

UNC EDUCATION POLICY DIRECTION 2025 – 2030

The Ministry of Education is a key leader in formulating the UNC Strategic National Development Plan.

As the ministry responsible for the education and development of almost 300,000 students at four levels of the education system and over 12,000 employees, it is crucial to ensure that the Ministry of Education's sector plan is fully integrated into the Strategic National Development Plan to deliver impact, value, and benefit to the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago.

The Ministry of Education has three key policy direction imperatives to transform the education system and contribute to progressive national development. The imperatives are rooted in The Vision of the Child, which affirms the following outcomes for our children:

1. Children who will achieve their full potential
2. Children who are adequately prepared educationally to fulfil their potential
3. Children who are adequately developed socially and culturally
4. Children who are healthy and growing normally
5. Children who are emotionally developed, mature and happy

To achieve the above, the education system has three major priorities:

1. Focus on our children
2. Focus on parents
3. Focus on the elements of the components of the education system

Fundamental actions must be performed if the education system intends to support every child and achieve equity, access, and quality.

The Ministry of Education can deliver the best results to the nation through the following primary considerations at the operational level:

1) PREPARATION OF ALL CHILDREN TO MAXIMIZE EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

The UNC will perform the following actions to achieve the above:

- Universal Screening and Treatment of Children between the ages of 4 to 6 re: neurodevelopmental, physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing, socio-economic wellbeing, etc.

- It is expected that specialist consultants (neurodevelopmental) will be engaged to assist in planning, conducting initial screening and treatment, training and development of specialists and other advisory support and any other requirements, as deemed necessary.
- The Children Authority and the Students Support Services Division (SSSD) of the Ministry of Education will be re-evaluated concerning their purpose, roles, institution construct and performance expectations to satisfy best the preparation, development and care of the nation's Children, including operational delivery of services and in terms of regulatory.
- Neurodevelopment specialist expertise will be hired to enhance the competence of existing resources and fulfil the Transformational Initiatives' performance. Further, international alignment with neurodevelopment science research centres will be pursued to stay abreast of learning and developments.
- The Students Support Services Division (SSSD) of the Ministry of Education (MOE) will be re-engineered to become the primary operation for Screening and Treatment for all Children in the country between the ages of 4 and 6 and to lead and manage the entire screening process on a sustainable basis into the future.
- The Children's Authority's role will be re-examined to give it a more focused Regulatory and overarching supervisory role in protecting and developing Children. At present, the role is mixed between reacting to reports of at-risk children and being a regulatory measure
- A Computerised development Tracking System of the "Understanding" of all Children will need to be developed.

This should form the basis for tracking the development and performance of children throughout their schooling. This will be a major Digitalisation project that must be planned, developed, and managed. This is an opportunity to focus on the development of Local Business Organisations, with possible assistance from foreign consultants, but the opportunity must be locally led to derive optimum benefit from capital expenditure (CAPEX).

2) PREPARATION OF PARENTS AND GUARDIANS TO ASSIST CHILDREN TO MAXIMIZE EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

Parents and guardians provide pivotal support for children in the education journey. However, not every parent or guardian has the requisite skills, abilities and experience.

The UNC will provide parents and guardians with the following types of support to enable them to best assist their children during and beyond their school years.

- Parental Training of Parents, Guardians, Caregivers
 - An inventory of all Parental Training Programs and corresponding resource deployment will be undertaken within the Government and the Private Sector.
 - An exercise will be conducted to consolidate understanding of the nature of Parental Training programs in the government and the private sector.
 - A team will be established to develop a Parental Training Framework of critical understandings which all Parents should have to allow them to best contribute to the development of our Children of the Nation.
 - Standardized Parental Training Programs will be designed and developed using lessons from the nature of Existing Programs.
 - A Parental Training Management Division within the MOE will be established to oversee all Parental Training. This is

considered appropriate because only the MOE has an appreciation and possible understanding of who Parents, caregivers, and Guardians ought to be because of the correlation between Children and Parents.

- The Parental Training Program will be initiated as a volunteer participation and incentive system but will be prepared to institute legal and regulatory requirements to ensure Parental Training participation and recognition of responsibility.
- A certification-type process will be instituted to verify Parental Training participation.
- The opportunity to use a computerized system to manage parental training is also available.

3) TRANSFORMATIONAL INITIATIVES TO IMPROVE THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

The framework for a leading practice education system was developed from 2010 - 2015. The basis and substance of the model remain valid and can now be enhanced and improved through the following activities, interventions and initiatives.

3a). STUDENTS SUPPORT

- Provision of tablets and laptops to facilitate digital learning, research and technological competence.
- Procurement of learning materials such as textbooks for enactment of the curriculum.
- Establish literacy libraries in every classroom to improve reading and comprehension skills.
- Provide students with reliable high-speed internet and bandwidth to facilitate IT traffic.
- Review and improve homework centres.
- Introduce the peer discipline concept

- Provide continuous career guidance advice.

3b). CURRICULUM DELIVERY

- Activate a teacher management and development unit at the curriculum division to facilitate current and future training requirements.
- Establish master teacher positions to improve curriculum delivery and provide localized teacher support.
- Recruit outstanding retired educators in language and mathematics to continuously conduct workshops and training sessions in these key subject areas.
- Create teacher specialists at each level at primary and secondary schools to enable more focused curriculum delivery.

3c). SCHOOL MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

- Establish position of master principal to lead and manage high-risk schools based on school improvement ability.
- Assign principals with proven ability to improve their performance to assist underperforming schools.
- Provide continuous upskilling training for principals.
- Provide compulsory training for persons seeking promotion.

3d). EXAMINATION AND ASSESSMENT {Primary Schools}

- Reintroduce Continuous Assessment Component (CAC) on a phased basis as part of SEA examinations since it allows a fairer assessment of the multi-intelligence principle of students than the present model.

3e). SCHOOL SUPERVISION

- Reengineer the School Supervision Division to be more focused on school performance.

- Establish independent cross-disciplinary school intervention teams as another layer of school support and evaluation.

3f). TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

- Establish a full-fledged technical university to provide the highest level of technical vocational training, including a technical vocational teacher training division independently or in a private-public partnership.
- Integrate the TEC/VOC schools into the secondary school system. Students interested in technical vocational education can attend a technical vocational institution full-time for two days per week from form three. They can graduate with a combination of O' Levels and CVQs at the comparative level
- Engage the National Training Agency more directly in delivering technical vocational education.
- Create more positions of technical vocational curriculum officers to facilitate technical vocational expansion.
- Review the staffing certification and quality of technical education for performance standards.

3g). TEACHING SERVICE COMMISSION

- Seek a full-time TSC to address the volume of work adequately.
- Urgently work with TSC to seek to delegate more responsibilities to the Ministry of Education since TSC mainly functions as an HR contractor of the Ministry.
- Improve alignment with Ministry of Education processes.

3h). PHYSICAL PLANT AND EQUIPMENT

- Work urgently to complete schools in an advanced state of completion.
- Plan and perform refurbishment at distressed schools.

- Provide schools with the required funding, equipment and supplies to deliver quality education.

3i). LEGISLATION

- Review reports of consultations to determine the way forward on amendments to the Education Act.
- Since 2017 the UNC has advocated for the Parental Responsibility Act to address violence in schools and bullying and as a long-term measure to deter crime. Several other commonwealth countries, such as Canada and the United Kingdom, have similar pieces of legislation that have assisted them in reducing deviant behaviour and bullying in schools. The UNC will pursue such legislation.