levels** through an active mentorship programme, confirmation classes and Anglican Youth Fellowship (AYF) groups in the schools.
- The establishment of two new Anglican schools, **even private**; a high school in Jamaica and a preparatory or primary school in the Cayman Islands.
- Work to get the structure of the Boards of leased schools changed or get a Concordat with the Ministry of Education/Government on the operation of Church schools in Jamaica.
- Revitalise the Anglican Educators Association in **all parishes**.

Fellow workers in the field, after 50 years of Independence and nearly 300 years of involvement in education, the Anglican Church needs to shine again in its directorship and influence in this field.

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