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Education in Belize: History and Current Issues

A Thesis in Partial Fulfilment of the degree of
Master of Arts in Administration and Policy Studies in Education
Faculty of Education
McGill University
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Clara Pastor

March 1995



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ABSTRACT

This study examines the evolution of preschool, primary and secondary education in Belize for the period 1816 to 1994 in relation to access, quality, effectiveness and efficiency in the use of available resources. Qualitative analysis of documentary evidence and interviews with 40 Belizean educators was combined with quantitative analysis of enrolment and other statistics. The data collected identified the major development milestones including compulsory attendance for primary students, the Primary School Leaving Certificate, the Belize National Selection examination for primary students, the Caribbean Examination Council examinations for secondary students and local teacher training. Major continuing issues include: lack of proper planning, inadequate human and financial resources, shortages of qualified teachers, high dropout rates, irrelevant curricula, and imbalance between rural and urban educational opportunity. This study concludes that although preschool, primary and secondary education has expanded, much still remains to be done to provide equal access, and improve its quality, effectiveness and efficiency.

RESUME

Cette étude examine l'évolution de l'éducation préé-scolaire, primaire et secondaire de Belize pour la période de 1816 à 1994 en rapport avec l'accès, la qualité, l'efficacité et l'efficience compte tenu de l'utilisation des ressources disponibles. L'analyse qualitative d'évidence documentaire et d'entrevues avec 40 éducateurs de Belize fut combinée à l'analyse quantitative d'effectifs et autres statistiques. Les données recueillies rélèlent les événements majeurs de développement incluant l'assiduité des élèves du primaire, la certification de fin d'études du primaire, l'examen national de sélection des élèves du primaire, les examens du Conseil des Caraïbes pour les élèves du secondaire ainsi que la formation des maitres. Des questions majeures permanentes incluent: le manque de planification, les ressources humaines et financières inadéquates, l'insuffisance de maitres qualifiées, le taux élevé de décrochage, des programmes d'étude non pertinents et le déséquilibre des chances entre le milieu rural et le milieu urbain. Cette étude conclut que beaucoup reste à faire pour assurer un accès égal et une qualité de l'éducation bien que l'éducation pré-scolaire, primaire et secondaire aient connu une expansion.

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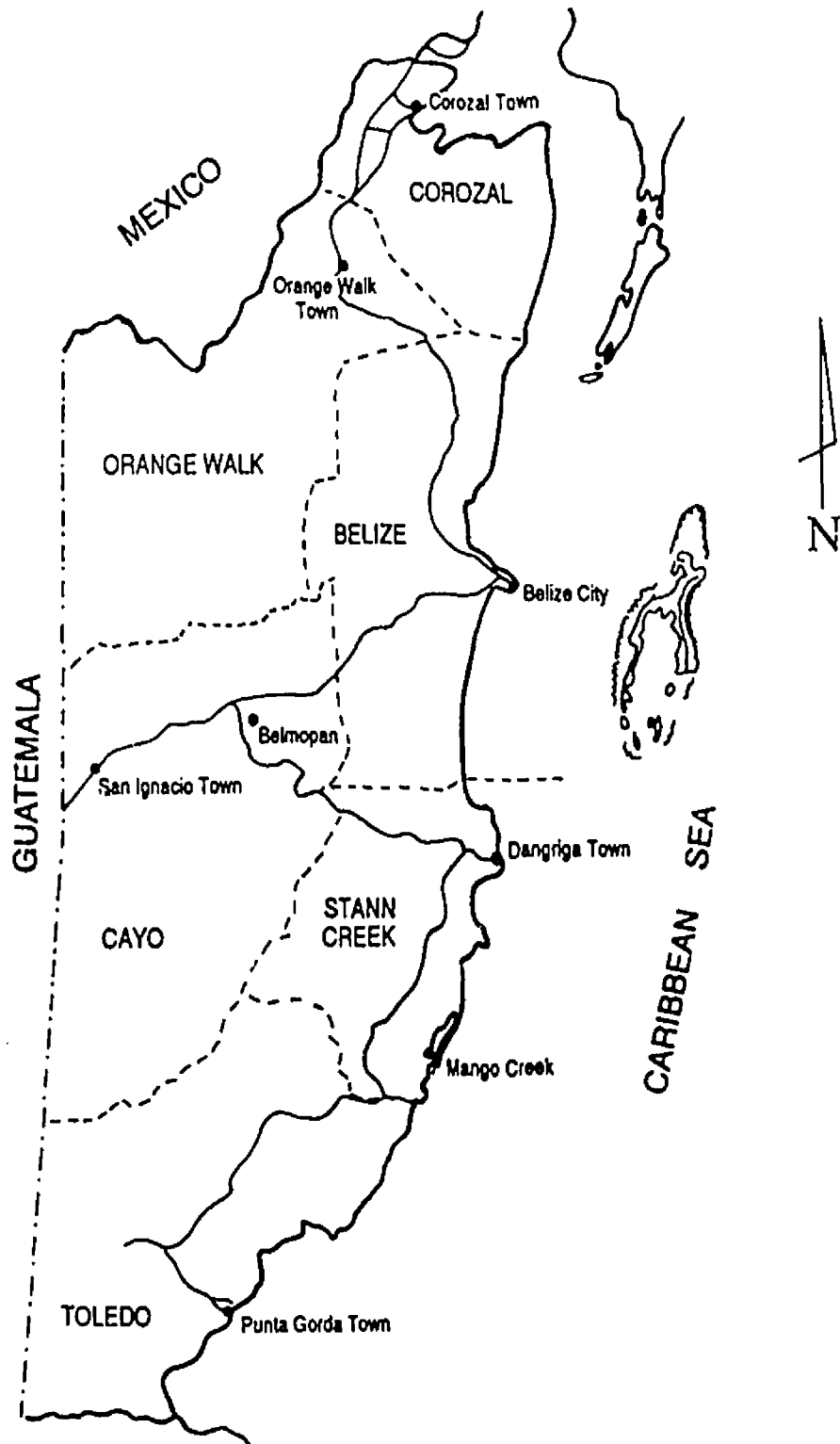
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Dedication

*To my husband, Herman and our children, Doreen, Herman Jr., Sheryl, Carla,
Georgia and Gregory with love.*

MAP OF BELIZE



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The educational system in Belize today mirrors that of many developing countries. The system - a legacy of over a century of British colonialism - is centrally planned; boasts a church-state partnership; offers pre-school to university; prepares its own teachers; and makes schooling accessible to everyone regardless of social status or religious affiliation (see Appendix A). These features were not always part of the system, however. This study will reveal that many of the above features, often taken for granted, are the results of years of evolution, policy changes and advocacy of special interest groups. More specifically, the study traces the major developments of preschool, primary and secondary education between the period 1816 to 1994, describes the major physical and social factors which affect the system and discusses the issues affecting preschool, primary and secondary education in terms of access, quality, efficiency and effectiveness. This chapter introduces the thesis. It states the rationale of the thesis and questions that guide the research, and explains the significance, methodology and limitations of the study.

Rationale

No comprehensive published histories of education exist in Belize so there is need for research to document the state of affairs in education from an historical perspective. This study has been prompted by an awareness, on my part, of the shortcomings of the

educational system. Because I have been emotionally and intimately involved with education for some twenty-five years, first as a primary school teacher and principal, then as a high school teacher and, of late, as a Ministry of Education official, I am aware that for some time now, the education system has been fulfilling neither individual nor national needs.

It is hoped that this study will help educators in Belize, especially the Ministry of Education officials, as they seek to make education relevant and responsive to the development needs and aspirations of all Belizeans. In addition, this study will contribute to the sparse literature on education in Belize.

This study will provide Ministry of Education officials with valuable insight into the preschool, primary and secondary sectors as they seek to restructure these systems to make them more relevant and responsive. The importance of this study, therefore, lies in its potential to contribute to the development and improvement of preschool, primary and secondary education in Belize.

Research Questions

In an attempt to trace the development of education from its inception to the present, this study answers the following research questions:

- 1) What geographical, historical, social, economic and religious factors affect preschool, primary and secondary education?
- 2) What are the major developmental reforms in preschool, primary and secondary education?

- 3) What are the issues affecting the preschool, primary and secondary systems of education?
- 4) How effective is the preschool, primary and secondary system in terms of access, quality and the use of resources?

Methodology

The purpose of this study is to trace the development of preschool, primary and secondary education in Belize. It also discusses issues in terms of access, quality and effectiveness in preschool, primary and secondary education.

Sample

The target group for this study includes a purposive sample of 40 individuals: politicians, officials in the Ministry of Education, Teachers' Union officials, school principals, and teachers (see Table 1).

Table 1

Target groups for data collection

Target Groups	Retired Respondents	Serving/Acting Respondents	Total
Teachers	5	5	10
Principals	5	5	10
Politicians	0	5	5
Teachers' Union Officials	0	5	5
MOE Officials	5	5	10

Significance of the Study

Since its inception, formal education in Belize has gone from buoyancy to crisis to attempts at reform. Present and past issues in our education system illuminate the dire need for research to document the true state of affairs in education in order to lay the foundation for improved educational programs.

I firmly believe that it is only when the history of education is known that the present situation will be understood and then, ultimately, plans can be made for future effective development in education.

Before addressing a group of educators and administrators on the subject of Church-State system of education in Belize, Father N. Murphy, a renowned educator in

Belize, stated:

. . . as I reflected on the Church/State system and asked colleagues in education questions about it over the past few weeks it occurred to me that a missing document is a history of the system. We have essentially inherited a British system and adapted it with time but I am not aware of any comprehensive historical account of exactly and specifically how the system evolved and changed over time in Belize.

Since a document on the history of preschool, primary and secondary education for the period of this study does not exist in Belize, it is my dream that this study will become the first book on the history of these three sectors.

Sources of Data

In qualitative research, the researcher is the major data gathering instrument (Anderson, 1990). In order to facilitate the triangulation of data for this research, semi-structured interviews, interpretation and content analysis were used as methods of data collection.

Two sources of data were used for this study. The first was documentation which consisted of Ministry of Education records and reports, the Archives of Belize and records of various educational institutions. Primary and secondary sources of information on the subject in other countries and Belize were also scrutinized. The second source was people who have made significant contributions to the development of education.

Literature Review

There is at present a dearth of literature on the evolution of educational systems

in Third World countries and Belize is no exception. Nevertheless, some literature which is available includes: The Development of Education in Jamaica by Wright (1956) who examined all levels of education from its inception in the 17th century to 1955. She provides a comprehensive analysis of the development of education in Jamaica. As a Belizean, I am interested in the educational system of Jamaica because of our historical links to that country. Our first Education officers came from Jamaica, our first set of trained teachers were trained in Jamaica, our educational system was thoroughly examined by B.H. Easter, Director of Education, Jamaica, in 1932. To date, our Belize Teacher Training College is affiliated with the University of the West Indies, Jamaica. Wright's study is therefore invaluable especially since it throws some light on what Jamaica's education system was like during colonial times. Wright's study provides information which showed that the educational systems of these two countries have evolved in an almost identical manner.

Bacchus (1980) thoroughly investigated Guyana's Educational System from its inception in the early 17th century to the late 1970's and also provided some insights about its implications for the Third World. His main focus, however, was the contribution that Guyana's education programs have made, or are making, on its socio-economic development. The information from this study is useful for my study. It has not only afforded me the opportunity to see the similarities in the evolution of education in Guyana but has also shown the effects of education on the socio-economic development of another Third World country which can be applied to Belize. The implications offered by Bacchus's study is applicable to Belize.

The World Bank conducted a study in 1992 to explore education and training systems in the Caribbean nations that are members both of the World Bank and the Caribbean group for Cooperation in Economic Development (CCCED). The analysis focused predominantly on the English-speaking countries, like Belize, but data on the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Surinam are included.

The overall emphasis of the World Bank study was to highlight the strong commonality of issues in the education sector across the Caribbean Region. It discussed successful initiatives which were being implemented, as well as promising new policy and investment options meriting further exploration. These measures should enhance access, quality and effectiveness of education.

The information in this study which is pertinent to Belize included some useful information about issues in preschool, primary and secondary education in terms of access, quality and effectiveness. It also provided the guideline for this study.

Easter (1935) made a comprehensive inquiry into the educational system of Belize and, invariably, described the existing system of education in relation to the conditions and needs of the population during this period. He also made recommendations regarding use of limited funds available for education. Although Easter's study took place some six decades ago, it bears significance on this study in two ways: it was the first study done on the educational system of Belize and secondly, it laid the foundation for our present educational system.

Dixon (1936), Supervisor of Negro Education for the state of Georgia in the United States examined the education system of Belize and made recommendations for

improvements specifically in regard to the supervision and training of primary school teachers. Dixon's report is important to this study mainly because it provides information on the first system of supervision of primary schools in Belize (The "Jeanes Teacher" system) which has become a permanent feature of the education system of Belize (Education Officers).

Sanchez (1963) studied the development of the Education System of Belize from 1816 to 1962 and wrote a report for the Institute of Education, London University. The study was entitled "Historical development of education, 1816-1962". He presented educational activities of Belize in a chronological manner. His study is invaluable because it presented the educational activities of Belize in the colonial times.

The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Education Planning Mission (1964) also studied our educational system in 1963. In preparation for the transition of control over education from the British to the Belizeans, the ruling political party, the People's United Party (P.U.P.) requested assistance from UNESCO to examine the existing education system and to make recommendations for its improvement. Following the independence of Belize in 1981, UNESCO was once again invited in 1982 to evaluate the educational system and make recommendations for its improvement. These two studies are significant for their historical context and the opportunity they afforded me to reflect upon the outcomes of UNESCO's recommendations.

The work of Bennett entitled "A study of educational policy making in British Honduras, 1915-1965" highlighted the problems of primary and secondary teachers during

the Crown Colony period. His study provided information on the policies in education during that period.

Other researchers have examined specific aspects of Education in Belize. Palacio (1972) in his Master's thesis, researched and documented his findings on development of teacher training in Belize from its inception in 1954 to 1972. Rosado (1990) conducted a survey on the Belizean teachers' perceptions of the training they received between 1976 and 1987. He also presented a brief history of educational development in Belize which provided in-depth information on teacher training in Belize. Norales (1980) investigated secondary education. Her study, entitled "Belizean secondary school teachers' judgements of discipline problems in Belizean secondary school students' attitudes toward education", sheds some light on how secondary school teachers perceive the problems that they were facing in their classrooms. The Belize Education Sector Review Mission (1988) made a comprehensive study of the educational system of Belize and made recommendations for its improvement. The study provides data on preschool, primary and secondary education which is invaluable for this research. The archives of Belize provided valuable primary information on the education system from its inception in 1816 to 1974. Additional secondary information from the past and the present were also available there.

Data Analysis

Qualitative and quantitative methods were used for this thesis. An historical approach is a mode of "inquiry" which is no different from other qualitative approaches to research. It is context specific, concerned with natural settings and seeks to

understand experiences as a whole and not in isolation from the past nor the present (Bogden and Biklen, 1992). Precisely, a historical approach seeks to interpret and explain the significance of past experiences and not merely to document them (Gay, 1987). Qualitative descriptions are presented in summaries. Quantitative methods were used to analyze statistics including enrolment, examination results and government expenditures on education are presented in tables and graphs.

Organization of the Thesis

This study is divided into six chapters. Chapter I provides the background to the study. It states the purpose of the study, gives its rationale and explains its significance. It also includes the literature review, the research questions and describes the methodology used. Chapter II describes the geographical, historical, political, economic and socio-cultural development of Belize. Chapter III outlines the colonial beginnings of education from 1816 to 1962. The efforts of various religious denominations, the development of administration and the legal basis for education are also discussed in this chapter. Chapter IV examines the development of preschool and primary education. Chapter V examines the development of secondary education. Chapter VI discusses the major issues of primary and secondary education and presents suggestions for further research.

Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to the preschool, primary and secondary levels of education

and does not include tertiary and higher level education such as Sixth Forms, teacher education and the university. Time constraint was a major factor for data collection, especially since the data had to be collected in Belize within two months. Compounding the problem was the fact that there is a dearth of literature on education in Belize and that data collection required extensive travel and arduous searching. This has undoubtedly affected the outcome of this study. Treated as a case study, the results from this study cannot be generalized. The results should, however, help in understanding the true state of the preschool, primary and secondary education in Belize, in regard to access, quality, and the effectiveness of those systems.

This chapter introduces the thesis. It also states the rationale and research questions and explains the significance, methodology and limitations of the study. The following chapter describes the geographical, historical, political, socio-economic and socio-cultural development of Belize.

CHAPTER II

GEOGRAPHICAL, HISTORICAL, POLITICAL, SOCIO-ECONOMIC, AND SOCIO-CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF BELIZE

Introduction

A history of education in Belize would be incomplete without a description of how its physical and social features influence and are influenced by the education system. One of the most glaring examples of this is the number of schools serving small numbers of students. This is the result of different denominations establishing schools for their adherents. So, whereas one school could provide sufficient places for a village, two schools are built. Also, because of the attempt to make schools accessible to everyone, some schools are located in flood prone areas and in areas without proper roads. Supervision of these schools is particularly difficult, hence these schools exist mostly on the whims of the principal. During the rainy season attendance falls dramatically -- at times up to 50%. During the dry season, however, not only is attendance good but schools welcome the opportunity to conduct classes outdoors.

Economic factors also impact on education in Belize. Belize is a developing country -- most of its people are poor. Meeting the education needs of the country is therefore difficult especially with more than half the population being of school age and not earning an income. Agriculture is the mainstay of the economy but the education system has not responded adequately to the demands of this sector. Neither has the

school system responded to the multi-ethnicity of the society. For example, although English is the language of instruction it is not the mother tongue of the 12 ethnic groups or the new immigrants in the country. These are only some of the ways in which the physical and social features of Belize impact the education system. This chapter briefly describes the geographical, historical, political, socio-economic, and socio-cultural development of Belize.

Geography

Belize is situated in Central America, bounded on the north by Mexico, on the south and west by Guatemala and on the east by the Caribbean Sea. It boasts the second largest barrier reef in the world and shallow coastal waters sheltered by a line of coral reefs, dotted with islets called 'cayes'. The terrain consists of a low coastal plain, much of which is covered with mangrove swamp. There are mountain ranges in the southern and western parts of the country and a large part of the mainland is forest.

The area of Belize including the islands or cayes, is 23,000 square kilometres (twice the size of Jamaica and slightly larger than El Salvador). The country is divided into six districts: Belize, Corozal, Orange Walk, Cayo, Stann Creek and Toledo. The main towns are the most densely populated. In the rural areas, people live mostly in small villages along the sea coast of Southern Belize and inland, along rivers and roads. Most of these 200 villages are located in the area between the towns of Corozal and Orange Walk, along the coast of Southern Belize, along the Belize River and Western Highway and in southern Toledo District. The rest of Belize is very sparsely populated

or uninhabited.

The estimated population in 1991 was 190,792 of which 96,933 were males and 93,859 were females. Belize's small population impacts educational development. This has two important implications.

First, the administrative burden of managing the education system tends to fall on a very small number of people. As a consequence, the demands of routine administration allows little time for policy review and new initiatives. Second, the small size of the nation's educational system underscores the infeasibility (and very high cost) of education self-sufficiency, especially for the post-secondary level . . . (World Bank, 1992, p.6).

Belize, like most of Central America and the Caribbean, is in the hurricane belt. There have been two major hurricanes so far (1931 and 1961). The climate is sub-tropical and temperatures in coastal districts range from about 10 degrees Centigrade (50 degrees F) to about 35.6 Centigrade (96 degrees F); inland the range is greater. There are two seasons -- the dry season and the rainy season (Fact Sheet, Belize, 1992).

All the above features impact education. Primary schools are widely dispersed and are mostly situated in the rural areas. Some are located in the deep forest where roads are usually inaccessible, especially in the rainy season. As a result, these schools are seldom supervised. This can affect the quality of education that the children receive.

History

The Maya, the Indigenous People of Belize

The Maya are the indigenous people of Belize and are believed to be one of the first inhabitants of the Americas. They came from Asia 50,000 years ago, possibly by

crossing the Bering Straits (Dobson, 1973). The earliest Mayan settlement dates back to 2,000 B.C. and the Maya civilization in Belize is said to have been strongest between 250 A.D. and 900 A.D. (Dobson, 1973; Musa, 1987).

The Maya lived in villages and the society was divided into strictly ranked groups, having their own rights and duties. At the top were the supreme rulers who inherited their position. The merchants were the next most important group. They maintained a viable trade by sea and land, trading salt, cotton, cocoa, fish, honey, feathers, shells and precious stones. Belize was an important trading centre for the entire Maya area (Musa, 1986). The priests were also important members of the society and were very active in public affairs.

The Belizean Maya were basically farmers, builders, and potters. They grew corn, beans, squash, cocoa, chili peppers, other vegetables as well as cotton. They constructed buildings from stone and jewellery from gold, silver, copper, bronze and jade. Later they built temples, palaces and public buildings, plazas and ball courts and sculptures showing the lives of their gods and heroes.

Religion, mathematics, astronomy and calendrics played a very great part in the culture of the Maya. The Maya developed a positional system of numeration and an elaborate calendar mainly for religious purposes. They also invented a system of hieroglyphic writing. The Maya glyphs were sculptured or occasionally incised on alters, panels, walls, ball-court markers, wooden or stone lintels and most important of all, on stone stelae. The Maya also wrote in books made from bark. Some of these pages have survived to this day and have helped archaeologists to discover more about the Maya

culture (Dobson, 1973; Musa, 1987). These facts indicate that the Mayas must have attained a high level of education.

For unknown reasons, the Maya civilization began to decline around the tenth century. This decline was heightened when the Europeans arrived in Belize in the 16th and 17th centuries. Their arrival drastically altered the Mayan society and the indigenous people were forced to move to remote parts of the colony. Thousands died due to epidemics and the leading religious and political voices were suppressed. The British eventually subdued the remainder (Barry, 1989; Musa, 1987).

The Maya people who presently live in Belize are not directly descended from the natives who were there when the Europeans arrived in the 16th and 17th centuries. The modern Maya of Belize are descendants of Maya who lived in other Central American countries, specifically Guatemala and Mexico. They started migrating to Belize in about the mid-nineteenth century.

Three distinct groups, the Yucatec, Mopan and Kekchi Maya, came to Belize at different times and for different reasons. The Yucatec Maya, who live in the northern districts of Corozal and Orange Walk, came to Belize in great numbers during the mid-nineteenth century to escape the Caste War in the Yucatan. The Mopan Maya, who live exclusively in the Toledo district country's southwest, were forest dwellers who left their homes in the San Luis area of the southern Peten in Guatemala during the 1880's in search of new farmland. The Kekchi Maya, who fled to Belize in the 1870's and 1880's from the Verapaz region of Guatemala to escape forced labour recruitment during the construction of the original Guatemala City -Puerto Barrios highway, settled in the Toledo

district.

The Europeans

In 1502, Columbus sailed into and named the Bay of Honduras but he did not actually visit the area later known as British Honduras. The Spanish were the first to claim sovereignty but the first recorded settlement was established in 1638 by shipwrecked British sailors. They were in search of highly priced wood (logwood) used in Great Britain for dye. These former pirates, with the help of African slaves bought in the West Indies, became honest labourers. They cut and hewed logwood trees and were later joined by continual trickle of immigrants from other English settlements in the area. They later referred to their territory as the Settlement of English wood-cutters in the Bay of Honduras, and to themselves as "Baymen".

The Baymen were subjected to numerous attacks from the neighbouring Spanish settlements. The Spaniards started their attacks about 1718 and continued at intervals through the century until 1798 when the settlers were helped by African slaves and the West India Regiment of the British Army to win the Battle of St. George's Caye. After that battle, British control over the settlement gradually increased and in 1862 it became a British Colony and was called British Honduras.

The settlers were preoccupied with exploiting the economic potential of the forests. They were thinking primarily in terms of amassing wealth as quickly as possible and were not concerned with developing a very elaborate system of education for their children (Ashcraft and Grant, 1975).

The history of Belize has greatly impacted the education system in Belize. Although some changes have taken place, the structure of the system is largely a replica of the one set up by the British in the 1800s. The highly centralized system, the church-state system of control, the predominant academic curriculum and English as the language of instruction are only some of Belize's legacy from the colonial times.

Political Development

In the early years, Belize was governed by "the Public Meeting" presided over by the "magistrates". Every free man could attend the meeting, but only a small group with property and money could be members of "the Public Meeting". This group made all the laws. In 1765, a visiting Admiral named Burnaby wrote down the laws of the settlement and they became known as the Burnaby's Code. In 1786 the British sent out its first superintendent and in 1840 the laws of England were proclaimed to be in force in the settlement.

From 1854 until 1871, the settlement was governed by a Superintendent and a Legislative Assembly elected by a limited number of persons who had acquired property qualification. The title of the Superintendent was then changed to Lieutenant Governor. In 1871 Belize also became a Crown Colony. The Legislative Assembly was replaced by a Legislative Council. Under this system the country was governed by the Lieutenant Governor, who was also Governor of Jamaica, and a Council which was entirely a nominative body. Belize got its own Governor in 1884.

National politics in Belize began in 1919 during what were called the Ex- Servicemen's Riots. Upon returning from World War 1, Belizean veterans protested the continuing racism in the society and their status as second-class citizens. A strong nationalist movement, inspired by U.S. black nationalist, Marcus Garvey, developed in the first half of this century. The labour movement also became an important force for economic and political change in the colonial society (Barry, 1989, p.6).

Belizeans wanted to have more say in their government but in the elections of 1936, only a small fraction of the population could vote -- of the 56,071 people in Belize at that time only 1,035 were listed on the register of voters.

In 1949, one of the first political parties, the People's Committee, was formed. This party relied heavily on the national infrastructure and activism of the Belizean labour movement led by the General Workers Union (GWU). Nationalism gained momentum in the 1950's and there was regular confrontation between the nationalists and the colonial government. In 1954, a new constitution gave all citizens over the age of 21, and who could read and write, the right to vote.

In 1960, the Ministerial system was introduced with the elected representatives being a majority of the Executive Council. In 1961, the new constitution came into effect and the Honourable George Price became the First Minister of Belize. Belize was granted limited self-government in 1963 and full self-government in 1964. The Legislative Assembly was renamed the House of Representatives and retained its 18 elected members, discarding the former five nominative and two ex-officio members. The Governor remained in charge of Foreign Affairs, Defence, Internal Security and Civil Service.

After the elections of 1960, the Government pushed for political independence.

Independence was delayed, however, due to the threat posed by the territorial claim of the Guatemalan government, dating back to an 1859 Treaty between Britain and the Republic of Guatemala. The struggle for Independence took another 17 years and was won with the help of lobbying by the Caribbean Community, the Commonwealth and the Non-Aligned Movement. Belize finally became an independent country on September 21, 1981.

Belize, like most of the English-speaking Caribbean, is a constitutional monarchy. Its Constitution is modeled after the British system known as the "Westminster or Whitehall" model of parliamentary democracy. The Constitution divides the Government of Belize into three branches: the Legislative, the Executive and the Judicial. The Constitution also provides for a bi-cameral Legislature which is called the National Assembly, comprising a House of Representatives and a Senate. Members of the Senate are appointed by the Governor General while the members of the House of Representatives are elected. Elections are held every five years.

The country is a member of the Commonwealth of Nations and the Queen of England is the titular head of state. She is represented in Belize by the Governor General (a Belizean) who is appointed on the advice of the Prime Minister. The Governor General's role is mostly ceremonial and other functions are performed in accordance with the advice of the Cabinet. The Governor General appoints as Prime Minister, the member of the House supported by the majority of members, as well as the leader of the Opposition (The Belize Fact Sheet, 1990). The Prime Minister chooses Ministers of State to help him run the country. Government hires workers through the Public Service to

help the Ministers to do their jobs.

Since the emergence of national political activity in Belize, the education system has to one degree or another, enjoyed the support of the nation's political parties. The church-state control of education is an attestation to the good relationship which has existed between the church and state for over a century.

In the years following Independence, there have been two changes of government with both political parties having a turn at ruling. Musa (1982), the then Minister of Education (Peoples United Party), said that "an integral part of government's educational strategy has been to make the educational system more relevant to the development needs of the country" (Ministry of Education, 1982, p 2). However, the educational activities of the country have sometimes been hampered by political changes. In one instance, an entire educational institution, the Belize College of Science and Technology (BELCAST), was dismantled by one party simply because it was instituted by the other party.

Socio-Economic Conditions

The economy of Belize was traditionally based on forestry, mainly the export of logwood, mahogany and chicle. The industry was controlled by foreign landowners. For example, by 1875 the British based-Belize Estate and Produce Company owned one-fifth of the country (over one million acres) for the purpose of mahogany extraction. After the abolition of slavery in 1838, the freed slaves were forced to depend on their former owners for work. This economic dependence upon their former masters facilitated another form of slavery since the "freed" slaves remained poor and landless. The result

of this situation was poverty, uneven distribution of resources and underdevelopment which continued well into the twentieth century.

The 1930's, in particular, was a period of recession and labour struggles and the Belizean economy suffered the effects of worldwide depression. Unemployment was rampant and food shortages were common. This period of hardship was worsened by the devastation caused by the Hurricane of 1931. Several school buildings were wrecked and damaged. An important effect of this was a serious fall in the revenue of the Colony which necessitated a curtailment of expenditure in education.

Large landowners continued to dominate the Colony making their fortune from mahogany. Agriculture was not important and they imported food to sustain what was primarily a captive labour force. Small holder agriculture was suppressed in an effort to control the labour force. Because of the indiscriminate exploitation of timber resources in the past and of the destruction of forests by hurricanes, the timber industry started to decline at the end of the nineteenth century.

When the logging industry declined, small land holders began to develop small subsistence agricultural villages. Such settlements used public lands or squatted on private land; agricultural land remained overwhelmingly in the hands of a few foreign landowners. In the early 1970's some 3% of the landowners had possession of 97% of the freehold land. All but one of the landowners with estates of 10,000 acres or more were foreigners, few of whom lived in the country (Bolland and Shoman, 1977; Sanchez and Fonseca, 1989). Today, Belizean small farmers are concentrated in areas that were once public land and on a few private holdings that were expropriated by the government

in the 1970's for distribution to farmers.

Between 1960 and 1970, Belize's economic base was diversified and industries such as sugar, fishing, citrus and banana were developed. This was an era of fairly rapid economic growth and the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew at a rate of 4% to 5% per year. Throughout the years 1970 to the 1990's, the main thrust in the Belizean economy continued to come from the agricultural sector, followed by trade and the construction industry. According to the Economic Report of Belize (1983):

. . . the structure of employment by economic sectors had not experienced any significant changes during the past decade. Agriculture, forestry and citrus accounted for one-third of the labour force, industry and transport accounted for twenty-four percent and the rest were employed in the service sector. Women were employed mostly in the service sector, while agriculture and industry remain largely male occupations (p.5).

Female participation in the labour force increased during the past twenty years. It rose from 20% in 1960 to 30% in 1980. The percentage of the work population rose from 50% in 1960 to 65% in 1980 (Ministry of Education 1983, p.39).

Between 1981 and 1982, the Belizean economy began to deteriorate, largely due to the stagnation in manufacturing and the combined effects of reduced production and the collapse of sugar prices and a price decrease of citrus fruit in the world market. Government re-emphasized and encouraged diversification of the economy. However, a change of government in 1985 brought about a change of economic policies in Belize. While the economic trends continued to be centred around agriculture, the government noted some priority areas for economic growth. These were: (1) agro-industry, (2) tourism, (3) fisheries, (4) forest-based industries, and (5) manufacturing. There was a

definite increase in the volume and value of fisheries products and the service sector showed signs of modest expansion (Government of Belize, Development Plan, 1980-1985).

The largest employers in the economic sector are agriculture with over 35% of the active labour force; agroprocessing, manufacturing, and transportation, with around 26%; and the government sector, which employs approximately one-quarter of the active labour force (Belize Sector Review Report, 1988). Literacy of the work force is reported in Belize to be as high as 90%, but functional literacy is generally considered much lower. There is however a shortage of professional and technical workers in both the public and private sectors. Most of the unskilled or semi-skilled labour for large scale agricultural operations is provided by recent immigrant labour from neighbouring Spanish-speaking countries (Government of Belize, Development Plan, 1980-85).

There was some economic growth in 1987. Agriculture growth was 10.5%. Output in manufacturing was up 6.3%, while construction expanded as much as 32%, led by 14% increase in trade, restaurants, and hotels, and a 9.6% increase in transport and communication (Belize Education Sector Review, 1988). However, economic development is hampered by inadequate infrastructure: roads, port facilities and electricity production are often inadequate and poorly maintained. Large tracts of arable land and timber are not serviced by any electrical power grid. Belize is forever dependent on the United States which presently provides a market for 50% of Belize's exports while providing 58% of Belize's imports (Sanchez and Fonseca, 1988).

Nevertheless, when one takes into consideration the three centuries of neglect

under colonialism, Belize's development (construction of new capital, expansion of water and electrical services etc.) which has taken place over the past two decades are impressive. The Belizean economy being small and open, is dependent on the international situation. However, with proper management of natural resources, sound government policies and vigorous pursuance of regional economic cooperation, the dependence on North America can be reduced.

The World Bank document (1992) states that:

The economic performance of a nation affects its educational provision in two principal ways: it influences the availability of both public and private resources to finance education and training, and together with structure and growth, it determines the level and mix of demand for labour (p.5).

The educational system of any country is therefore a product of its existing socio-economic circumstances. Since these circumstances are dynamic, the educational system is expected to be responsive to them. The school is expected to supply students with knowledge, skills, values and ideals, in order to become productive citizens. In other words, the school helps to fashion and influence those goals towards which the society aspires. The resources that government provides for education is dependent, therefore, upon its economic resources.

Socio-Cultural

Belize is a multi-ethnic, multi-racial country, in which almost everybody is either an immigrant or the descendant of immigrants. According to the population census of 1991, the Maya make up about 11.1% of the total population of Belize. The Creoles,

estimated at some 29.8% of the population in 1991 was once the largest ethnic group in the country. The recent influx of refugees from neighbouring Central American countries has changed this situation. These Creoles are descendants of African slaves and British settlers. The Mestizos are now the largest ethnic group in Belize. They make up 43.6% of the population in 1991, are Spanish speaking and trace their ancestry to Mayan refugees from the Caste War of Yucatan in the mid 1850's. There is also a Garifuna (Black Caribs) group who were originally expelled from St. Vincent by the British in the early 1800s. In 1991, the Garinagu made up 6.6% of Belize's population. Belize also has a small Mennonite (German origin) and East Indian populations estimated at 3.1 and 3.5%, respectively. Smaller groups include Syrian, Lebanese, whites and Chinese (Dobson, 1973; SPEAR, 1986; Sanchez and Fonseca, 1989; Bolland, 1986).

In Belize, in 1991, 57.7% of the population were Roman Catholics as a result of the development of a strong church infrastructure by American Jesuits. The flight of refugees during the War of the Castes in 1848 formed a base for the Roman Catholic Church in Belize, which has developed into a religious institution encompassing all races and cultures. The Anglican church which was established in Belize in the early 1800's is 6.9% in 1991. Other churches include: Pentecostal (6.3%), Methodist (4.2%), Adventist (4.1%), Mennonite (4.0%). Churches continue to play a leading role in the provision of education in Belize.

Although Belize is one of most multi-cultural countries in the region, the dominant cultural influence has been Anglo-Saxon. To varying degrees, each of Belize's ethnic groups were deculturalized towards English identity and culture. Over the past several

decades, however, the dominant cultural influence has come from the United States and British influence has waned. "The Americanization of the educational institutions, the overwhelming presence of the United States (U.S.), and the growing number of tourists and other U.S. visitors have combined to make U.S. cultural imperialism one of Belize's most formidable barriers to the development of a strong national cultural identity" (SPEAR, 1986 p.10).

A large proportion of its population is multi-lingual with English and Spanish being most widely spoken. The 1980 census showed that 50.6% of the population preferred English as their first language, 31.6% preferred Spanish, 6% Garifuna, and 6.4% Maya. However, the official language is English and it is used throughout the educational system. This situation sometimes affects the teaching - learning situation, especially since not all teachers are bilingual.

The diverse ethnic mix can also be considered a source of contention in the Belizean society. Sanchez and Fonseca (1989) wrote that

although the Belizean society has always been reluctant to admit it openly, there has existed and there continues to exist a degree of prejudice and discrimination between the two largest ethnic groups, the Creole and Mestizos, often referred to as "Spanish". Some Creoles with close ties to the former colonial administration have created a middle elite and have come to regard themselves as the inheritors of the colonial order (p. 14).

They, the Creoles, project the dominant position of the Belizean society and fear that the "ethnic balance" may be disturbed to affect this position. This fear has multiplied with the influx of Central American refugees, who are perceived by many as adding strains on social services, employment and land. Emigration to the U.S. is also problematic for

Belize; hundreds of intellectuals leave each year in search of employment thus resulting in brain drain.

The class structure of Belize (upper, middle, lower), like the economic system impacts on the education system. The class structure reflects the values of the society especially the importance attached to education by the different groups. On the one hand the middle class family is expected to provide the native professional and political leaders. School attendance on the part of the middle class children is therefore regular since their parents are supportive and can afford to pay for their education. The children of the middle class often attain the highest level of education -- sixth form (Junior College) and university at home or abroad. At the same time children from lower class families usually do not go beyond the primary school level because they lack the economic means to do so. As indicated in the World Bank document (1992) on the Caribbean, ". . . children from the poorest households obtain lower quality education . . . even when they attain levels of schooling similar to those from higher income groups" (World Bank, 1992, p.1).

There are some young Belizeans (from deprived families) who grow up lacking effective parental control and who do not have the chance to develop self-discipline nor cultivate the habit of work and delayed-reward. To these youngsters the immediate pleasures of street life and the togetherness of other equally undisciplined youths are the be all and end all of growing life. These children eventually become part of the dropout statistics. Absenteeism in schools is therefore the result of the chronic social malady afflicting the Belizean society (Sanchez, 1977).

There are some families who exist on marginal incomes and are constantly pre-occupied with mere survival. The children from these families must earn some money to supplement the family income or simply to feed and clothe themselves. In their constant struggle, the majority of such economically marginal families usually do not have time to think about their children's education, or to finance their educational needs.

Although serious problems and needs remain, significant progress has been made in the health sector. Child mortality fell from 6.8 to 1.5 between 1979 to 1984. The incidence of moderate to severe malnutrition in children aged one to four, however, is 19%, and considerably higher in the Southern districts where the Mayas live. Nutritional deficiency as a cause of death in children under five years of age has increased threefold since 1980 (SPEAR, 1986; Sanchez and Fonseca, 1989; Belize Fact Sheet, 1989). On the other hand, mortality among those 45 years and over has also increased.

Belize has a universal health care policy, but in reality, it is not always "equal health care for all". Access to health care, especially in the rural areas, is limited due to a shortage of health personnel such as doctors, nurses, dentists, and other health specialists. There is also a serious shortage of facilities, equipment and supplies. Other environmental factors also impact on the health status of Belizeans. Figures from the 1980 census revealed that 51% of the rural households had access to a safe water supply. Many of these suffer from a lack of proper nutrition and adequate housing.

In 1992 approximately 51,445 of the population were five to 14 years and of these 39,779 were attending primary schools: 7,326 ranging in age from 11 to 20+ years were attending high schools. The youth of the population has significant financial implications

for the education system of Belize. Population projections suggest that while the size of primary school-age will decrease in the other English speaking Caribbean countries by the year 2010, it is expected to increase in Belize. These features have serious implications for the education sector. Mechanisms need to be put in place to provide a highly skilled labour force for future Belize (World Bank, 1992).

The World Bank document (1992) declares that:

. . . ample evidence exists within Belize and elsewhere in the Caribbean that "fertility, infant mortality, and nutritional status are closely linked to levels of educational attainment, particularly of females. Further . . . the alienation of many youth is a serious social problem, exemplified by prevalent drug abuse, crime and teenage pregnancy. Increasing educational opportunities for youth is expected to help ameliorate these problems as well as foster more positive self-images. . . strengthening educational systems also is expected to be key to developing a greater sense of self-reliance, and commitment to nation building (p.1).

This chapter has outlined briefly the geographical, historical, political, socio-economic, and socio-cultural development of Belize. The chapter also illustrated some ways in which physical and social features impact on preschool, primary and secondary education. The following chapter discusses the colonial beginnings of education for the period 1816 to 1967. It highlights legal provisions and early studies that acted as catalyst to the development of education in Belize.

CHAPTER III

COLONIAL BEGINNINGS OF EDUCATION: 1816 - 1967

Introduction

Although the British arrived in Belize in the early 17th century, they did not provide any formal education in the settlement until the early nineteenth century -- 200 years later. But what else could Belize have expected? This was a community of white woodcutters, who were constantly at loggerheads with the Spaniards, and who spent most of their time in the bush. After all, mahogany work did not need educated slaves. And because these British had plenty of money during these early years, the practice was for them to hire tutors for their children or send them to be educated in Jamaica, England, or the United States. This policy continued throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, declining in the early half of the nineteenth century. Most writers claim that formal education started in Belize in 1816 with the establishment of the Honduras Free School, but Narda Dobson (1973) disagrees. She argues that the woodcutters of British Honduras seemed to have been more informed than their counterparts in the West Indies because they did not positively prevent the education of their slaves, though reportedly, they did little to encourage it. The Public Meeting (Government) supposedly founded a free school for 10 poor children in 1807. A Colonel Arthur, who showed great interest in this school, hinted that it supposedly grew to a population of about 120 boys, while the Superintendent's wife was holding classes for girls at her home (Dobson, 1973).

From the very beginning religion was the driving force behind the educational activities in Belize. When missionaries came to this new settlement, they arrived in search of prospective converts. It turned out that the most economical and fastest way to get these converts was through the establishment of schools. Up to about 1850, educational activities were limited to the settled population around the mouth of the Belize River. Already there were recent Spanish, Maya and Carib immigrants living in the south of the settlement so the settlement had to be extended to incorporate them. As the population grew so did the number of schools and some form of central authority for the administration and direction of Education became a necessity. This chapter discusses the colonial beginnings of education in Belize for the period of 1816 to 1962. The topic is analyzed under two major topics: efforts of religious denominations; and the development of the administrative and legal basis for education. The latter is further divided into these sections: Easter's enquiry into the education system; Dixon's report and the Jeanes teachers; the West India Royal Commission and the Moyne Commission reports of 1938; and the Hammond report, the Education Ordinance of 1962, and the UNESCO Education Planning Mission Report of 1964.

Efforts of Religious Denominations

As mentioned in Chapter I, religious involvement has always been crucial to the development of education in Belize, beginning as far back as the nineteenth century. The missionary societies stepped in to Christianize the slaves, as was the case in the West Indies wherever slavery was practised.

The first church to appear on the scene was the Church of England (Anglican), the then established church of the settlement, which appointed the first chaplain in Belize in 1776. Then missionaries started coming. W. Bourne of the Baptist society who arrived in 1822, was the first to begin missionary work with the slaves. He was followed three years later (1825) by O. Wilkinson, the first Wesleyan Missionary. Apparently these missionaries, along with others who continued to trickle in, were instructed to take the gospel to the slaves in the mahogany camps, and away from the Belize settlement. The missionaries decided that this was not financially possible and instead acquired some property in the Belize settlement to serve as the headquarters for their congregations. By the end of three months they had congregations of about thirty or so. They set up Sunday schools for children, to increase and maintain their membership.

As Sunday schools continued, the missionaries saw fit to increase their congregations and their membership by having daily schools where children were taught to read the bible. This daily reading of the bible led to the studying of words and the knowledge of numbers, and eventually to the beginnings of schools or formal education. Church wardens and officers of the churches were among the first teachers of these schools. The churches therefore were by no means reluctant to assume the greater part of the responsibility for education since they regarded it as an appendage to spread the gospel, and therefore an important part of their religious activities (Dobson, 1973; Ashcraft and Grant, 1968; Dobson, 1973).

The Wesleyan church (Methodist) enjoyed considerable success among the Garinagu in the Stann Creek District, today called the Dangriga area. In 1834 the local

people built a chapel and a school and by the end of 1838, 50 Garifuna students were said to be regularly attending the Methodist school. Educational control was jealously guarded and any spirit of Ecumenism towards education was totally lacking among the several denominations, so by preaching and teaching, the missionaries established a network of schools in British Honduras. Other missionaries continued to arrive. Two Roman Catholic Jesuit priests arrived in the settlement in 1851; they were sent by the Vicar Apostolic of Jamaica to preach their religion to slaves. As the number of denominational schools increased, it became evident to the authorities that the time had come to promote education and to formalize the marriage between church and state. Hence the passing of the Education Ordinance of 1892 to amend the law relating to the promotion of education.

Church administration of education at both primary and secondary levels was therefore, more a missionizing than an educational effort. Each of the three main denominations, the Roman Catholics, Anglicans and Wesleyans, virtually competed with each other in their missionary efforts to establish schools in the rural areas. This denominational system of education, however, created a great deal of duplication and wasted resources in this small country. There were times when the denominations opened schools in close proximity of each other and with very few students. The Roman Catholic priests and nuns carried their religion into many parts of the country and to every ethnic community. They established schools in all the villages where they preached their religion and created a lasting effect which has enabled the Roman Catholic church to grow to its present position of dominance (Ashcraft and Grant, 1968).

A study conducted by Easter (1935) has contributed significantly to shaping the

development of the educational system of Belize. Easter recommended that the denominational system be continued and that amalgamation be carried out where two or more schools served the same community. According to Easter, there were 75 schools in Belize in 1932. Thirteen were located in towns, 12 in Belize City and 50 in the rural areas. As shown in Table 2, Easter discovered that schools were run by the following denominations.

Table 2

Management and number of schools in 1932

Management	Number of Schools
Roman Catholic	41
Church of England	15
Methodist	15
Baptist	2
Salvation Army	1
Non-denominational	1

Source: Easter, 1934; Sanchez, 1977.

In 1954, the Roman Catholics also opened one of our first two teachers colleges - the St. George's Training College and had its own separate Teachers Association.

Development of administration and legal basis for education: 1816-1967

The first recognized elementary school, the Honduras Free School, established in 1816, was affiliated to the Church of England, the major church of the settlement. This school was supported by voluntary subscription from the inhabitants and subsidized by public funds. This was the beginning of the Church-State form of educational administration. This dual control of management gave the churches much latitude to decide what policies and goals would be pursued for their individual schools as well as the colony as a whole. This was not unique to Belize. Education throughout the British Empire was largely a missionary effort.

Administration also included a Committee consisting of His Majesty's Superintendent, i.e the officer administering the Government, and the seven magistrates (Acting Governors), the Churchwardens, and all subscribers of £10 sterling annually. Schooling was free but the children were only admitted by a ticket obtained from any one of the governors. The greater share of the expenses for running the school was borne by the Government which made special provision for the tuition of soldiers and pensioners' children. By 1836 the number of primary schools had increased to five.

As the number of religious denominations establishing schools increased, the need for legislation developed, thus the first Education Ordinance was passed in 1850. The main objective was "to provide for additional schools for the benefit of every denomination of Christians in the settlement of British Honduras, and to make certain regulations for the government of such schools and of the Honduras Free School" (Sanchez, 1963, p. 2). This Ordinance also expedited the establishment of a Board of

Education to serve as the central authority for the administration and direction of education in the colony. The sum of £1,000 sterling per annum was placed at the Board's disposal for educational purposes (Sanchez, 1963). With the exception of passing legislation and offering grants from time to time, it cannot be said that the Government played any major part in educational programs.

The 1850 Education Ordinance was amended in 1855 to increase the number of Board members to seven and the Superintendent of the Settlement and the Members of the Executive Council were constituted Governors and Visitors of the schools, respectively. They acted as arbitrators in the case of any disagreement between the Board and the ministers of religion who were and remain to this day managers of the schools. This amendment also made provisions for the establishment of an infant free school in addition to other existing free schools. Provisions were also made for mechanical and industrial teaching at schools. The Headmaster of the boys' free school was made part-time Inspector of the other Church of England schools and assisted in the annual examinations of the schools of other denominations. This amendment also provided for trained teachers to be recruited from Great Britain for the free schools only. Unfortunately, their appointment did not alter the general condition of education at the time. Thus in 1863 this recruitment amendment was repealed since such appointments proved to be both expensive and disappointing.

From 1850 to 1855, the Honduras Free Schools were supported entirely from Government funds. Other public elementary schools, two conducted by the Wesleyan and the other the Baptist Churches were paid grants at the rate of twelve shillings per annum

for each pupil in average daily attendance, and were supplied with books, maps and other school material from the Education Vote. The schools were also given an allowance of £25 per annum for the rental of school buildings. The Baptists, however, refused to accept Government aid for their school and maintained this position until 1968. The 1855 amendments of the Education Act (1850) fixed the annual salaries of teachers of the Honduras Free Schools at £250 for the Headmaster of boys' schools and £120 for each of the Headmistresses of girls and infant schools. These salaries were raised to attract teachers from Great Britain. School fees began to be charged at this time.

The situation remained basically unchanged when the settlement became a colony in 1862. In 1868, the Board of Education was abolished and its powers transferred to the Executive Council of the Colony. The Honduras Free schools were also abolished. Under the regulations passed by the Council, competent teachers of schools having an average attendance of 25 pupils or over were paid a monthly grant of two shillings per head for children over seven years of age, and 1s.6d. a head for infants between three to seven years. The total number of children enrolled in the various schools at this time was 1,100 and the population of the Colony was over 26,000.

In the Regulations of 1877 the Executive Council made several regulations for the guidance of government-aided schools. The regulations provided for the examination of teachers for First and Second Class certificates and for the payment of monthly grants to teachers of schools having an average attendance of 25 pupils and upwards, at the following rates:- First Class Teachers - For older children, \$.50 per head and for infants \$.25 per head. Second Class teachers received \$.25 per head. The payment of grants

depended on the managers' raising a sufficient sum from school fees and other sources. The proportion of this sum to the government grant was fixed at not less than one-fourth.

The school age commenced at three years and ended at 15 years. The Executive Council paid a bonus to teachers on their results in the annual individual examination of the children. The first full-time Inspector of Schools, the Reverend J. Jackson was appointed in July 1879 to be in charge of the whole work of administration, direction and inspection of schools. A separate Education Department, however, was not established until 1891.

The child population continued to increase rapidly and in 1891 there were 35 schools, nine in Belize City and the rest in the out-districts, with a total enrolment of 2,994 pupils. As a result Government expenditure in Education had mounted to \$14,674. The Executive Council decided that a specialised body was again needed to control and manage all public schools.

The Education Ordinance of 1892 stipulated that the Board of Education which would be the body for policy, now consist of the Governor as President, the Members of the Executive Council and five other members appointed by the Governor. The five other members were usually ministers of religion who acted as General Managers for the schools of their respective denominations. Section 9 of the 1892 Ordinance defined the powers and duties of the Board of Education which included:

The making, altering and revoking of rules for regulating application for the allowance of grants in aid of schools and training institutions, for fixing the rates of such grants, with regard to the examination of schools, the employment of teachers and pupil teachers, and the granting of certificates; with regard to the duties of education officers appointed

under the Ordinance (Sanchez, 1963, p.5).

Section 13 of the 1892 Ordinance also laid down the conditions under which grant-in-aid was to be given to denominational schools. The conditions were as follows:

- 1) that the property and management of the school be vested in managers having power to appoint and dismiss the teachers and responsible for the payment of the teachers salaries and all other expenses of the school.
- 2) That the school, by its rules, be at all times open to inspection by the Inspector, the Sub-Inspector, or any member of the Board.
- 3) That the school be open to children without distinction of religion or race.
- 4) That reading and writing of English Language and arithmetic be taught in the manner so prescribed under the Board Rules.
- 5) That by the rules of the school no child will receive any religious instruction to which the parent or guardian of such child objects, or be present when such instruction is given at the school (Sanchez, 1963, p. 3).

The Ordinance of 1892 legalised the partnership in education between the Churches and Government and it is the basis of all other education ordinances in Belize. This ordinance also legally enacted that provisions should be made for deserving primary school leavers to get scholarships to attend secondary schools.

The Board of Education Rules, first of their kind, drawn under the 1892 Ordinance, began to be enforced in 1894. It placed the whole work of administration upon the Inspector of Schools, who also acted as Secretary to the Board of Education. All grants were paid through his department after they had been approved by the Board.

All correspondence between the Board and the school managers and others was carried on through him. He was to visit all aided schools for the purposes of inspection and individual examination of pupils. This system in which the Inspector of schools is both "Administrator" and "Inspector" has continued to this day. The Ordinance of 1892 was amended by Ordinance 21 of 1895 and Ordinance 36 of 1897. By the latter, the limits of the school age for purposes of grants were raised from an entrance age of three to four and a leaving age from 15 to 16. Finally, in 1899, the school age for the purposes of grants was fixed at five to 16 (Sanchez, 1963).

By the 1900's, Belize already had a uniform system of elementary education, but although the children of school age increased with the population, the enrolment in the schools and the average daily attendance did not increase proportionately. "In 1901 the number of school age was estimated at 9,000 out of a population of 37,479 but only 3,423 were enrolled in the schools with a daily attendance of 3,173" (Sanchez, 1963, p.6). This was not a satisfactory position, so Government decided that legislation for Compulsory attendance was necessary. Hence the establishment of the Compulsory Education Ordinance of 1915. By this Ordinance the Governor was empowered to specify, with the consent of the Board of Education, which areas of the country would be designated compulsory school attendance areas. The age limits of compulsion was fixed at between six and 14 years. "The payment of school fees was compulsory. This Ordinance was primarily intended for towns and villages where the majority of the population was Maya Indians for it was felt that they were not making an effort to send their children to school" (Sanchez, 1963, p.7). Bennett (1963) and Dillon (1925) also blamed this situation

on the fact that:

- a) the large number of school age youths employed in stores, many of whom were driven to earn money because of the hardships brought on by World War I;
- b) the migration of families to the rural areas, because of economic hardships;
- c) the inability to adequately equip students due to lack of finances (Dillon, 1925, p.23).

An Education Ordinance in 1926 was passed, incorporating all past Ordinances with some modification, aiming at updating and organizing recent developments. Part I dealt with general provisions in respect to education. Part II dealt with compulsory education and the conditions for the registration of private schools. Some provisions of Part I were as follows:

- (a) The Board of Education was to consist of the Governor as President, a Chairman, the Members of the Executive General and not more than five other members appointed by the Governor. Appointments were to be for not more than three years and meetings were held at least once a month.
- (b) The duty of the Board was to utilize all monies voted by the Legislative Council for educational purposes: (1) to assist schools and training institutions, and (2) to institute scholarships, (i) to enable children from primary schools to attend secondary schools, (ii) to enable children from both primary and secondary schools to receive courses of technical instruction with a view to the development of the natural resources of the colony, (iii) to empower the Board to make rules for regulating the allowance of grants-in-aids to schools -- the examination and

certification of teachers and the assisted schools and the duties of education officers appointed under the Ordinance. It was also empowered to make any rules which it considered necessary for giving effect to the provisions of the Ordinance, and (iv) to assist schools in respect only of children of five to 16 years of age.

The Provisions of Part II, with respect to compulsory education were:

- (a) The Governor, with the consent of the Board, has power to declare any area of the country as compulsory attendance areas and to decide whether the ages of attendance within the areas shall be from six to twelve or from six to fourteen;
- (b) It made it the duty of every parent of a child residing within a compulsory attendance area to send such a child regularly to a school or to provide such a child with private instruction as efficient as that obtainable at a school within such an area;
- (c) School Officers were empowered to enforce a fine of five cents for every absence of a child from school without reasonable cause;
- (d) Parents who neglected to pay the fines levied by the School Officers were liable to be summoned before a Magistrate who could impose an additional fine not exceeding two dollars (Sanchez, 1963, p.6).

The great hurricane which struck Belize in September 1931, wrecked or destroyed several school buildings. The religious bodies were aided in the work of reconstruction by free grants and loans from the government. An important effect of the hurricane was a serious fall in the revenue of the Colony which necessitated a curtailment of expenditure

on education. Certain temporary amendments were made to the Board Rules to effect changes with reference to grants-in-aid. These amendments became effective in April 1933. Among the changes made in the payment of grants-in-aid was the substitution of a system of block grants for the usual salary grants, payable to the School Managers for the staffing of their schools. The principal effect of this was a heavy cut in teachers' salaries. The system was discontinued at the end of 1935.

Because of the World Depression and the effects of the Hurricane of 1931, financial and political control of the Legislature was transferred to the Governor in 1932. Following these constitutional changes the interest of the colonial administration in general development gathered momentum and in particular a positive approach was adopted towards educational development. Whereas Government spent a meagre 3.3% of the annual budget before the introduction of Imperial Treasury control in 1932, this increased to 7.12% by 1933/34. Table 3 shows that the average attendance of schools grew considerably, that the government's contribution to primary education increased significantly as did the grant allotted to each student. Table 4 shows that the government contributed much more money to primary education than secondary education. Thus the system showed that it had recognized its responsibilities and the need for change in the educational system. It is commendable that instead of implementing changes without direction, Government requested the assistance of experts. It is in this context that B.H. Easter and J.C. Dixon among others, visited Belize and made their famous reports.

Table 3

Expenditure on primary schools, 1850-1961

Year	Number of Schools Receiving Grant	Average Attendance	Government Grant (\$Bz)	Grant per Scholar
1850	7	579	3116.00	5.38
1860	10	na	6370.00	na
1870	11	767	4210.50	5.49
1880	16	na	6499.00	na
1890	34	1967	11558.25	5.87
1900	38	1383	11245.53	4.76
1910	44	3173	17749.59	5.59
1920	58	4458	40339.17	8.85
1930	75	6118	71863.83	11.75
1940	79	8042	103450.00	12.86
1950	90	9597	267938.00	27.92
1961	128	21268	943754.00	44.37

Sources: The Ministry of Education Annual Report, 1961; Sanchez's Report, 1963; The Ministry of Education Triennial Report, 1952-1954.

Table 4

Expenditure on primary and secondary education during the years ending 1952 and 1954

Source of Funds	1952		1954	
	Primary Education	Secondary Education	Primary Education	Secondary Education
Education Department (excluding grants to local authorities)	\$310,825	\$ 8,451	\$339,431	\$ 9,925

Source: Department of Education, Triennial Report, 1952-1954.

Easter's enquiry into the education system

In 1935, Easter released his report which he called Report of an Enquiry into the Educational System of British Honduras, 1933-1934. This report formed the basis of the educational policy of British Honduras. It was used for the reorganization of the educational system; it marked a great turning point in the educational development. According to Easter, the primary purpose of his enquiry was "to make a comprehensive survey of the existing system of education in relation to the present conditions and needs of the population" (Sanchez, 1963, p.3). His secondary purpose was "to make recommendations as to the most economic use of the funds available for education" (Sanchez, 1963, p.3). Because of the great importance attached to these recommendations it is necessary to list all of Easter's major recommendations which follow:

1. Only in exceptional cases should new schools be aided while the emergency (effects of the hurricane of 1931) lasted and no new schools should be recognized or aided in the vicinity of established schools, unless the size of the population warranted it.
2. The age of entry to schools should be raised to six and no grants should be paid in respect of children under that age.
3. Easy transference of children from one school to another school should be controlled by the introduction of a system of transfer certificates.
4. The denominational system of education should be continued.
5. Expenditure on education should be revised so that the cost per child is approximately the same in all schools of the same class.
6. Block grants should be abolished and salary grants resumed on a fixed minimum scale.
7. The individual examination of children should cease and a school leaving certificate instituted.
8. The school curriculum and the requirements for the examinations of teachers and pupil teachers should be revised.
9. Agents of the "Jeanes Teachers" type, with the rank of Assistant Inspector of Schools, should be appointed to supervise the schools.
10. Consideration should be given to the establishing of a "Central Institute" at which provision should be made for the teaching of manual training and domestic science and for a teacher-training centre.

11. A Director of Education should be appointed whose primary duty should be devising of plans for improving the standard of teaching.
12. The constitution and powers of the Board of Education should be revised. Membership should include at least one woman, and there should be a teacher representative.
13. Regular medical inspection of school children should be introduced.
14. If Government was unable to shoulder the burden of a pension scheme, a scheme should be devised whereby the teacher, the denominational authority and the Government would each make a proportionate contribution.
15. Grants on a 50% basis should be made to enable schools to build up their own libraries.
16. There should be a fixed annual grant in aid of the secondary schools on condition that each accepted two pupils as government scholars, annually (Sanchez, 1963, p.11).

It took over 20 years for most of these recommendations to be implemented.

The Education Ordinance of 1935 provided for the reorganization of the Board of Education as recommended by the Easter Report. The Board was to consist of the Governor as President, the Colonial Secretary and not more than seven unofficial members nominated by the Governor, one of them a woman and one a representative of the teachers. The unofficial members were to be appointed for one calendar year at a time. Five members formed a quorum and the person presiding had an original and deciding vote. The Governor was empowered to override any decisions of the Board if

he considered such a course to be in the public interest. This Ordinance also changed the title of the head of the Education Department which was changed from Inspector of Schools to Superintendent of Education. The change became effective with the appointment, in September, 1935, of B.E. Carmen, as the first Superintendent of Education. The primary recommended duty of the Superintendent was to devise plans for improving the standard of teaching. An Assistant Superintendent of Education (E.V. Brown) was appointed on 1st January 1937 to undertake the general inspection of schools. The titles of the officers were changed in 1939 to Director of Education and Inspector of Schools, respectively. The latter was further changed in 1951 to Senior Education Officer; this position has been held by Darrel Diaz and K.E.V. Frazer, both Belizeans.

Jeanes teachers and the Dixon Report

Acting on Easter's recommendation that agents of the "Jeanes Teacher" type, like those employed in the southern states of the United States, should be appointed in view of improving the rural schools, His Excellency Sir Allan Burns solicited the help of the Carnegie Corporation of New York in initiating the system of Jeanes Supervision. Accordingly, in 1935, the Carnegie Corporation made a grant of \$13,500 U.S. to the Government of British Honduras to be used for this purpose over a period of three years.

In July 1936, J.C. Dixon, Supervisor of Negro Education for the State of Georgia visited the Colony at the invitation of the Governor to investigate and advise on the best methods of inaugurating the "Jeanes Teacher" system. Since Dixon's report is also important for the understanding of the educational system from the 1930's to the present,

it is necessary to include his main recommendations. He was severely critical of Belize's educational system and expressed his dissatisfaction, particularly with the expatriate domination of schools and the dual control of policy by Church and State. He complained that the Roman Catholic schools were administered by Americans, the Protestant by Englishmen or West Indians. He urged that the teaching staff be made native up to the controlling and supervisory level (Young, 1980, p.37).

The major recommendations are listed below:

1. Three Jeanes Supervisors should be selected on the basis of qualification for the job irrespective of religious affiliation. One local and two foreign teachers (probably from Jamaica) could be employed. One of the supervisors could be a woman.
2. Jeanes Supervisors should be directly responsible only to the Superintendent of Education. Placement and duties should be assigned by him, and these supervisors should work cooperatively with both church and state.
3. The duties of Jeanes Supervisors should be to improve classroom instruction and to up-grade the teaching personnel of the colony.
4.
 - (a) A one or two-teacher school should be selected in Belize City to be operated as a Demonstration school;
 - (b) This school should be under the general supervision of the woman Jeanes Supervisor for Pupil-Teacher practice teaching. This should be in addition to her field work;
 - (c) The Demonstration School must be a Government School with its own

Principal and staff.

5. Government should begin to train local men and women so that they may teach their own children (Sanchez, 1974, pp.5-6).

The Dixon Report, influenced by the Easter Report., initiated the "Jeanes Teacher" type agents to be employed to improve rural schools. The Jeanes System was introduced in July 1937. The first Jeanes Teachers were three trained teachers from Jamaica, namely, A.S. Frankson, S.E. Daley and E.A. Nicholson. The Jeanes System, however, became a permanent feature of the Colony's educational system.

Initially, the Jeanes Supervisors were hired to help the teachers, particularly in the rural schools, to improve their methods and standards of teaching. Gradually the Jeanes Supervisors' work included administrative work as well. In 1942 they were called Supervisors. This was changed to Education Officer in 1951. Are you aware that the first native Education Officers were S. Yorke, W. Frazer, D. Diaz, and E.P. Yorke? This, I was told by a renowned educator, was a revolutionary move on the part of the Belizean Government, since at this time "the foreigner can do it better syndrome" prevailed in Belize. My informant added, however, that probably these persons were chosen because they were trained in Jamaica. The responsibility of the Education Officers resulting from the reports of Easter and Dixon may be summarised as the following:

1. Demonstration of new up-to-date methods of teaching.
2. Improvement of the curriculum by the introduction of new subjects viz: Hygiene, Nature Study, Singing, Handicraft, Physical Training, Organized Games, Gardening, Social Studies.

3. Guidance to teachers in the keeping of school records and in the drafting of timetables and schemes of work.
4. Improvement of the classification of pupils so as to secure more individual attention and more even classification.
5. The organization of Teachers' and Parent Teachers' Associations, School Clubs, Inter-School Sports, and Open Days.
6. Supervision of pupil-teacher training.
7. Revision of the school curriculum and the syllabuses of the teachers' and pupil teachers' examinations.
8. The organization of Vacation Courses and the performance of other duties assigned by the Director of Education from time to time (Sanchez, 1963, p.10).

Thus started for the first time a new era of educational inspection and supervision. The individual examination and payment by results was abolished and the role of the Inspector as examiner and fault finder changed to that of roles such as coordinator, consultant, and leader (Sanchez, 1977).

Government finally awoke and saw the need for educational reform and was suddenly willing to spend much more on education despite the years of depression and limited available funds. Such monies had to be spent with care as suggested by Easter. Therefore, unlike Dixon's suggestion that initiative in education should henceforth come from Government, Easter advocated continuance of the Church/State schools. It had the advantage of being more economical for Government and it avoided discord between Government and denominations which was unwelcome at a time when everyone was

recovering from economic depression (Sanchez, 1973).

The West India Royal Commission and the Moyne Commission Reports of 1938

In 1938 the West India Royal Commission came to Belize to investigate social and economic conditions in the British West Indies, which included British Honduras. In the Commission's report the proposals called for the replacement of the pupil-teacher system by more systematic training of teachers; the reform of curricula; the use of films and broadcasting; greater attention to adult education, setting the primary school age as being between six and 12 years, and instituting Junior Secondary Schools for youths between the ages of 12 and 15 years. This Commission also recommended that funds released to the denominations consequent to the Hurricane Loan should be expended on the maintenance and improvement of existing schools and provision of new schools.

As a result of the West India Commission Report, the Moyne Commission visited Belize in 1938 and held discussions with the Board of Education and General Managers of Schools and made the following major recommendations:

- (1) arrangements should be made for the training of teachers in Jamaica;
- (2) the secondary scholarships system should be equitably distributed among the schools;
- (3) the churches should be relieved of all loans for hurricane reconstruction;
- (4) that funds released to schools should only be spent on maintenance and school improvement, and

- (5) that Government should undertake the direct provision of new schools (Bennett, 1973, p.3).

The Hammond Report, 1941

S.A. Hammond, C.M.G., Educational Advisor to the Comptroller for Development and Welfare in the West Indies, visited Belize in 1941. After visiting a number of schools and holding informal discussions with the Board of Education, he submitted a report in which recommendations were made for applications to receive assistance under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act for:

1. the establishment of two schools, one in Belize City and one in the country, organized into primary and senior schools in which apprentice teachers should be trained;
2. the provision of houses for teachers, as models of housing constructed of local materials;
3. the establishment of a trade school in Belize City after a preliminary visit by the Principal of the Kingston Technical School Jamaica;
4. grants to the Jubilee Library for the purchasing of books for young people and for the extension and development of the museum on industrial and teaching lines, and
5. the extension of broadcasting (Sanchez, 1963, p.12).

An Education Ordinance in 1943 was passed for closer control of private schools by the Government.

Colonial Development and Welfare Schemes, 1944

The first schemes affecting primary education, approved under the Colonial Development and Welfare Acts were as follows:

- (a) A free grant of £6,680 (Bz.\$26,720) towards the rehabilitation of schools damaged or destroyed by the hurricane of November, 1942, on condition that the balance of Bz.\$43,620 was met by the churches concerned and the Government, the Government's contribution being Bz.\$16,000.

This scheme was completed in 1951. Under it 14 buildings -- 11 Roman Catholic, two Anglican and one Methodist -- were entirely replaced and 12 others repaired. Plans were approved in advance by the Government and in every case provision of suitable sanitary arrangements and water supply was insisted on. The majority of the buildings erected were of stone or reinforced concrete.

- (b) A free grant of £9,000 spread over five years, for the free supply to assisted primary schools, of textbooks, stationery and minor equipment.

Under this scheme, which was originally proposed by S.A. Hammond, reading books, exercise books, and text-books in English and Arithmetic were supplied for the use of pupils. On the completion of the scheme, the service became a charge on the colonial revenue.

- (c) A grant of £375 towards the cost of a two-week vacation course for teachers in 1945, on condition that the balance of £200 be contributed by the Government.

This scheme made it possible to extend to a larger number of teachers, particularly rural teachers, the benefits derived from attendance at vacation courses held annually in

Belize. Similar schemes were also approved in respect of courses held subsequently (Department of Education Triennial Report, 1952-1954, p.10).

Commission on Secondary Education, 1947

A Commission was appointed by His Excellency Sir John Hunter in 1945 to enquire into the state of secondary education in the Colony and recommend measures for its improvement. The Commission reported in June 1947. The main recommendations were:

- (1) the number of pupils receiving the traditional academic education should be limited;
- (2) a "practical" secondary school, with a bias towards pre-vocational and scientific training should be established and conducted by the Government;
- (3) the existing secondary schools should be grant-aided;
- (4) in due course some scholarships to the University College of the West Indies should be provided for prospective secondary school teachers;
- (5) the number of university scholarships provided by the Government, should be increased (Department of Education Triennial Report, 1952-1954, p.11).

Second Visit of Mr. S.A. Hammond, 1947

In July 1947, S.A. Hammond again visited the Colony primarily to enquire into and advise on secondary and technical education. He held meetings with the Board of Education, school managers, heads of secondary schools, employers and heads of

departments concerned with the employment of craftsmen. He recommended:

- (a) that the secondary school authorities should be invited to consider, perhaps in conjunction with each other, the better selection of their pupils and the raising of their fees, providing for the case of the selected child whose parents cannot afford the full fee; and that the Education Department should lend its assistance in the establishment of appropriate means of selection;
- (b) that the Government should give consideration to a system of deficiency grants to secondary schools, if grant-aided to secondary schools proves to be possible in its development plans;
- (c) that first priority should be given to the establishment of a means of secondary education that will ally itself with the improvement of the productive resources of the country, providing also recruits to teaching with a practical approach to the improvement of its conditions, extending the resources of the existing secondary schools, and capable of extension into a centre for further training and adult education (Department of Education Triennial Report, 1952-1954, p.11).

The Education Ordinance of 1962

The Education Ordinance of 1962, which arose out of the 1960 Constitution with its ministerial system, can be considered a landmark act in the educational system of Belize. This Ordinance, and the Board rules appended, set out the regulations for the management of denominational and government schools. The former outmoded Board of Education was abolished to introduce a new line of management. At last Belizeans

were going to hold the reins of the education system. Henceforward, the Minister of Education became responsible to the Cabinet for the formulation and execution of the government's educational policy. All education matters became the ultimate responsibility of the Minister of Education at that time, the Honourable Gwen Lizarraga, who had considerable powers vested upon her under this Ordinance. A Primary Education Board, an Advisory Council for Secondary Education and Further Education, served as her advisors. The Principal Secretary (P.S.), the Senior Official in the Ministry of Education, also acted as the Minister's advisor and chief executive.

In 1963, E. McMurdo (an expatriate) was appointed as Chief Education Officer and assumed responsibility for the administration of the education system. He headed the Education Department and considerable powers were vested in his office by the Education Ordinance of 1962. The Chief Education Officer also functioned in the capacity of advisor to the Principal Secretary and the Minister of Education. In that same year, 1963, the administrative team consisted of two Principal Education Officers, a Senior Education Officer and six Education Officers, one for each district. These officers were the executives of the Chief Education Officer, who carried out the supervisory functions in schools.

The UNESCO Education Planning Mission of 1964

Now that the final authority for national policy has been passed into the hands of the Minister of Education, increasing attention was given to expanding opportunities for education at all levels of the educational system and to making it more contributory to

(the needs of national development. On March 1st, 1963, Minister Lizarraga appointed a committee of eight to study and analyze the present educational system and suggest ways in which it could be made to play a more purposeful and constructive role in the country's struggle for economic progress. At the same time, government requested UNESCO to send an education mission to enquire into the education system and to draw up an education plan for the country. The Mission was comprised of C.L. Germanacos, specialist in general education planning as leader, and M. Gaskin, economist from the United Kingdom and S. Syrimis, specialist in technical education and vocational training from Cyprus. By the time the UNESCO Team arrived the national committee had completed its work and had made submissions to the government. The UNESCO Educational Planning mission drew heavily on the proposed educational development plan of the local committee in preparing its own report and plan for Belize. When it did, the government considered the plan satisfactory and the UNESCO Educational Plan was adopted as the basic policy document of the Belize Government throughout the plan period, 1964-1970. The major goals of the government therefore were aligned to those of the UNESCO Mission Educational Plan. They were as follows:

- (1) To improve the quality of education at all levels;
 - (2) To orient the educational system to the development needs of the country;
 - (3) To expand opportunities for technical and professional training, and;
 - (4) To orient Belize's educational services to its social and economic goals
- (Educational Planning Committee Report, 1963; UNESCO, 1964; Ministry of Education, 1964; Ministry of Education, 1982).

The UNESCO mission recommended the integration of the Department of Education with the Ministry of Education, with the Principal Secretary as the Minister's chief executive as well as advisor on general policy, and the Chief Education Officer as the principal professional advisor and planning officer. In addition, the Chief Education Officer would be responsible for translating policy into projects and for the control of the professional staff. The Principal Secretary would also be responsible for the clerical staff.

Another recommendation made by UNESCO was that the Primary Board and Advisory Council be replaced by a National Council for Education for the purpose of advising the Minister on the overall education effort, policy and direction. The Council was intended to represent a wide spectrum of society. Thus the Ordinance of 1962 was first amended in 1967, to accommodate this change. The National Council consisted of the Chief Education Officer and fifteen members appointed by the Minister of Education, of which 11 were nominated by delegating bodies (constitutional bodies, teachers and trade unions, and churches) and four principal teachers of denominational and government secondary schools. It is quite unbelievable that other government institutions such as the Planning Unit of the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Economic Development, the Chamber of Commerce, representatives from the business community, and Ministry of Social Development did not participate in the Council, especially since the country is supposedly striving to link education with the overall development of the country (UNESCO Education Planning Report, 1975).

Conclusion

This chapter has described the colonial beginnings of education in Belize for the period 1816 to 1967. This was outlined under two major headings: the efforts of religious denominations; and the development of administration and the legal basis for education during this period. The latter section includes these important sub-sections: Easter's enquiry into the education system; the Jeanes Teachers' System and the Dixon report; the West India Royal Commission and the Moyne Commission reports of 1938; the Hammond report of 1941; Colonial Development and Welfare Schemes of 1944; the Commission on Secondary Education of 1947; and the second visit of S.A. Hammond, 1947; the Education Ordinance of 1962; and the UNESCO Education Planning Mission Report of 1964. These early developments paved the way for the present education system. The following chapter will outline the development of preschool and primary education. The chapter indicates emerging patterns and issues, e.g. access, quality and effectiveness of the preschool and primary sectors.

CHAPTER IV

PRESCHOOL AND PRIMARY EDUCATION

Introduction

Preschool and primary education form the basis of the educational system. If this foundation is weak it follows that students are ill prepared for life. This chapter discusses the coverage and access of preschooling and primary education. The issues in terms of quality, efficiency, and effectiveness are pinpointed. The resources and their uses are also outlined to determine efficiency and effectiveness.

Preschooling

Preschool education in Belize, like in other English-speaking Caribbean countries, is a product of the changing social and economic conditions of the country. During the 1970s more women were entering the labour force. In Belize, 22% of households are headed by women (1991 Census). Some of the women are unmarried teenaged mothers who tend to be concentrated in the lower income groups. These adversities are increasing the demand for preschool provision. Preschool enrolments in most Caribbean countries increased rapidly during the 1960s and 1970s. Belize, however, was late in introducing preschool education. It started in 1979.

Research on the effect of preschooling in Caribbean countries is limited, but those that were conducted suggest that in positive terms preschooling can reduce dropout rates

in the primary school and improve academic performance. It has been noted, however, that these positive effects can soon be undermined by poorly managed and resourced schools (World Bank, 1992). Advocates of preschooling contend that the benefits can go beyond providing a child care service for working parents.

There is convincing evidence that an appropriately designed preschool program, which is community-based and parent-oriented, can have a lasting effect on a child's behaviour and performance in primary school and beyond. . . . The most noticeable in the area of motivation and personality development and not so much cognitive skill development (World Bank, 1992, p.49).

In Belize and elsewhere preschooling is attempting to fulfil a multiplicity of functions. These include: providing daycare facilities, especially for single parent families, providing health and social services, developing cognitive, effective and psychomotor skills, and helping parents to develop parenting skills - perhaps the most important function (World Bank, 1992).

Coverage and Equality of Access

The definitions of what constitutes day-care and preschool provision vary between countries. In some parts of the Caribbean, day-care makes provision for children zero to four years of age and preschools for ages four to six years. In Belize some children aged zero to three years attend early stimulation centres and preschools admit children between the ages of three and five.

Structure and Growth

Preschools are classified as government-operated, community-operated, organization and private. Of all the preschools in Belize, only five are owned by the government. Thirty-two community operated preschools are government-aided. The 45 private preschools are the sole responsibility of the individuals or the organizations that established them.

Preschooling started in 1979 and by 1980 the number of preschools grew to 31. By 1991 there were five early stimulation centres. The five Early Childhood Development Centres, serving as prototypes, were organized in Orange Walk, Corozal and Stann Creek districts, attended by approximately 209 children. There were also 81 preschools (49 urban and 32 rural). Total enrolment figures for 1991 show 2,914 pupils (1,426 males and 1,488 females).

Equality of Access

In much of the current literature on 'equality in education', some writers treat equity and equality interchangeably while others relate equity and equality to each other. Campbell and Klein (1982), on the other hand, approach the subject by providing 'examples of educational inequity' (Secada, 1989, p.581).

Education and schools have been described in terms of inputs, processes, and outputs (Good and Brophy, 1986; Harvey and Klein, 1985; Mosteller and Moynihan, 1972); in terms of access, participation and outcomes (Brookover and Lezotte, 1981; Winfield, 1986). At each of these junctures in the educational system, something is being

construed as being distributed among students by the schooling system. Green (1983) defines the 'ideal of educational equity' as a

statistically describable social condition within which there is a random distribution of resources, attainment, and educational achievement in respect to variables irrelevant to educational justice together with a predictable distribution in respect to variables relevant to educational justice (Green, 1983, p.324).

Throughout this thesis 'equality of access' is used to mean government's 'provision of equal educational opportunity for students to receive quality education in preschool, primary and secondary schools.' Examples of educational inequities are also highlighted. When comparing Belize with other developing countries in the Central America and Caribbean Region, educational opportunity in Belize is equitable only in limited areas (UNESCO Education Planning Mission, 1983). The participation rate of preschoolers was 26.3% or 2,914 children, whereas the total number of eligible children was 30,415 in 1991 (see Figure 1).

As indicated above preschools in Belize are too concentrated in the urban areas. This creates a situation where rural children have less access to preschools. They are therefore denied the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for smooth transition to primary schools.

The expansion of preschool opportunities is therefore needed for the social and cognitive development of children and for increasing children's readiness for primary education.

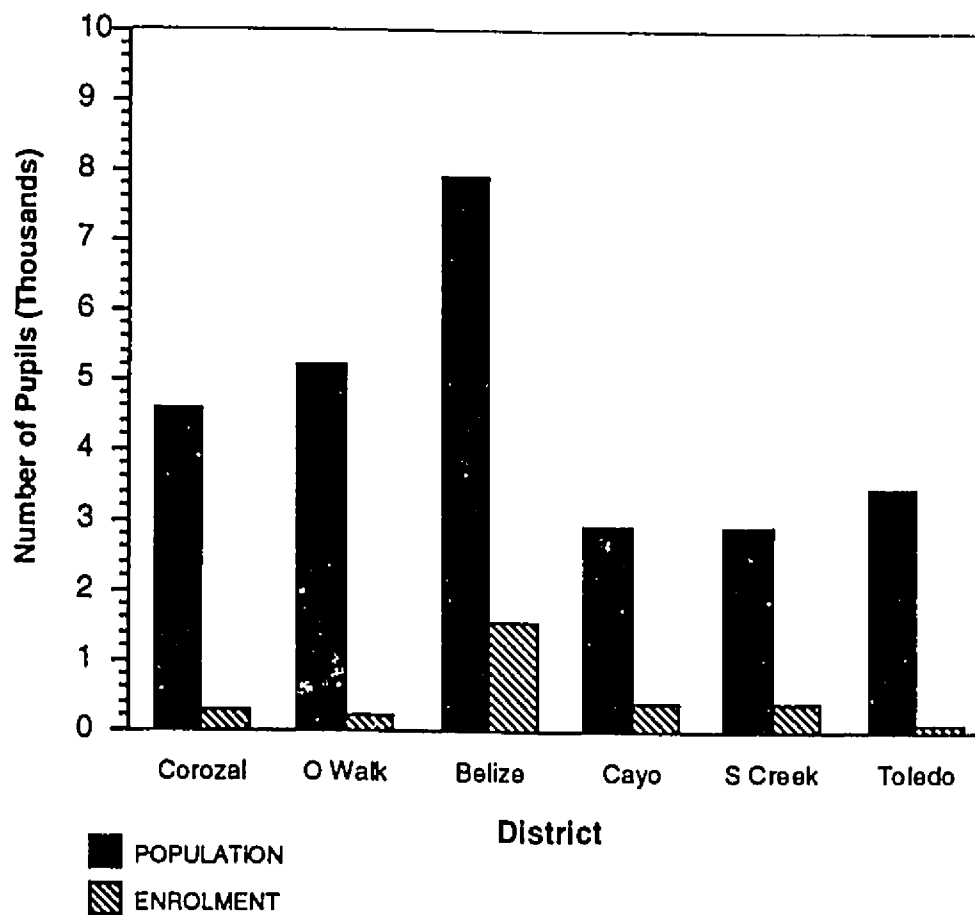


Figure 1. Preschool population and enrolment by district for 1990-1991.

Note: Age cohort is 3 - 5 years.

Source: Central Statistical Office, 1992.

Effectiveness and Quality

Hoy and Ferguson (1985) defines organizational effectiveness "as the extent to which the organization as a social institution, fulfills its objectives without incapacitating its means and resources and without placing undue strain upon its members" (p.121). Throughout this study 'effectiveness' will be used to mean the extent to which preschools, primary and secondary schools are achieving their goals with the resources available to them. Efficiency is used to mean the ability of the organizations to achieve their goals with the minimum of resources available to them.

Quality of education refers to the provision of the sectors to meet the needs of students' academic, socio-emotional and physical development.

Preschooling in Belize, like elsewhere, has many functions. However, there is no research available on the quality and effectiveness of preschools in Belize. A synthesis of observations made by several individuals are outlined below.

Curriculum

Curriculum is defined as "a plan for sustained process of teaching and learning" (Pratt, 1994, p.5). Throughout this study curriculum is used to denote the total body of knowledge taught in the preschool, primary and secondary school and the interrelationship between the subjects. Experts in curriculum development maintain that relevance and significance are key elements of curriculum development (Jennings, 1984; Marsh, 1992; Pratt, 1994).

With respect to curricula for preschool education, Belize uses the Preschool Centre

Curriculum Guide. The curriculum emphasizes social and emotional development as much as the formation of functional skills. This is often a problem with parents and those primary school teachers who perceive that the role of preschools is basically to provide introductory literacy and numeracy skills (World Bank, 1992). The teachers, because they are untrained, emphasize knowledge acquisition to the detriment of the children's cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills thus defeating the purpose of preschooling (Belize National Teachers Union, 1990; Ministry of Education, 1990; USAID, 1988).

Resources and Their Use

"A resource can be defined as any person, tool, place or equipment . . . that has the potential of aiding the productive process" (Sirkorski et al., 1977). Throughout this thesis, resources refer to the human and material means used to achieve the goals of preschool, primary and secondary education.

Government

The government's intervention at the preschool level of education is comparatively recent. In 1980 the first Education Officer was employed to coordinate and supervise all preschools, but the supervision is ineffective mainly because there are too many schools to deal with. The Education Officer also advises the Minister of Education on matters relating to policy development and the operation of centres. Governmental support also includes training in Early Childhood Development Needs, for teachers and parents of preschoolers through workshops, provides some managerial and administrative support,

coupled with small subsidies to community-based preschools and improve the quality of preschool education. The Belize Teachers College also started to give some attention to the training of preschool teachers. The institution started offering early childhood education courses in the early 1980s.

Finance

Preschooling is the level of education most dependent on private financing. This is nearly always due to the fact that the initiative to provide preschool facilities are generally taken by non-government community organizations or private individuals. Consequently, the proportion of total recurrent spent on preprimary schooling is low in Belize, as well as other Caribbean countries. For example, in the 1991/92 school year only 0.8% the recurrent budget went to preschools. Table 5 below shows the government's expenditure for the period 1985 to 1990.

The provisions in this budget was used for staff costs and other related expenses of the preschool education officer, salaries and other allowances to teachers, salaries to teacher aides in privately operated schools, subvention to community preschools, and workshops. The United Nations International Children Educational Funding (UNICEF) meets 50% of the cost of workshops. The budget for preschool education almost doubled over the five-year period. However, as with most budgets, the larger portion goes to personal enrolments. Over the same period, the allocation for support was on a steady decline.

Table 5

Government's Expenditure on Preschools 1985-1990

Year	Total Budget (Bz\$)	Salaries (Bz\$)	Support Services (Bz\$)
1985/86	137,320	99,820	37,500
1986/87	182,000	145,000	37,000
1987/88	193,000	160,000	33,000
1988/89	147,000	115,000	32,000
1989/90	227,448	195,000	31,700

Sources: Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure, 1985-1990; SPEAR, 1991.

The Preschool Unit

A Preschool Unit was established in 1979. The responsibility of the Unit is to supervise and work with all preschools countrywide, train teachers and parents, plan, upgrade and organize the activities of Early Childhood Education and work with UNICEF on projects supporting the program since it began. The program is still carried out by Belizean teachers and five Peace Corp volunteers.

Teachers

Although there is a growing awareness of the importance of initiating educational

intervention at an early age and the contribution that preschool education makes towards the child's readiness for formal schooling, there are issues and concerns manifested in the administration and governance of preschool education. The major one is that there is a dire shortage of qualified teachers in the preschool centres. The exact data on preschool teachers and their qualifications were not available, but it was suggested that less than 10% of these teachers have received any training other than workshops. A few of the teachers have upgraded themselves and moved on to training. However, because the majority of preschools are private, the proprietors cannot afford the salaries paid to government-employed teachers. As a result, once a teacher from the preschool receives training, he or she moves to a primary school for financial reasons (SPEAR, 1991).

School Facilities

Despite the fact that preschool education has been established in Belize for over two decades, it was only in 1989 that policies, norms and regulations were developed. However, no official Ministry policy statement has yet been adopted. Hence, many preschools in Belize were established and developed haphazardly and without proper assistance and supervision from the Ministry of Education. Some are overcrowded and the neighbourhoods and teaching environments are unwholesome and inadequate. Most specifically the furniture, equipment and facilities are unsuitable. In summary, the preschool system is primarily being served through private schools; most of which are grossly lacking in proper facilities, qualified staffing, teaching aids and other amenities. Most of the teaching staff, with the exception of the Government schools, are grossly

underpaid and need professional assistance. Despite the apparent zeal, interests and efforts of many of the teachers and parents, these schools are struggling and need much help. There is therefore, an urgent need for the Ministry of Education to expand its Preschool Unit with sufficient and properly trained staff and resources. It is also necessary to provide in-service training and other resources such as health and nutrition services to support the work of preschool teachers, that is, if the goal is to improve the quality and effectiveness of preschool education.

Primary Education

Primary education is the foundation of the educational system. This justifies why Belize (and other countries) are concerned about the efficiency and effectiveness of their primary school system. They are particularly concerned with schools' increasing children's knowledge and skills and preparing them for later life. The acquisition of literacy, numeracy, and problem solving skills are especially important in this regard.

These skills directly affect the productive behaviour and also increase the individual's ability to utilize the products of technological change. They also tend to increase the ability to observe, diagnose and correct a variety of situations and to be receptive to new ideas in general (World Bank, 1992, p.56).

Until Belize has a primary school system with coverage and quality which allows the majority of students to develop these basic but essential skills, it is highly improbable that either efficiency or equity considerations will justify expansion of other parts of the educational system.

Primary schooling in Belize and other developing countries:

...has come under increasing scrutiny in recent years. As its importance has been increasingly stressed so has its shortcomings. Criticisms have focused on the common inefficiency with which schools transfer (process) a first-year student through the full primary school and the often low quality of the learning process. Evidence of low primary school quality in many developing countries comes from low achievement rates in nationally administered tests as well as from cross-national comparisons (World Bank, 1992, p.57).

Coverage and Equality of Access

Structure and Growth

Primary schooling in the Belize settlement began in 1816 for ten poor children. Since then enrolment rates have been increasing gradually. By 1900, Belize, like other British Caribbean colonies already had enrolment rates of about 70%. The rates continued to increase. By 1962, all districts already had primary schools. Education in the country was almost universal and was compulsory from six through 14 years, but the children could enter school at five and remain until 16. Primary schools had eight grades -- organized as Infant I, II, then Standard I (grade 3) through Standard VI (grade 8). There were 161 primary schools in 1962 -- three Government, 131 church or Government-aided and 27 private. The estimated total primary school population was 27,000 and the total primary school enrolment 25,923 (95% of school-age population). Primary school attendance had been compulsory since the colonial period (1915), and government officials credit this policy for the reported high literacy rate in the country. However, in 1962 many of the existing Government and Government-aided primary schools there was a shortage of places amounting to some 3,200 thus many of the schools

were overcrowded (Education Planning Report, 1963-1970). Many schools were small, so the teachers were forced to teach multi-grade classes. The teachers in the larger schools had classes with 50 or 60 pupils. The primary schools, with the exception of seven infant schools, were all-age schools (grades 1 to 8). Primary education in the Government and Government-aided schools was tuition free, but children were expected to buy textbooks (The Economic Planning Survey Report, 1963).

In 1992, there were 259 primary schools including 205 denominational, 32 government and 22 private schools. There were 47,210 (95% of school age population) students enrolled in government and government-aided primary schools of which 52% were boys and 53% of the total population of which went to urban schools.

Figure 2 shows that there has been a gradual annual increase in primary school enrolment to almost 50% since 1965. This is the result of government efforts to increase the accessibility of education, particularly in rural areas, by opening new schools.

According to the World Bank Report of 1992, enrolment at the primary level in Belize compared favourably with other Caribbean countries (see Table 6). Universal access to a place in a primary school, however, does not necessarily imply equity among all children.

The overall trend in the retention rate for the primary school eight-year cycle is one of improvement. Although the rate fell during the period 1977 to 1982 and later in 1989 to 1992, it has generally improved by 0.12 since 1972 (see Figure 3).

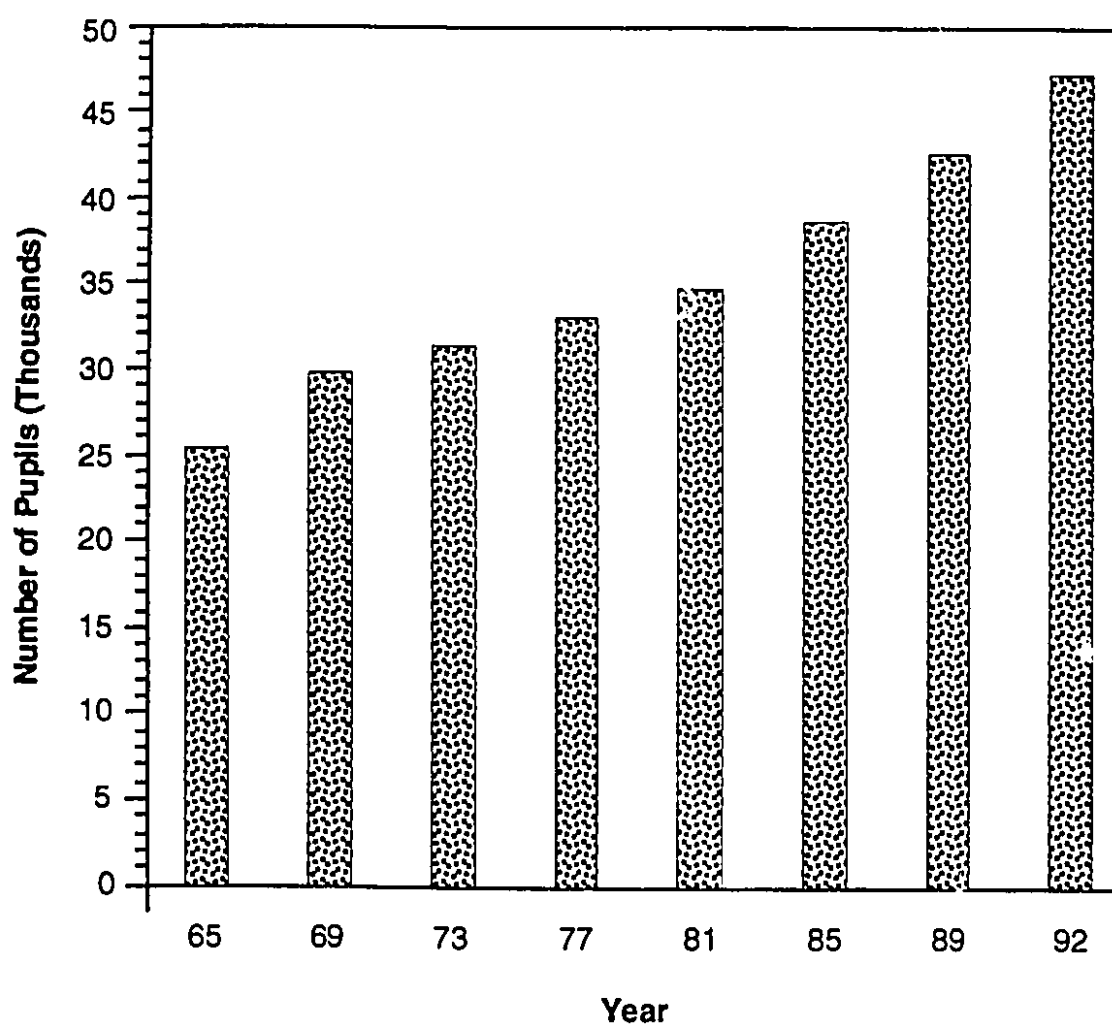


Figure 2. Enrolment of primary schools, 1965-1992

Source: Central Statistical Office, 1965-1992

Table 6

Caribbean - Primary school enrolments 1980/81-1988/89

	1980	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	Annual Average Percent Change	Enrolments as Percent of Primary Age Group
The Bahamas	37399	37301	37181	36003	36336	35691	-0.6	110
Barbados	36786	36295	32908	31599	30562	31100	-1.9	110
Belize	34165	37753	38512	39212	39779	41586	2.4	95
Grenada	12650	12008	11854	11834	11861	11890	-0.8	100
Jamaica	350000	346200	340053	341596	343763	339163	-0.4	106
St. Kitts	7666	6510	6468	6674	7675	7473	-0.3	78
St. Lucia	30391	32383	32273	32400	32825	32649	0.9	94
St. Vincent	24158	24651	24755	24561	24521	24605	0.2	86
Trinidad	155155	160675	162391	166152	171509	179497	2.0	95
Dominican Republic	908591	949444	926317	1055491	1030245	1032055	1.7	133
Suriname	74538	71454	69963	59633	62271	65978	-2.2	84

Sources: Columns 1 - 7: Caribbean Development Bank, 1990; Commonwealth Secretariat, 1990b; Dominica Ministry of Education and Sports, 1989; Suriname Ministry of Education; Inter-American Development Bank, 1989; World Bank Appraisal Reports.

Column 8: Commonwealth Secretariat, 1990a; World Bank, 1990c; UNECLA, 1988.

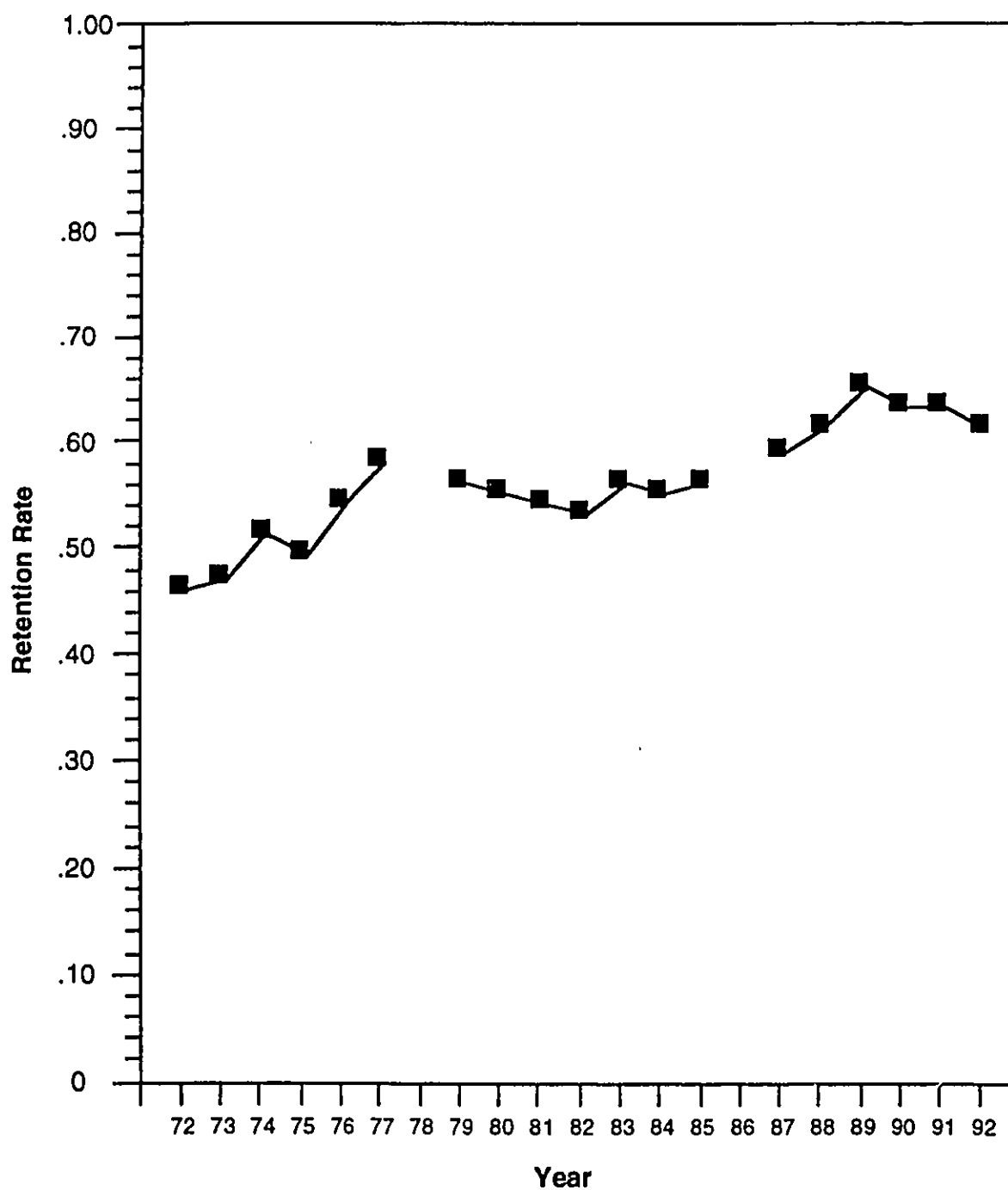


Figure 3. Retention rate of students Infant 1 - Standard VI, 1972-1992

Note: There is no data available for 1978 or 1986

Source: Central Statistical Office, 1965-1992

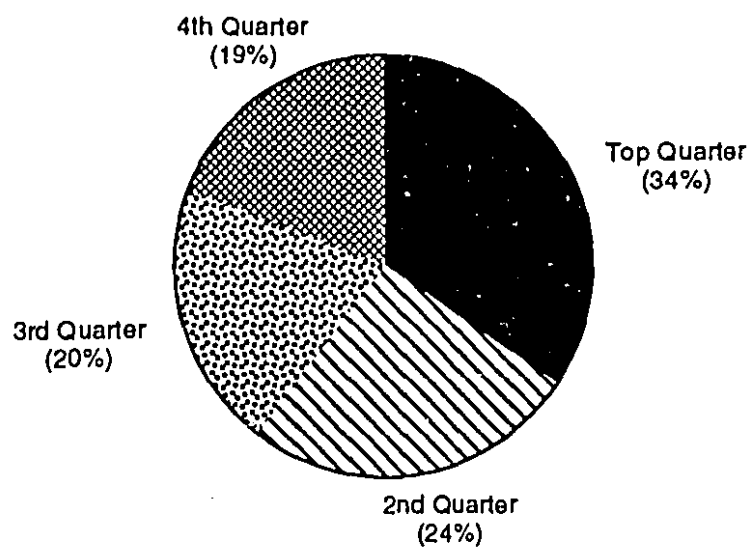
Equality of Access

Equity in primary education is only manifested through the following policy: The Education Act of 1991 states that "all children (male or female) between the ages six to 14 are free to enrol in any primary school". Schools are subsidized by the government, so students are not required to pay fees.

Inequities, however are more common. For instance, there is evidence that rural districts are under served in comparison with other areas. Rural students generally receive a lower quality education than their counterparts in urban areas. This discrepancy is significant, with rural education being the most disadvantaged, lacking trained teachers, textbooks and other materials. Parents are expected to buy recommended textbooks and materials, but there are times when rural parents, due to poverty are less likely to have funds needed to buy them. Lower quality education is also indicated by the low proportion of rural students who pass the former Primary Certificate Examination or the present Belize National Selection Examination for entrance to secondary school each year (while 50% of urban students pass the examination, only 20-30% of rural students pass (Belize Education Sector Review Report, 1988).

Figure 4 shows that pupils from urban schools who sat the BNSE in the 1991/92 school year were 2.6 times more likely to be placed in the upper quartile than those from rural schools (34% as opposed to 13%); they were only half as likely to be placed in the bottom quartile (19% as opposed to 33%). This limits the opportunities of rural children to gain entry into prestigious high schools. SPEAR (1991) also pointed out the irrelevance of the present primary curriculum to rural students. The present curriculum

URBAN



RURAL

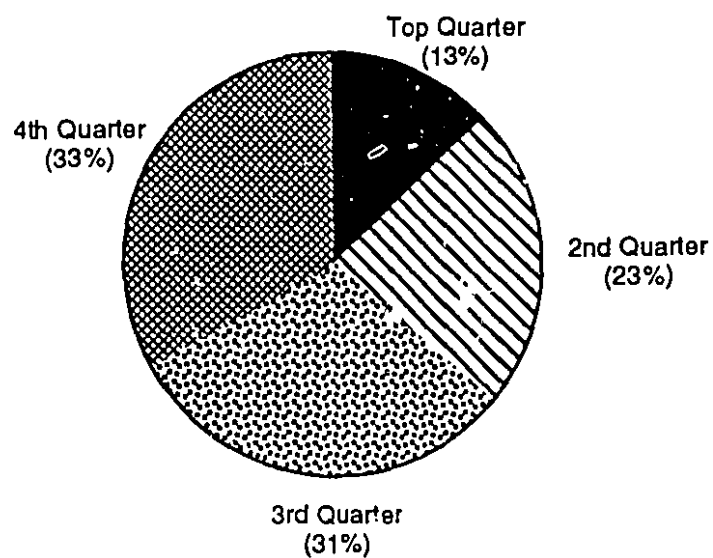


Figure 4. Primary School Performance in the B.N.S.E. Urban/Rural, 1992

Source: Central Statistical Office, 1993

is highly academic and is geared toward students who will pursue higher education. Another area of inequity is that there are certain subjects on the curriculum which are only studied by individual sexes. For example, schools still have sewing for girls and crafts for boys. Textbooks are also still sexist.

Even though there are more students as well as teachers in rural areas, there is a startling discrepancy when it comes to the number of trained teachers -- 27.8% in rural areas against 60% in the urban areas (see Table 10, p.117). The pupil/teacher ratio was 25:3 in rural areas and 25:1 in urban areas. Primary age children not well catered for in Belize are those with special needs, particularly the gifted, handicapped and those with learning disabilities. These students are mostly placed in normal schools but without the special teachers and programs for their screening or support.

The issues of Equity consists, therefore, of much more than making school places available. Equity must also be measured in the context of the quality of access and the quality of services, its retention rates, as well as the quality of outputs, outcomes or results.

Quality and Effectiveness

Belize and other Caribbean countries are concerned with the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of their primary school systems. They are particularly concerned with schools increasing children's knowledge and skills and preparing them for later life. The acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills are especially important in this regard (World Bank, 1992).

By all the quantitative indices (enrolment, attendance) primary education in Belize was doing well by the 1960s. A synthesis of the findings of the Planning Committee on Education (1963) and the UNESCO Education Mission (1964) pinpointed the following existing issues in primary education: textbooks were unsuitable and inappropriate; there were unsuitable furniture and insufficient supplies of materials, equipment and aids; the school curriculum and syllabuses were irrelevant and little attention was given to the needs and interests of older pupils in particular; there was a wide age-range in each grade often resulting from an over-strict promotion "by examination results" which was equated with "attainment and ability"; there was wastage in primary schools because pupils lost interest and left school at the earliest opportunity; fragmentation of schools was evident in the rural areas; and most schools were staffed by untrained teachers (The Planning Education Committee on Education, 1963; UNESCO Education Mission, 1964).

The grade retention and student dropout rates at the primary school level is still high. These are two major sources of inefficiency at the primary school level. For example, in 1969, the government estimated that 33% of students who completed primary school education continued to secondary school. To help counteract the high dropout rate, the Belize Government opened two senior schools (Junior Secondary Schools), in 1969 and 1972 respectively; however the dropout situation did not improve. The Belize Education Sector Review (1988) also reported that "although enrolment rate for the 6-14 age group was estimated at 87%, the dropout rate was high between the first and eight grades, estimated at 41% of the 1980-1987 cohort, and an estimated 28% of the dropouts occur between grades one and three" (Belize Education Sector Review, 1988, p.20). In

1965, 6,379 children started school in Infant, but only 3,801 reached Standard II. In 1991, there were 8,827 students in Infant I, and 6,658 entered Standard II. Of those who continued from Standard II, a majority finished Standard VI (see Appendix B). The rate of students graduating from 1965 to 1972, eight years after entering, was 46%. This percentage has increased to 61% in 1992, reaching a peak of 65% in 1989 (see Figure 3, p.77).

After the investigations of 1963 and 1964, periodic investigations were carried out to analyze the state of primary education. The UNESCO Education Mission (1983), the World Bank Mission, (June, 1988), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID, September/October, 1988), the Ministry of Education (1989), all conducted education sector studies. Each group presented its findings along with recommendations for the improvement of primary education. All of the studies noted the high participation rate of students within the 6-14 compulsory age range. There were, however, a number of problems with respect to the qualitative aspects of educational development.

The above issues that plagued the system in 1964 still persisted. In addition, the reports pointed out that there were no native language programs for minority children who do not speak English. This language problem has had serious repercussions on the education system. Many primary students experience problems with the subject 'English'. This problem ultimately contributes to the high dropout rate.

Belize has been boasting a literacy rate of 90% and over on record, but for many years it turns out that this is mostly functional literacy. This is manifested through the

poor quality compositions written by students during the Belize National Selection Examination (BNSE). The preliminary results of a Computerized Reading Assessment Survey (CRAS) show Belizean students performing well below their counterparts in the United States (The UNESCO Education Mission, 1983; USAID, 1988; World Bank, 1988; Ministry of Education, 1989; SPEAR, 1991).

Curriculum Application and Development

But this was not always the case in Belize. Belize's primary school curriculum, like most Caribbean and Third World countries, continued to reflect the values of the colonial era. This position was confirmed by the United Nations Economic Survey of 1963 and the UNESCO Education Planning Mission report of 1964, who suggested that more support be given to the curriculum process so as to improve the quality of education generally, and to make it more relevant to the development needs of the nation (UNESCO Planning Mission, 1964).

In 1962, the subjects of the primary school curriculum included: writing, reading, arithmetic, geography, history, general science, and religious knowledge. In some schools, drawing, handwork, singing and physical education appeared on the time-table. Sewing was taught to the girls. In Belize City and Corozal Town domestic science and woodwork centres had been established for the benefit of older boys and girls but on the whole there was little instruction outside the literary curriculum. A few schools had gardens.

The Education Department offered a syllabus of instruction as a guide to the

teaching of the subjects of the curriculum but teachers were encouraged and assisted by Education officers in preparing syllabuses suited to the particular needs of their environment. Many of them were not successful in doing this, because of their own lack of formal training and for other reasons including an overcrowded curriculum (Education Planning Committee, 1963)

At present the primary curriculum is still oriented toward a broad/general education, and the areas of study in the typical primary school today include the following: Infant I and II generally include arithmetic, writing, oral reading and recitation, dramatization and story telling, phonics, singing, informal conversation and religion. Standards I and II generally include traditional mathematics, comprehension, oral reading and recitation, dramatization and storytelling, phonics, modern mathematics, social studies, grammar, drills on multiplication tables, art work, science, spelling drills and religion. Standard III and IV generally include spelling drills, math tables, reading (oral and silent), social studies, mental math drills, traditional and modern mathematics, science, comprehension, grammar, and religion. Standard V and VI generally include traditional mathematics, mental math drills, modern mathematics, social studies, grammar, science, comprehension and religion.

To date curriculum guides have been produced and approved for use in the following subjects: language arts, mathematics science, social studies, health and physical education. These should be in use in all schools throughout the entire country. Religious knowledge is also included on the curricula of church schools, but these are provided by the different denominations who own them (Ministry of Education, 1992).

In the past decade, the Curriculum Development Unit has also supported a proliferation of new curricula introduced to the educational system by individual groups. Some of these are: REAP (Relevant Education for Agriculture and Production); TESOL (Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages), PEP (Primary Education Programme), SHEP (School Health Education Programme), PPTT (Posterized Programme Teaching Technology) and WIZE (Wildlife Inquiry Through Zoo Education), and Drug Education, among others. All these interventions were projects funded by foreign agencies, such as USAID. Some have continued to operate even after funding has ceased. REAP, for example, is now funded by Government. While all of these interventions have their merits, one has to be concerned that the curriculum is not becoming too overcrowded. Teachers complain and are confused by all these curriculum guides. For example, they contend that they are torn between using REAP guide and the 'basic' guide because they have to prepare the pupils for BNSE. The complaint is that the BNSE does not address the areas of The REAP curriculum (SPEAR, 1991).

The prevalent criticism of the primary school curriculum has been is still that the curricula has considerable concentration on the 3Rs, which meant that it had leaned too much toward the academics and not so much toward the aesthetics and practical subjects. The criticism of teachers who teach the curriculum was that teachers had a tendency to favour subject teaching rather than the child-centred approach (UNESCO Planning Mission, 1964; Education Department Annual Report, 1965).

There are some major issues in the development and application of the primary school curriculum. For example, although curriculum guides are disseminated to all

schools, teachers are not compelled to use them. Thus, some of the guides are left to gather dust on school shelves, simply because the teachers do not know how to use them effectively. The reality of having mostly untrained teachers in the majority of our rural schools also contributes to this situation. The Curriculum Development Unit usually initiate teachers into the use of the curriculum by occasional workshops held throughout the country. The workshops, however, are most often held for new interventions. This effort is undoubtedly not enough. The effective use of guides has therefore been impaired by a lack of systematic training for the teachers on the proper use of materials (Belize Education Sector Review Report, 1988). It is also generally felt that the Ministry needs to develop a policy for curriculum development and training teachers to use its curriculum guides. It also needs to ensure that textbooks approved for use in the schools support curriculum goals and are culturally sensitive to Belize.

Primary School Examinations

Examinations, and more especially competitive examinations, can be for several purposes: checking results and the benefits derived by the pupils; selection (promotion, entrance, and competitive examinations); administration (award of diplomas or certificates for specific objects); guarantees of the right to sit a competitive examination or enter a given institution or occupation (Agazzi, 1967; Broadfoot, 1984; Broadfoot, 1986; Marsk, 1992). In elementary school, where there is a fixed yearly curriculum, examinations are held at the end of each school year, but there is a growing tendency to do away with these and substitute a more flexible system, providing for an overall assessment of each

pupil (Eggleston, 1984; Marsh, 1992). Belize, however has historically inherited an exam-oriented society.

At the end of the primary course in the 1960's, students sat one, two or three examinations: the Primary School Certificate Examination; (2) the Government Scholarship Examination; and (3) the Common Entrance Examination.

The Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) was instituted in 1946 as a credential for primary school leavers (Standard VI) seeking employment or desiring entrance to secondary schools. The examinations consisted of tests in verbal reasoning and attainment tests in English, mathematics, social studies and science (Ministry of Education, p.15). In July of 1969, 2,328 students sat the Primary School Leaving Certificate, and 1,190 (+51%) were successful (Education Department Annual Report, 1969).

Sad to say, the marking system plus the unsystematic approach to setting the examination papers militated against the majority of children and only about 50% of the school leavers gained the much needed certificate. It was not until 1979 that an educational advisor to the British Government working in the Caribbean provided some assistance in the improvement of the Primary School Leaving Examination by training Education Officers in the writing of objective tests aligned to the new curriculum guides in English, mathematics, social studies and science, and in changing the marking system to eliminate an overall pass mark and replace this with individual grades for each of the four papers (Ministry of Education, 1982).

The Government Scholarship Examinations were only open to Belizeans between

the ages of 11 and 13. The tests used for the selection of students consisted of items in verbal reasoning, English, and arithmetic. In 1969, the Government Scholarship Examination to secondary schools was taken by 632 students, and the first 75 candidates in order of merit were granted scholarship awards.

Scholarship awards covered tuition fees and a book allowance; bursaries were provided in cases where scholarship students must live away from home to take up their awards and where needs for assistance were established. Scholarship winners were automatically given a place in the secondary school of their choice.

Otherwise, admission to secondary school was through entrance examinations set by the secondary schools individually. The Roman Catholic Board of Management used a common entrance examination for all its secondary schools and employed standardized tests produced by school testing agencies in the United States (Education Department Annual Report, 1965).

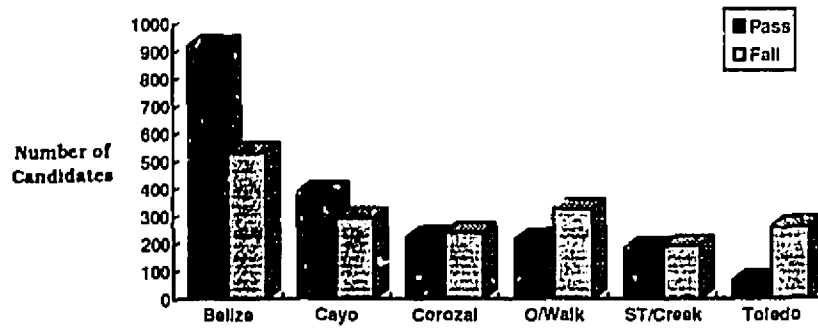
The first National Common Entrance Examination was constituted in 1973 by the Belize Association of Secondary Schools' Principals (BAPSS). This was considered a significant development. At last the multiplicity of admissions examinations to secondary schools was abolished to adopt one, the American Common Entrance Examination, which had previously been used by Catholic schools. This venture created a common policy among secondary schools regarding admission requirements. The examination, however, was criticized in some quarters, mainly because it was alien to Belize, but it had the merit of being objective and computerized. The results of this examination became the main criteria for selection of students for secondary schools.

The name, Common Entrance Examination, has been changed twice: Belize National Examination (BNE, 1980) and the Belize National Selection Examination (BNSE), since 1982. The format, and content of this examination has also changed. Instead of the former American Examination, the content was changed to items based on Belize.

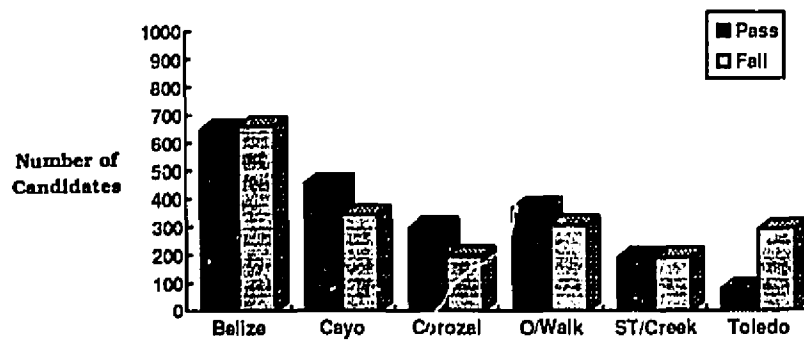
The BNSE, the only national examination administered in Belize is an attempt to standardize the Primary School terminal examination (taken at the end of Standard VI). It is compulsory for all students regardless of the type of school attended. Figure 5 shows that while high failure rates are not consistent for each district over the three years depicted on the graphs, they remain a salient characteristic of the data. Generally, the results for each district are relatively stable, with little change in the pass/fail ratio from year to year. A notable detractor of this trend is Belize, the most urban population, where the number of passes was halved from 1985 to 1986.

The results for Stann Creek show a ration near 1:1 for each year. With passing rates that barely approach half that of very high failure rate, Toledo gives the poorest showing of the six districts. The total number of entries in 1992 was 4,204. BNSE is administered by the Examinations Unit of the Ministry of Education and it tests students abilities in six areas: English usage and comprehension, composition, mathematics, social studies, science and learning potential. The BNSE serves several purposes. Its main purpose is to select students for secondary school, but it is also used for the award of scholarships. For the students who are not selected, BNSE serves as a school leaving certificate. The certificate does have some value for those seeking employment. For

BNSE Results for 1985



BNSE Results for 1986



BNSE Results for 1988

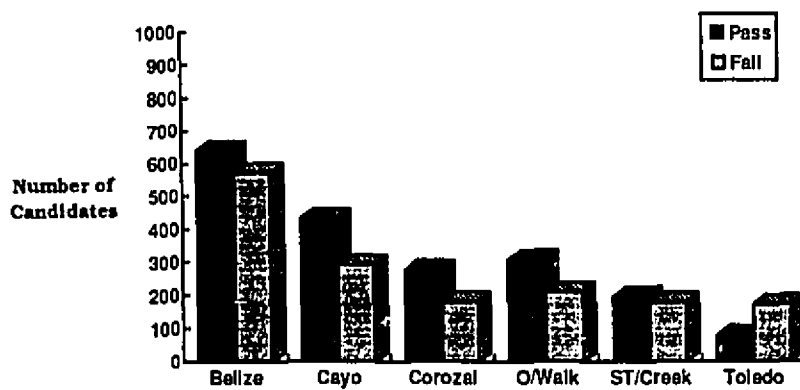


Figure 5. Trends in BNSE Results 1986-1988

Source: Abstract of Statistics 1988; Ministry of Education Records, 1985-1988

example, it serves as a minimum qualification for the Police service and as a prerequisite for vocational training and entry into the First Teachers' Examination. Schools set their own entry requirements in terms of percentile rankings and only admit students who meet their criteria (some schools as high as 75% and some as low as 50%). Most Government schools set their entry requirements between 50% and 65%, but welcome students with higher percentiles.

The inadequacies of the Belizean educational system are often highlighted by the media after the results of examinations are released -- BNSE, and others. Because students' performance on this and other examinations has been on the decline, there is much fingerpointing. The finger of blame is usually pointed at the system, the examination process, the test, the curriculum guides, the school, the pupils. Some teachers argue that the assessment practices are not sufficiently flexible to accommodate all curricula materials, needs, and interests of all children. There is too often the narrowing of the Primary School Curricula so as to teach the test. This is not so throughout the entire eight years of primary school but it is apparently so when the children reach Standard VI and the teaching-for-the-test becomes the pattern.

Another factor that must be considered is the fact that the greater percentage of the teachers are untrained. Many teachers do not have the curriculum guides because they do have them they do not know how to use them. They very seldom receive supervision, and the materials and support services they need to function are inadequate. Some managers provide some materials and supplies for free. However, in the majority of instances schools have to do fundraising activities to provide cash to purchase the materials which are essential. The time spent on these activities cuts heavily into the time pupils should be spending on task (SPEAR, 1991, p.38).

High school teachers also complain that the BNSE is not a good predictor of students' academic ability. They claim that some students who score high percentiles on the BNSE have serious problems in high school. "Secondary school teachers blame primary school teachers for the unpreparedness of first formers for high school" (SPEAR, 1991, p.39).

The assessment system of Belize is fraught with a number of difficulties. However the single most important, and perhaps the major source of these difficulties is that there is not a clear unified Assessment and Evaluation structure. The system operates without an efficient feedback mechanism hence it suffers from a surplus of opinion and shortage of evidence. For example, schools prepare their own end of year tests, for all their students from Infant I to Standard V, which are used for promotional purposes. Failure rates of these tests are low and few students repeat an academic year. It is generally recognized that these tests do not provide teachers, administrators and parents with valid information which would permit them to judge the effectiveness of Belize's education system.

As mentioned above the BNSE is the only official examination presently administered by government, provides assessment results which serve primarily as a selection examination to determine placement at the secondary level and to award scholarships. Missing in its feedback mechanism is the development aspect and as such little or no feedback is given to policy makers, schools, managers and management, teacher trainers, curriculum developers, examination designers, and question writers. The feedback mechanism only provides for assessment and evaluation to be sent directly to

the Planning and Development division of the Ministry of Education (MOE) for transmission upwards only.

There are also inherent difficulties stemming from lack of involvement of a wide range of interest with advisory and consultative abilities, adequate equipment, and sufficiently trained personnel. The Examinations Unit has relied considerably on the cooperation and assistance from other units to produce examinations. This has proven to be a very unsatisfactory state of affairs when one considers that deadlines have to be met annually in the production of examinations.

Although the BNSE is the only national indicator of students achievement in the primary schools, unfortunately there is no consistent system of item analysis and as such valuable information which would serve to upgrade the quality of the BNSE is left to gather dust on shelves, destroyed or rest on some computer disk for years to come.

Primary school enrolment in Belize is 95%. Grade retention is negligible, dropouts are about 40% of enrolment. Approximately 60% of students at the primary level gain access to some type of secondary schooling, and about 50% of those who start secondary school complete their secondary education. The government is placing emphasis on improving quality of primary schooling through a comprehensive program of teacher training, curriculum reforms and periodic national assessment of student achievement (World Bank Report, 1992).

Resources and Their Use

The Church/State Partnership

The question of the management of schools still remains a topic of discussion in the educational circles of Belize. Many reports to the government highlighted the question of control - Church and State as partners. The Easter Report of 1935 and the UNESCO Mission's reports of 1964 and 1983 recommended the continuance of the church state partnership in the management of schools. However, both Dixon and the West India Royal Commission of 1938 recommended that the government should take administrative responsibility for the discipline as well as the finance of education of the territory. The Church-State partnership in education continued nonetheless.

Under the Church-State partnership the government established the education objectives, provides funds to pay 100% of primary and 70% of secondary school teachers' salaries, contributes half the costs of facilities and their maintenance, develops curricula and administrative standards, trains teachers and administers selection examinations at the end of primary school. The churches are responsible for managing their schools, school maintenance and personnel matters, such as hiring, firing and transfers. It should be noted that although government pays 70% of secondary school teachers' salaries and provides grants for maintenance, government continues to play a passive role in the control of education. Reports submitted by Dixon (1936) and UNESCO (1964) complained about this passivity, particularly in regard to the management of secondary education. They contended that the "various denominations have been allowed to plan and implement their differing programs with little relevance for the government's

economic and social goals" (SPEAR, 1991, p.39).

The Education Ordinance of 1962 and its successive amendments of 1967, 1970, 1977 and 1991, and the Board Rules appended, set out the regulations for the management of denominational and government schools. Immediate control and administration of the schools is vested by law in the denominational managing authorities. Even where the law gave the Ministry or the Department of Education authority in certain matters, there are times when these powers are exercised with diffidence and sometimes not at all. This dual control is deep-rooted in the history of the educational system, in the minds of the teaching profession and people at large. The Belize Sector Education Review (1988) acknowledges the invaluable services that the church has provided for the development of education in Belize. The report stated that:

...the Church partnership in the provision of education has been a fruitful one. The partnership has saved resources in the public sector by leveraging government saving in education; it has promoted pluralism and diversity in a sociologically complex society; and through competition it has increased to some extent the operational efficiency of the educational system (SPEAR, 1991, p.10).

The UNESCO Education Mission (1983) even attributed our high literacy rate (93%) to the church-state partnership. Nevertheless, the system is still contributing to considerable fragmentation, duplication and overlap of educational effort in Belize (UNESCO Education Missions, 1983, p.10).

Finance

In the beginning (1816) education was financed by some voluntary subscriptions

from the inhabitants of British Honduras, but the bulk of financing has always come from central government (the first amount being a meagre £1,000 in 1850). From 1941 to the late 1960s, the Colonial Development and Welfare Act assisted in the form of grants mainly for building schools, libraries and teachers' houses. Under the Education Ordinance of 1962, government aided primary schools received 100% of teachers' salaries, a supplementary grant at a fixed rate per pupil as well as 50% of the capital and recurrent expenditure of schools with respect to construction, equipment, supplies and maintenance. The churches' input is the management of the schools and all management costs, as well as the remaining 50% of the capital and recurrent expenditure for the schools under their management.

The fact that the country obtained internal self-government in 1964 explained why the government's expenditure on education increased considerably. In 1965 the government spent \$1,265,226, which was 14.1% of the annual budget -- Bz\$870,608 of which Bz\$166,339 (88%) was spent on salaries. During this time there were 139 primary schools with a total enrolment of 26,268 pupils.

Table 7 shows that education takes a sizeable portion of the annual budget -- an average of 18% annually. Expenditure on education in general has risen by over 230% during the period 1977 to 1990. During that time an average of 56% of the education budget went to primary education. However, there has been virtually no change in the distribution of funds to salaries and support services. In fact, the allocations for the support of education has been on the decline. Figures for 1989/90 show that 94% of the Primary Education Budget was allocated to salaries and 6% to the support services.

Regional and international funding agencies, such as USAID, UNHCR, CIDA, UNESCO and the World Bank also provide assistance to education through grants and loans in connection with specific education projects and programs.

The breakdown of expenditure in primary education for 1989-1990 fits a pattern that goes back many years. The lack of maintenance funds resulted in many government and church schools to be in dire need of repairs. Building conditions tend to be worse outside Belize City. The lack of instructional materials and dilapidated and overcrowded

Table 7

Summary of recurrent expenditure on primary education, 1977 and 1985-90

Year	Total Education Budget (\$Bz.)	% Nat'l Budget	Total Primary Education (\$Bz.)	Teachers Salaries (\$Bz.)	Support Services
1977/78	8,014,761	21	4,125,830	3,740,606	385,224
1985/86	18,647,419	19	9,847,546	8,959,546	888,000
1986/87	19,061,000	16	10,946,000	10,120,000	826,000
1987/88	22,015,000	16	12,298,000	11,450,000	848,000
1988/89	23,581,149	18	13,759,300	12,784,500	974,800
1989/90	26,931,240	19	15,777,696	14,854,098	923,600

Source: Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure, 1977, 1986/87, 1987/88, 1988/89, 1989/90

physical facilities have resulted in poor teaching environment.

While the use of about 90% share of available funds for teachers' salaries

compares favourably with most Caribbean countries, the 6% available for supplies, maintenance, scholarships and other needed operational expenditures is nonetheless inadequate in the Belizean context. The salary bill, moreover, finances an excessive number of teachers with inadequate regard to the quality of the teaching staff. The current student-teacher ratios, which are 26 to 1 in primary schools, needs to be assessed carefully. Improved efficiency can also be realized by reviewing and revising practices for the hiring and remuneration of teachers in primary schools.

A World Bank publication (1986) posited that in most developing countries like Belize primary education should receive the highest investment priority, followed by secondary education. It argued that evidence from previous studies showed that primary education is the most profitable level of investment, followed by secondary education, and then higher education. Although secondary and higher levels may be highly profitable from a social point of view, primary education in general not only shows the highest level of return but also "apart from measurable monetary awards, investments in lower levels of education may generate more externalities in the higher level" (World Bank Report, 1986, p.9). Externalities are the benefits to society, such as the development of national consciousness and loyalty, socialization of ideologies and morals.

In the case of Belize, inefficient use of resources often occurs at the school level. This includes not only inefficient use of resources in the purchase of inputs, e.g. teachers services and materials, but also inefficient allocation of resources to meet the needs of economically deprived students. Inefficiency also occurs when a student with a good learning potential fails to perform satisfactorily, or drops out, or fails to go on to a higher

level because of economic reasons.

Innovation

Government recognized these problems, and in 1990 obtained assistance from the World Bank valued at \$11 million (Bze.) to work on a major five-year Primary Education Project. The project aimed to improve the quality of instructional inputs in primary schools and increase student educational achievement levels by pursuing three objectives:

- (a) introducing a new system for the training of primary school teachers in order to improve the quality and relevance of teacher training and increase the number of teachers with professional certification;
- (b) improving the quality, availability and efficient use of educational facilities and resources for teaching, learning and assessment in primary schools;
- (c) strengthening the planning and management of education to enable the Government to develop policies and implement programs to improve the cost-effectiveness of its expenditures on primary education (Ministry of Education Annual Report, 1991, pp.16-17).

The project was designed with three inter-related components reflecting its three objectives. The first focused on improvements in the teacher training system and upgrading the knowledge, skills, and overall competence of primary school teachers. The second component consisted of support for improving the classroom environment, distributing textbooks, improving the curricula, and designing and implementing new examinations for diagnosis and measurement of student achievement and materials for remediation of learning difficulties. The third aimed at improving educational planning and management through the introduction of new methods and systems for monitoring, budgeting and evaluating educational programs.

Central Administration

The Minister of Education continues to make policy decisions with the support of the National Council for Education. He is also still assisted in the discharge of this function by professionals staffing the Administrative Services and Development Divisions of the Ministry (see Figure 6). Ministry personnel collaborate with managing authorities of various private, community and denominational institutions and with District Management Teams for the delivery of educational services in each of the six districts.

In 1994 responsibility for the administration of the education system still lies with the Permanent Secretary. The Chief Education Officer still functions as the chief professional officer and as advisor to the Permanent Secretary, the Minister of Education, and State. The Chief Education Officer is now assisted by a Deputy Chief Education Officer appointed since 1989. There are now two Principal Education Officers, one for the primary system and the other for secondary and higher systems. There are 14 Education Officers, five stationed in the five out-districts (Corozal, Orange Walk, Cayo, Stann Creek and Toledo) whose main functions are to supervise the work in the schools and assist in improving teacher effectiveness and the quality of education. One Education Officer is in charge of examinations. One is responsible for the Curriculum Development Unit, another directs Rural Education and Agriculture in primary schools and yet another is in charge of pre-school education.

The Ministry of Education is situated in Belmopan and the office of the Ministry of Education, Permanent Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Chief Education Officer, Deputy Chief Education Officer, and the two Principal Education Officers. The Ministry of

Education is responsible for the formulation of education strategies and plans and their implementation through appropriate programs. It is expected to monitor and supervise the implementation of the programs, to collect and analyze educational data, to promote research on education with a view to formulating educational policy plans and to establish the adequate administrative and financial capacity to support this work (UNESCO, 1983; Belize Education Sector Review Report, 1988; Ministry of Education Annual Report, 1990). The Ministry lacks the planning capacity and other resources to respond effectively to the large number of primary schools in need of repairs or new construction. This problem is aggravated by the cumbersome procedures used by the Ministry of Education to reimburse churches for maintenance and capital expenditures.

The Ministry of Education's operational capacity is limited by shortcomings in planning and program monitoring, including management information, financial planning, and budget control. Previous attempts to establish a data base for educational planning and management have had limited success. The present data base on education is poor and unreliable. The Ministry of Education also lacks a school map necessary for planning new facility construction. Following a recommendation from the World Bank, MOE established a small Planning Unit in 1990 which is responsible for collecting and analysing information on education for planning and management purposes. A major output of the of the Planning Unit has been a five-year (1989-1994) plan for education. In addition, the reality is that the MOE has a small professional staff which is overburdened with day-to-day administration and troubleshooting. There is little or no time to plan and manage change. Decision-making is highly centralized and

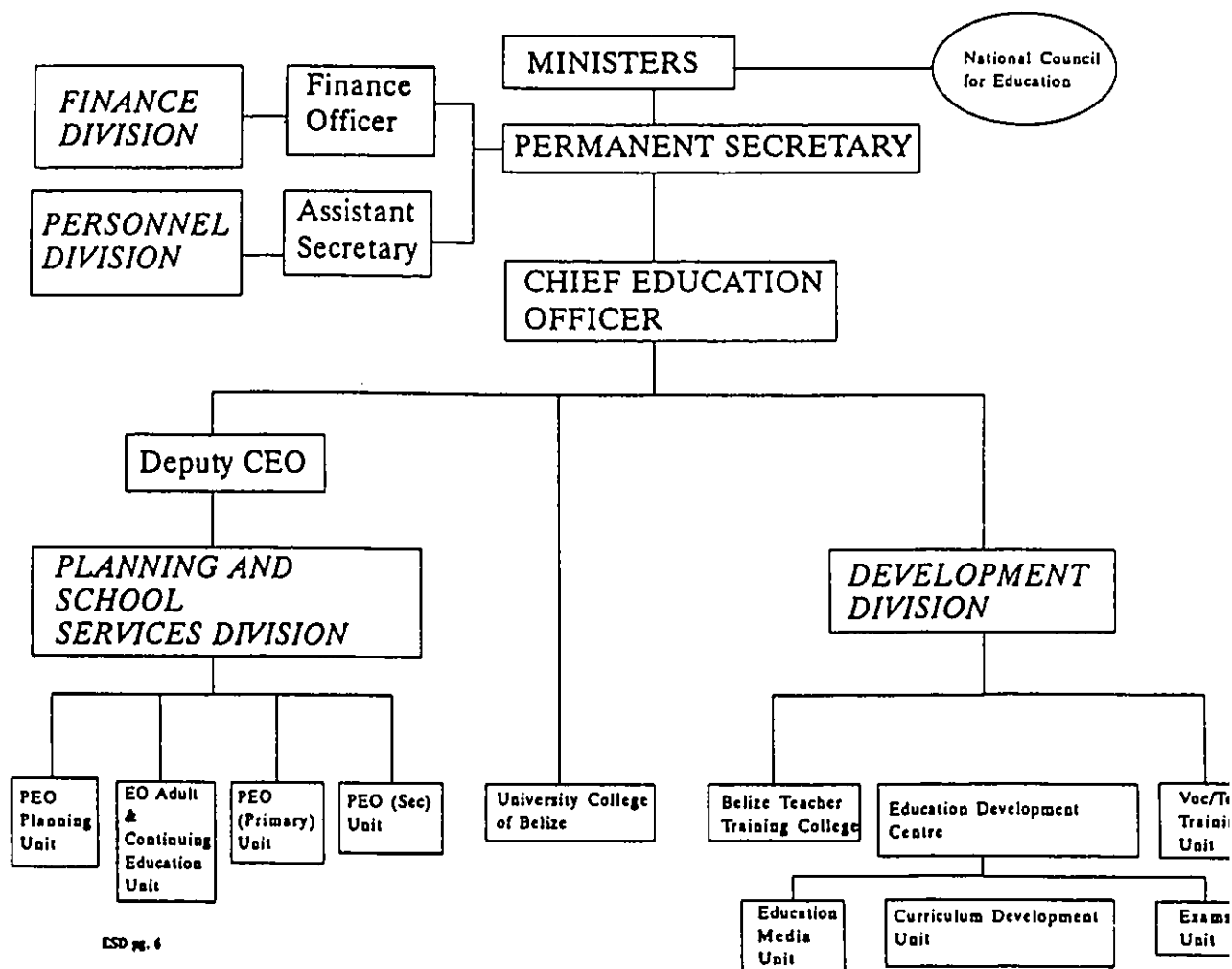


Figure 6. Organization Structure of the Ministry of Education

Source: Ministry of Education, 1992.

implementation capacity of both the district and the school level is underutilized.

The Planning Unit

One major problem that plagued the Ministry of Education up to 1990 was its lack of planning capability -- a situation which, according to the UNESCO Education Mission (1983), already existed in 1964. The mission at that time drew attention to this fact and made recommendations in this respect. The UNESCO Education Mission (1964) commented that:

...the absence of this specialized service has handicapped the Ministry in dealing with a number of malfunctions from which the system has suffered in the past and continues to suffer. Schools and entire subsystems have grown rather erratically, mostly of the initiative of religious denominations without any evaluation of their consistency and national development objectives, which reflect such vital parameters as social justice, economic development, demographic factors -- last but not least -- financial resources. Education has in fact, largely been made to respond to external demands rather than to act as a supporting service to overriding goals (p.9).

The UNESCO Education Mission of 1983 found the same situation.

Criticisms made by UNESCO and other external education sector missions, in conjunction with the Ministry's realization of its handicap in attempting to manage a growing complex system without a planning capability, resulted in the Ministry of Education designing a project in 1984. It was established in cooperation with UNESCO in the establishment of an Education Planning Unit in the Ministry of Education. Its goals were:

- 1) To collect, restore, retrieve and analyze statistical and other data for the

educational system;

- 2) To coordinate the preparation of projects;
- 3) To coordinate the preparation of plans for the educational system;
- 4) To coordinate the preparation of the Annual Budget;
- 5) To carry on an examination of the Education System relating to increasing the efficiency of administration;
- 6) To collaborate with the School Building and Maintenance Unit on a program relating to the location of new institutions;
- 7) To coordinate the preparation of plans for the education system.

However, due to a variety of constraints this unit was only formally established in 1990. In September of the same year, some technical assistance was provided by Robin Ellison, a financed Technical Cooperation Officer (TCO) from the Overseas Development Administration (ODA), (an arm of the British Development Division in the Caribbean). A consultant for UNESCO/CARNEID Barbados, Una Paul, also guided the planning initiative which aimed at deriving policy guidelines, programs and projects for the implementation of the Five Year Development Plan (1990-1994). The Ministry of Education needs to be commended for this important move but there is still much room for improvement. For example, the problem of a lack of communication between the Ministry and schools, and the dissemination of information on education still persists; information is still not reaching the remote rural schools and the situation has barely changed (SPEAR, 1991).

The Curriculum Development Unit

The Curriculum Development Unit (established in 1975) as an arm of the Ministry of Education functions in the context of the broad educational policy aims of the government. These are reflected in the recently developed mission statement which reads as follows:

The Ministry of Education, on behalf of the Government of Belize, is charged with the responsibility of ensuring that all Belizeans be given the opportunity to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for a full and active participation in the development of the Nation.

In carrying out this responsibility, the Ministry of Education, in partnership with the churches and other voluntary agencies will ensure that there are adequate support systems for the delivery of appropriate and equitable educational services (Ministry of Education, 1990, p.2).

The Curriculum Development Unit continues to carry out its original functions. In addition, the Unit collaborates with the Belize Teachers' College in the area of in-service training and with the examinations section of the Ministry of Education with various local and external examinations -- The Belize National Selection Examination, The Caribbean Examination Council and National Teachers' Examination.

The first significant steps toward updating the primary school curriculum during the seven-year development plan period (1963-70) came in 1970 when the Chief Education Officer, E.P. Yorke appointed several national development curriculum committees to work together to revise the entire curriculum of Primary schools. A handful of curriculum guides was placed into the schools for trial. These included social studies and language arts for senior classes and a skeletal art curriculum guide.

Three years later an attempt was made to evaluate the social studies and language arts curriculum guides and a questionnaire was sent out for that purpose, but there was no final analysis of the questionnaires. The weakness of the project was that there was no one person responsible for completing the exercise. Clearly there was a need for some kind of agency within the Ministry of Education to take charge of Curriculum Development on a national basis (Ministry of Education, 1973).

In 1974 the Chief Education Officer appointed new committees to resume and complete the work begun in 1970. There were committees for language arts; social studies; mathematics and home economics. These early syllabuses had been simply lists of content which teachers were expected to cover each year. They were designed using a three-column layout so that the link between behavioural objectives, suggested teaching methods, and support materials were immediately obvious. In this second phase, an officer from the Ministry of Education was posted at the Education Office in Belize City to give full time attention to the working of the curriculum committees which were set up. That officer was J.A. Bennett.

In 1975 the Curriculum Development Unit (CDU) was established with J.A. Bennett as the head or Curriculum Development Officer (CDO), and E. Raymond and C. Aspinall as Curriculum Coordinators. The original functions of the of the CDU were as follows:

- 1) to construct new curriculum guides in the various content areas of the primary school curriculum;
- 2) to train teachers in the use of these new curriculum guides;

- 3) to produce materials in support of the guides; and
- 4) to act as a resource centre for teachers.

In addition to the Curriculum Development Officer, L. Moguel, there are in 1994, three Curriculum Coordinators each responsible for curriculum development in a particular content area, resource centres in each district which make some materials available to teachers out in the field.

The general approach to curricular development has been what is termed "participatory". In this approach Curriculum officers work very closely in collaboration with classroom teachers and other educators in the design, trial evaluation and adoption of curriculum materials. There are times when "experts are called in to help out. However, the Ministry of Education in principle has the final word on materials adopted for national use. In practice the Ministry gives every consideration to the options of teachers and other educators fed through the Curriculum Development Unit.

In most cases the work which had begun in the early 1970's was built upon. Work was done for the senior level first and gradually material for the juniors and infants was produced. By 1976 the first drafts of most of the Curriculum Guides were being tested in schools.

The Curriculum Development Unit has produced curriculum guides and limited instructional materials, but it has problems. The unit is understaffed and lacks basic equipment. It also operates with insufficient funds. Yet it represents a nucleus on which greater capacity could be developed which could in turn improve its quality of service and become effective.

The Education Officer

Some form of inspection of primary schools has existed in Belize from the earliest days of organized education. Private bodies, notably the churches, controlled the schools and the government-appointed Inspector of Schools to check the efficiency of teachers. Teacher effectiveness was judged by the performance of students at annual examinations. The inspector sometimes found time to give advice to teachers but his primary duty was to see that the course of studies was being followed and that the school regulations were observed. Supervision was virtually non-existent for little attempt was made by the inspectors to help teachers to improve efficiency.

In the early 1960s many Education Officers got their position from the ranks of trained teachers. In addition, qualification from a recognized university was also required, though not necessarily a full degree. In most cases Education Officers lacked any formal training in school supervision. The Education Survey (UNESCO, 1983) further confirmed the need to improve the officers' efficiency.

The management organization for the education sector is divided into six districts (Belize, Cayo, Corozal, Orange Walk, Stann Creek and Toledo) which are political subdivisions of the national government (see Map of Belize). In this structure the most important links between the Ministry of Education and the schools are the six District Education Officers (DEOs), responsible for the delivery of schools' administrative and supervisory services. Oliva (1987) defines supervision "as a service provided to the teachers for the purpose of improving instruction" (p.23). In the Belizean context supervision performed by Education Officers has two facets. The first is monitoring of

the actual teaching/learning activity and the second entails assessment of and administration and management of schools.

Each officer is assigned an average of 40 elementary schools and since 1993 has also been assigned to all secondary schools in their respective districts. Some of the primary schools are situated in very remote areas. The roads are usually inaccessible and one has to walk or travel by boat or horseback to reach these schools.

Although the inspecting role is still an important one, the Education Officer's function has undergone diverse changes to include advising and teaching functions. The Education Officer advises Boards of Management, principals and teachers on matters of education policy and practice, advises on problems that arise in schools and makes recommendations on behalf of the schools to the appropriate division of the Ministry of Education. He or she identifies professional problems and needs of the school personnel and arranges for and conducts relevant inservice training to meet these needs. Through workshops and conferences, demonstrations, and seminars, new ideas in education, especially in subject areas, and new methods and techniques are disseminated. The Education Officer's professional leadership aims at "improving methods of instruction as well as conditions -- physical, social and aesthetic -- pertaining to the development of the child, guiding efforts of principals and teachers to do a better professional job, seeing that quality of education is maintained and that the goals of the school are achieved" (Ministry of Education, 1992, p.12). In their inspectorate roles, Education Officers specifically look at the soundness of the physical plant. Education Officers also assess the teaching competence of untrained teachers aspiring to be certified at the First Class Teachers'

level.

Due to administrative workloads and financial constraints, District Education Officers continue to do everything else except being in the schools supervising and assisting teachers. School visits are infrequent and tend to be inspectorial rather than supervisory, mostly detecting needs and sometimes giving assistance. "During the 1990/1991 school year only 18 primary schools benefitted from comprehensive supervisory visits; eight in the Belize District, two in the Cayo, four in Corozal, and four in the Toledo District" (Ministry of Education 1990/1991 Report, p.34). Rural schools, which constitute about 74% of the total, are more adversely affected by this neglect than urban schools. The Ministry of Education recognized the inadequacy of the present inspection procedures and practices and planned to implement a modified version of the supervision/inspection mechanism. The orientation is towards a decentralization of the supervisory function, and the empowering of principals to perform their function as the immediate supervisors of teachers under their charge. Three Assistant Education Officers have also been appointed (1991) to assist in this endeavour (Ministry of Education 1990/1991 Annual Report).

The District Education Management Teams

Standing Committees were established in all districts in 1992. The Committees derived their mandates from the Ministry of Education and carried out advisory functions in accordance with the Education Act (1991) and in accordance with the Rules which apply to the various levels of education institutions under that Act, and any guidelines set

out by the National Education Advisory Council.

the functions of the Committees are:

- (a) To advise on (and to act on, where necessary) the following:
 - the supervision of schools
 - the conduct of National and External examinations
 - the training of teachers and matters pertaining thereto
 - the suitability and adequacy of school facilities
 - student affairs (welfare, discipline)
 - the establishment of new schools
 - implementation and suitability of curricula
 - other matters as may from time to time be viewed by the Committee as having a direct bearing on the proper administration of educational institutions in the District;
- (b) To make representation to the National Education Advisory Council on matters of concern to the District Committees;
- (c) To submit periodic reports on the activities of the Committee to the Ministry of Education.

The District Education Management Team is a form of decentralization (deconcentration). This means that tasks and work are passed down to subordinates (the committee) without the transfer of decision-making authority. The superior authority is decongested but little power is shifted (Rondinelli, 1981). The District Management Team is a new venture of the Ministry of Education and only time will tell whether this

will improve the administration of education in Belize.

Local Administration

The involvement of churches in education continue to be an important feature in the management of education and as mentioned above was enshrined in the Education Act of 1991. Church appointed general and local managers continue to be responsible for the management of denominational schools.

Each denomination operating a school or schools (approved by the Ministry of Education) must select a manager or managing authority to oversee the activities of its school. In 1964 the principal denominational managing authorities were the Anglicans, Roman Catholics and the Methodists. Other managing authorities included the British Honduras Mission of Seventh Day Adventists, the Church of God in Christ, the Baptist Church, the Church of the Nazarene, the Christian Brethren, the Bethel Assembly of God and the Salvation Army.

In 1994 the Roman Catholics, the denomination still with the largest enrolment of students, operate with a General Manager and 12 Local Managers. There is a local manager in each district and in Belize City and some towns, one for every 1200 pupils. The General Manager and Local Managers are paid by the church. In the Anglican schools, the next largest denominational management, the General Manager is assisted by several Local Managers. Unlike the Roman Catholics, Local Managers in the Anglican management do not receive salaries. They offer this as voluntary service to the church. In other denominations, there is usually one person or a managing authority in charge of

the schools. Local Managers, who manage primary schools at the district level, coordinate the activities of their schools, thus they have to work closely with principals. Their responsibilities include hiring and firing of teachers and liaising between principals and the General Manager and principals and the Ministry of Education.

Government primary schools are managed by the Ministry of Education. The Ministry appoints an Education Officer as General Manager who is assisted by the principal of the school. Unlike the denominational managements these Education Officers must perform their regular administrative and supervisory duties as well as that of management. The most frequent criticism is the lack of the Ministry's ability to address the needs of the schools' supervision of teaching, maintaining buildings, providing materials, and organizing staff development sessions among others. Where the denominational managers have the control over expenditure for the schools, the Education Officer appointed as General Manager for the government schools does not have autonomy in the control of the finances for the operation of their schools.

Teachers

The UNESCO Education Planning Mission (1964) pointed out that one of the greatest weaknesses of Belize's educational system was that the great majority of teachers were untrained. Of the 894 teachers in the country in 1964, 454 were certified and 445 uncertified. Of the 445 only 149 were trained (see Table 8 for the explanation).

Table 8

Gradings and classification of primary school teachers, 1965-1992

Trained Teachers:	teachers who have successfully completed a continuous course in a recognized training college lasting two years or, as a special measure, for one year.
Certified Teachers:	teachers who have not received a continuous course of training in a recognized training college, but who provide satisfactory evidence of academic attainment, professional knowledge, and ability to teach by passing the Teachers' examinations (1st, 2nd class) set annually by the Ministry of Education.
Uncertified Teachers:	teachers who do not meet the requirements of Certified or Trained teachers.

The efficiency of educational institutions largely depends on the standard and quality of their teaching staff (UNESCO Education Planning Mission, 1964). Therefore one of the best indicators of the quality of the educational system lies in the quality of the teaching personnel. A quick examination of the pupil/teacher ratio shows clearly that there is no general shortage of teachers. However a more thorough analysis reveals that there is a serious shortage of qualified teachers. Table 9 shows that the number of teachers reached a peak in 1990 with 1,941 teachers, of which 45% had been trained. By 1992 there were fewer teachers, 1,776 and marginally more of them, 47.4% had been trained. The teacher pupil ratio remained stable, going from 1:28 in 1965 to 1:26 by 1975 and remaining constant since. This is low, but is countered by the low percentage of trained teachers (see Table 10).

Table 9

Trained teachers, enrolment and pupil/teacher ratio in primary schools, 1965-1992

Year	Number of Schools	Enrolment	Number of Teachers	Percentage Teachers Trained	Teacher/ Pupil Ratio
1965	139	25,268	899	14.0	1:28
1970	164	30,060	1,073	28.8	1:28
1975	179	31,738	1,186	33.6	1:26
1980	197	34,615	1,421	35.3	1:26
1985	225	38,512	1,582	43.4	1:26
1990	249	44,201	1,941	45.0	1:26
1991	258	46,023	1,617	48.4	1:26
1992	259	47,210	1,776	47.4	1:26

Sources: UNESCO Education Mission Report, 1983; Belize Educational Statistical Digest, 1992; Belize in Figures, 1993.

Table 10

Number of Teachers and Pupil Enrolment of Urban and Rural Areas, 1987

District	Pupil Enrolment	Number of Teachers	% Trained	Pupil/Teacher Ratio
Corozal	5,754	238	36.6	24.2
Urban	1,596	64	49.2	24.6
Rural	4,158	173	31.8	24.0
Orange Walk	6,100	236	34.7	25.8
Urban	2,678	94	43.6	28.5
Rural	3,422	142	28.9	24.1
Belize	12,624	525	62.5	24.0
Urban	9,911	392	73.5	25.3
Rural	2,713	133	73.1	20.4
Cayo	7,442	264	33.7	28.2
Urban	2,866	137	46.0	20.9
Rural	4,576	127	20.5	36.0
Stann Creek	4,112	154	42.2	26.7
Urban	1,809	68	50.0	26.6
Rural	2,303	86	36.0	26.8
Toledo	3,747	161	28.0	23.3
Urban	803	28	60.7	28.7
Rural	2,944	133	21.1	22.1
Totals	39,779	1,578	44.1	25.2
Urban	19,663	784	60.0	25.1
Rural	20,116	794	27.8	25.3

Source: Central Statistical Office, Reported in: Educational Sector Evaluation, 1989.

In Belize there are two forms of primary school teacher training. The first generally involves practising teachers taking inservice classes to qualify for annual examinations set by the Ministry of Education. Workshops are also conducted for both recruits and qualified teachers. The second commits current teachers to two years of intramural studies at the Belize Teachers College followed by one year of internship. When teachers are at the college they need to be replaced. Most often only secondary school graduates are available, who in turn must also acquire training. This poses problems on the primary sector, especially since Belize places so much emphasis on admitting mostly serving teachers to the Teachers' Training College.

One problem associated with teacher training is that teachers must meet entry requirements in order to enter the Belize Teachers College. Practising teachers must pass the First Class Teachers Examination plus the entrance examination set by the college. Secondary school graduates must have passed at least four Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) examinations plus the college's entrance examination. Most aspirants to training are therefore denied access simply because they lack the required entry requirements. Almost anyone in Belize can be accepted into the teaching profession, but only a few can be accepted for training as teachers (Ministry of Education, 1991). Thus limited prospect of training has contributed to demoralization of the teaching cadre and attrition from the teaching service.

Notably there is also limited access to primary training for teachers in rural areas since they tend to have weaker academic backgrounds. Another impediment for rural teachers, especially those who do qualify for in-college training, is that finding

replacements is difficult. Teachers are reluctant to accept rural assignments where there are no adequate housing facilities. These limitations have contributed to disparities between the proportions of trained teachers in urban and rural areas. Recent Ministry of Education figures indicate that about 65% of rural teachers are unqualified as compared with 36% of urban or town area teachers (Ministry of Education, 1990).

Continued concern about the low percentage of trained primary teachers in the teaching force led to the introduction of a one-year program at the Belize Teachers College (BTC). In anticipation of funding from the World Bank for a revision of teacher training systems, the college launched a program in 1990.

Until recently, there were no incentives for good teachers; salaries were below those of other civil servants with similar training. The government approved a salary increase in 1988 and 1992 which appeared to place teachers in a more favourable position within the civil service. The rural allowance for teachers was also increased to a maximum of Bz.\$100, depending on the remoteness of the area. This seems not to be enough, the primary sector still finds difficulty in replacing good teachers with suitably qualified secondary graduates simply because those with the necessary qualifications often have alternative employment opportunities. Thus underqualified and unsuitable candidates find their way into the classroom (World Bank, 1992).

Instructional Material

Each school in Belize follows its own system for acquiring textbooks. There is a wide variety of textbooks in use without the benefit of criteria to ensure quality,

relevance to the curriculum, or affordable cost to parents who have to purchase them. This problem has been plaguing the school system, parents and students since the 1960's. Almost all the books are still imported from the United States of America, the Caribbean and other areas, thus making them high-cost and beyond the reach of some poor students. The problem was further compounded by the wide range of books used by the various denominations/management. Some of the books were often changed, or were out of publication. At times some books were not available for all grades, especially the senior classes. When children transferred to other schools within the country they were forced to change most of the textbooks to suit the series being used by their new school. In an attempt to alleviate this problem during the 1960's, and 70's, donations of books were sought from international agencies, such as the Peace Corps, CARE, and the Ranfurly Library.

A survey on the problems of textbooks conducted countrywide by the Ministry of Education in 1986 revealed that:

- (a) 85% of parents polled felt that textbooks were costly;
- (b) 72% said the recommended texts were not readily available;
- (c) 92% felt that students' textbooks should be standardized;
- (d) 95% of parents felt that students needed and should have textbooks.

"Many principals and teachers polled also indicated/reflected some of the same views: textbooks are costly, not available, and standardization must take place" (Ministry of Education, 1985, p.21). The Government of Belize acknowledged this problem and adopted a policy to ensure that every Belizean child in the primary school has access to

a basic set of textbooks.

In pursuance of this goal the EEC/Ranfurly Library Service Programme was established and a Textbook Committee was formed early in the 1990/1991 school year, charged with the responsibility of rationalizing primary school textbooks. This programme functions as a textbook scheme to provide primary school students with basic mathematics, reading, and English at a minimal cost. EEC/Ranfurly initially provided Caribbean texts which were sold at cost price. The income generated is kept in a central revolving fund to purchase additional textbooks. The Curriculum Development Unit was also charged with the responsibility for the development of low-cost teaching/learning support materials for the curriculum guides.

The provision of instructional materials, even those that are basic to any classroom, has always been lacking. Budget allocations are insufficient to meet these needs. Some schools raise funds to cope with the problem, but such efforts are generally inadequate. Specialized programs such as science courses in the upper grades lack laboratory equipment of even the most basic kind.

Time Allocation

The allocation of primary school time in Belize is typical of other Caribbean countries. The World Bank has indicated that on average:

34% of the class time is devoted to language arts and 22% to mathematics. In addition to mathematics and English, on average 9% of the school timetable is devoted to social studies, 8% to science, and the remaining 27% to health education, drama, craft, physical education and related activities (World Bank, 1992, p.70).

However, there is a variation between countries in regard to emphasis on these averages. Belize devotes more than one quarter of the timetable to mathematics, compared to less than one-fifth in Guyana, St. Kitts and St. Vincent (World Bank, 1992).

The UNESCO Education Report (1983) and the Belize Sector Review (1988), revealed that the distribution of time in primary school in Belize was "heavily loaded in favour of Language Arts and Mathematics" (SPEAR, 1991, p.37). Table 11 shows that in schools A and B, language arts were especially stressed, with 45% in A against 31% in B during Infant years, 35% in A against 34% during Junior years, and 38% in A and 25% in B during Senior years. Mathematics is more concentrated in school B through all grades, as is Science. Social Studies are equal in both schools, except during the Senior years when 9% in A against 7% in B. When it comes to the other subjects, school A spends more time on them except in the Senior level when school A spends 6% more time on those subjects. Both schools spend more time on these subjects in the Senior years. This could be attributed to preparation for the upcoming Belize National Selection Examination which normally takes place during the last term of Standard VI. In some instances, teachers fail to teach other subjects (Belize Education Sector Review, 1988). Adherence to prescribed time allocations is stricter in lower divisions of the schools.

School Facilities

Both economic recession and adjustment policies have caused governments in Belize and elsewhere in the Caribbean to reduce capital and maintenance expenditures. Subsequently, primary schooling has been significantly affected. The World Bank (1992)

report summarizes the situation in some Caribbean countries, including Belize.

Table 11

Percentages of time allocated to four subjects in two primary schools, 1987

Level	Infant 1-2		Junior 1-4		Senior 5-6	
School	A	B	A	B	A	B
Language Arts	45	31	35	34	38	25
Mathematics	21	30	17	27	19	24
Science	3	5	6	9	3	7
Social Studies	3	3	5	5	9	7
Other Subjects	37	29	37	25	31	37

Sources: UNESCO Education Mission Report, 1983; Belize Education Sector Review Report,

Because of overcrowding and deteriorating school facilities, especially in rural areas, the physical environment in many primary schools . . . is not conducive to effective teaching or learning, and capital investments requirements have increased. In most of these schools, individual classes are separated only by moveable partitions and the noise level is high. There is an acute shortage of appropriate school furniture in many schools and very little maintenance has been carried out on existing buildings (Caribbean Development Bank, 1990b; World Bank, 1992, p.72).

This disrepair of school buildings in Belize has also been cited in sector reports of past years by UNESCO (1983) and Belize Education Sector Review Report (1988). A Ministry of Education survey conducted in 1990 stated that many of Belize's 259 primary school facilities were in need of either repair, replacements, or extensions to relieve overcrowding. The report revealed that: (i) overcrowding is severe in both urban and rural schools. At least 75 additional classrooms were currently required to relieve overcrowding; (ii) about 60 classrooms need to be replaced; another 90 classrooms required major repairs and many more required minor repairs. Notwithstanding, this case of overcrowded classrooms, there are some schools which are sparsely populated (Ministry of Education, 1990).

Conclusion

Primary schooling in Belize has been universal for quite some time. However, what is taught in the various schools is anything but universal and this has contributed, in large part, to often substantial differences in outcomes.

There are several areas of concern in primary education, some of which stem from the Church/State control. The main problems are a lack of proper planning and inadequate human and financial resources as well as grade retention, high dropout rates, lack of instructional materials including textbooks, irrelevant curricula, and lack of physical facilities.

While no research exists on the exact nature of the relationship between resources and student achievement, existing data indicate that scarcity of resources results in low

achievement levels by a significant number of primary school graduates. Grade retention also contributes to low achievement because it can lower the academic aspirations of the student. This often makes the task of teaching more difficult.

Concerns about learning outcomes have also been expressed but at present there are no comprehensive testing programs other than the Belize National Selection Examination. While no research exists on the precise nature of the relationship between resources and student achievement in Belize, a positive association can be presumed. Existing data do indicate that those countries with large proportions of untrained teachers and a shortage of materials, particularly textbooks, have the slowest levels as measured by test results. The above issues are not unique to the primary system. The secondary level also has similar problems. Thus the following chapter discusses the development of secondary education under the same headings as preschool and primary education: coverage and equality of access, quality and effectiveness and resources and their use.

CHAPTER V

DEVELOPMENTS IN SECONDARY EDUCATION

Introduction

Secondary education builds on the work of primary education. It is expected to advance competencies learned at Primary school, especially those that are relevant to the world of work. Strong secondary education is a prerequisite for levels of effective skills training and studies in tertiary higher education (World Bank, 1992).

The expansion of secondary education during the 1960s was largely influenced by the perceived economic needs of that time. The United Nations Economic Survey of 1963 pointed out that "Belize should aim at possessing a relatively skilled workforce capable of pursuing techniques of production involving high productivity per person" (United Nations Economic Survey, 1963, p.94). It was felt that secondary schools should provide the skilled workforce. There was also a desire to replace the 60% expatriate workforce with locals. Hence there was a tremendous upsurge of interest in secondary schools.

Secondary schools (grades 9 to 12) are normally four-year institutions admitting students who have completed eight years of primary schooling. Entrance to the secondary level is determined by the students' performance in the Belize National Selection Examination. Secondary education is not compulsory but starting September 1994 the government took over the responsibility of paying tuition for secondary students.

However, there are fees to be paid and textbooks to be bought. At the end of secondary school students sit the Caribbean Examination Council Examinations. When students graduate from high school they are awarded a diploma and transcripts of grades which can be used as job qualifications. Belize offers three secondary education streams: academic, commercial and technical-vocational.

This chapter outlines the major developments in secondary education under these headings: coverage and access, quality and effectiveness, and resources and their use.

Coverage and Access, Structure and Growth

In 1882 the first regular school, Wesley High School, was established by Father Cassian Gillett, of the English Province of the Society of Jesus. The two girls' secondary schools, St. Catherine's Academy, which is still administered by the Sisters of Mercy, and St. Hilda's, formerly the Diocesan High School for Girls, were established in 1883 and 1897, respectively. St. Michael's College, a continuation of the Diocesan High School, was established in 1921. St. Hilda and St. Michael were merged in the 1980s and is now called the Anglican Cathedral High School. Until 1932 there were only four secondary schools situated in Belize City. Table 12 shows that secondary education did not spread to other districts until 1957 (see Appendix D for growth of secondary schools until 1961).

Table 12

Early secondary schools by management, type and location: 1882-1961

Year	Institution	Management	Type	Location
1882	Wesley High School	Methodist	Boys	Belize City
1883	St. Catherine's Academy	Roman Catholic	Girls	Belize City
1887	St. John's College	Roman Catholic	Boys	Belize City
1897	St. Hilda's College	Anglican	Girls	Belize City
1921	St. Michael's College	Anglican	Boys	Belize City
1952	Belize Technical College	Government	Co-educational	Belize City
1957	Pallotti High School	Roman Catholic	Girls	Belize City
1957	Lynam Agricultural College	Roman Catholic	Boys	Stann Creek
1957	Austin High	Roman Catholic	Girls	Stann Creek
1958	Muffle's College	Roman Catholic	Co-educational	Orange Walk
1959	St. Francis Xavier	Roman Catholic	Co-educational	Corozal
1960	Peter Claver College	Roman Catholic	Co-educational	Punta Gorda, Toledo
1961	Sacred Heart College	Roman Catholic	Co-educational	San Ignacio, Cayo
1962	Stann Creek High	Anglican	Co-educational	Stann Creek

Source: UNESCO Education Planning Mission Report, 1964.

The United Nations Economic Planning Mission (1963) reported that by 1962, there were in Belize, 14 secondary schools, with an enrolment of 2,013. This was 22% of the potential secondary school population of 8,872 children between the ages of 12+

and 16+ and a little more than 8% of the primary school population. By 1992, there were 31 secondary schools in Belize with a school population of 4,005 males and 4,896 females, aged 11 to 20+ years (United Nations Economic Planning Mission, 1963; Ministry of Education, 1992). Similarly small proportions of the potential secondary school population were enrolled in 1981 and 1991 (see Figure 7) as there were in 1962. Secondary school enrolments are considerably low.

Students between 11 years and 16+ years transferred from primary to secondary school. Table 13 shows that the ages of Secondary school students have consistently ranged from 11 years to 20+ years. It also shows that a significant number of 14 year olds were enrolled at secondary school, as was a significant number of 13 year olds and some aged 12. Older children tended to study in the more senior grades, but there was quite a large spread around this general pattern. The Junior grades held more pupils than the senior grades. This seemed partly to reflect demographic increases, as well as the promotion practices in schools.

Table 13

Growth of secondary school enrolment, by age, 1965-1990

Year	Age (years)										Total
	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20+	
1965	6	35	146	335	452	453	416	346	148	-	2,335
1970	6	62	305	682	822	701	481	349	160	79	3,647
1975	21	182	465	864	968	840	625	352	131	55	4,503
1980	10	84	468	1066	1323	1137	802	392	118	35	5,435
1985	12	139	652	1202	1425	1294	1000	565	270	117	6,676
1990	12	170	736	1466	1843	1483	1143	689	253	109	7,904

Source: Abstract of Statistics, 1965-1990.

The early 1970's saw the establishment of Community Colleges. The establishment of these schools came about due to changes which were related to, and influenced by the growth of national feeling associated with self-government and the move to independence, the growth in understanding and consciousness of national needs and problems and the growing acceptance of responsibility for meeting these needs and finding solutions to the problems identified (Ministry of Education, 1973).

Ecumenism was also on the uprise. The first ecumenical institution was established in 1974, the Stann Creek Ecumenical High School. It provided a different model for the existing high schools. Instead of being owned by church or state, the school was administered by a Board consisting of representatives of the major churches and the laity. Government provided the usual grants.

By 1975, the Church-State co-operation had increased considerably. Most of the private secondary schools had become grant-aided -- a relationship which was strongly resisted in the past. The managers of these schools have become assertive to receive from government salaries and other expenditures for their schools. Seventeen more schools were established between 1962 and 1994 -- an average of two schools each year (see Table 14). Of these, 10 were entirely funded by government. There were five government-aided Community Colleges. These institutions were neither church nor government schools and are still administered by Community Management Boards. Grant-aided denominational secondary schools are owned and administered by the churches (see Table 15).

Table 14

Distribution of secondary schools: 1962-1992

Management	1962	1994
Government	1	10
Roman Catholic	9	5
Anglican	3	1
Methodist	1	1
Other	-	13
Total	14	31

Table 15

Distribution of secondary schools by management, district and urban/rural location (1991/92)

Management	Belize		Cayo		Corozal		Orange Walk		Stann Creek		Toledo		All	
	U	R	U	R	U	R	U	R	U	R	U	R	U	R
Government	3	1	2	-	-	1	1	1	-	1	-	-	6	4
Government aided Comm.	2	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	5	1
Government aided Denom.	7	1	1	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	9	2
Special Assisted	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-
Private	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	1
All	13	2	5	-	1	2	2	1	1	1	2	-	24	7

Equality of Access

Historically, secondary education in Belize, like in other developing countries, has always been accessible to a privileged few. First it was the children of the well-to-do whites, and thereafter, it has been for those who can afford the high costs. This is borne out by the fact that up to the 1960s only about 9% of primary school graduates gained access to secondary schooling. By the 1990s the transition rate from primary to secondary school had increased to 60% (Education Department Annual Report).

Entry Requirements

At the end of the primary course, students used to sit, one, two or three

examinations: (1) the Primary School Certificate; (2) the Government Scholarship; and (3) the Common Entrance. The Ministry of Education administered the Primary School Certificate and the Government Scholarship Examination, but the Government Scholarship Examination was only available to Belizeans between the ages of 11 and 13. The tests used for the selection of students for scholarship awards were standardized tests in Verbal Reasoning, English and Arithmetic. Otherwise admission to secondary schools was through the entrance examinations set by secondary schools individually. The Roman Catholic Board of Management used a common entrance examination for all its secondary schools and employed standardized tests produced by school testing agencies from the United States. In 1973 the Belize Association of Principals of Secondary Schools (BAPSS) started administering a National Common Entrance Examination, using the same placement tests previously used by the Roman Catholic Management Board. However in 1982, the Ministry of Education introduced the multi-purpose Belize National Selection Examination (BNSE) which has since replaced the former three examinations and is now the main criteria used for selection of students to attend secondary schools.

Table 13 shows that there has been a gradual increase in the number of children receiving secondary education. There are however some problems which have persisted throughout the years and have limited the accessibility of secondary education in Belize.

As with primary schooling, access to secondary schooling does not always translate into equal access to similar quality schooling. Sharp differences in quality exist between schools serving those who pass the Belize National Selection Examination (BNSE) with top scores and those who do not. Secondary education in Belize, like in

other Caribbean countries, culminates in the Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) examinations. Students who score 70% and over on the Belize National Selection Examination gain access to the older, more prestigious and well resourced schools and usually those students pass four or more subjects in the CXC examination. This is the basic qualification for entry to Junior Colleges. Those who score marks between 50 and 65% have no alternative but to enrol in any school where their scores are acceptable. Many times students from these schools do not sit the CXC examinations, either by choice or on the advice of teachers.

This implies important qualitative differences between schools and hence educational opportunities. In many respects the large overall secondary enrolment ratios mask what in many countries are largely elitist educational systems (World Bank, 1992, p.85).

The UNESCO Mission (1964) noted that all schools in the district towns (excluding Belize City) were small and those which had been established for some years had not expanded significantly. In 1994, although some schools have expanded, and many new schools have been established in urban and rural areas, the growing demand for school places still surpasses the supply by far. Access to secondary schooling is limited for low-income groups.

The UNESCO Mission (1964) contended that in the district towns fees and costs of books deterred students from attending secondary school. In addition to tuition fees, there were a host of fees, e.g. registration, special subjects, sports, and library. These fees varied from school to school but generally increased the cost of secondary education. In the 1960's, fees payable ranged from \$65 Bz. to \$100 Bz. per annum. Fees have been

increasing steadily and in 1992, fees ranged between \$30 Bz. to \$45 Bz. per month for a 10-month year. Since September 1994 the government started to pay tuition, but individuals are still required to meet all other expenses. This helps alleviate the burden especially for the under privileged students, but the high private cost of secondary education constitutes a serious handicap for its democratization.

Access to secondary education is more restricted for rural students. Every year, 150 scholarships for secondary education are granted on a combination of economic need and scholastic merit criteria and 50 more are granted on scholastic merit (Belize National Selection Examination). These students are usually chosen from the top quartile of BNSE results. This makes it almost impossible for rural students to receive scholarships since most rural students do not score in the top quartile.

The scholarships used to provide tuition waivers, free educational materials and a small stipend (now only free educational materials and a small stipend). But the room and board costs for a student in Belize City or a district town are beyond the means of most rural families, thus rendering such scholarship assistance inadequate (Belize Education Sector Review Report, 1988).

Quality and Effectiveness

Three key issues emerge at the secondary level of education. The first relates to the quality of education received by secondary students due to the highly academic curriculum which has persisted in schools since colonial times.

The second pertains to the

...differences among the several types of post-primary schooling, including variations in the levels of resource allocations and access by socio-economic groups. The third is the effectiveness of each school type in educating students, as measured in examination results (World Bank, 1992, p.86).

The high drop out at the secondary level of education in Belize is also an indication of the ineffectiveness of the system. This can be attributed to factors such as highly academic curriculum and poor teaching and language problems.

The Dropout Problem

In Belize it is a rule in most high schools that students do not fail more than two years of the four-year cycle of schooling. Students are not allowed to repeat a class twice. Thus drop out has always been common. For example, in 1961, 527 students were enrolled in Form I and 451 in Form II in 1962; assuming repetition in the first form was offset by repetition in the second form, there appeared a drop-out of 76 pupils in the course of one year, or 14%. By the fourth form this group was down to 306, i.e. a retention rate of 60% (UNESCO, 1964). Through 1972 to 1974 the drop-out rate was highest in First Form followed by Second Form (see Table 16). Accurate data on secondary school dropouts are unavailable, but it is estimated that only 50% of those who enter high school graduate four years later. Although a few individual schools make an effort to counteract the dropout problem by counselling students, the problem is not dealt with in most of the schools, nor in the Ministry of Education. The same situation prevails with regard to the number of students who repeat the same grade. In a given year it is estimated that about 9% of the students repeat classes (Ministry of Education Annual

Report, 1991; Education Department Annual Report, 1973).

While there is no data showing the socio-economic background of persons dropping out of the educational system and the reasons for this phenomenon, one would surmise that there is an over representation of the lower economic groups among school dropouts because of economic reasons rather than the lack of ability (SPEAR, 1991).

Table 16

Enrolment, repeaters and dropouts in secondary school by forms

Form	1972			1973			1974		
	Enrolment	Number of Repeaters	Number of Dropouts	Enrolment	Number of Repeaters	Number of Dropouts	Enrolment	Number of Repeaters	Number of Dropouts
I	1467	119	49	1527	145	23	1520	113	32
II	1123	69	14	1162	68	26	1192	46	40
III	974	47	16	948	51	21	878	31	25
IV	684	18	3	706	20	7	778	17	7
Total		253	82		284	77		207	104

Note: Form I to IV = Grade 9 to 12.

Source: Education Department Annual Report, 1975.

Curriculum

The whole philosophy of the curriculum during the colonial times was to relate Belizeans to the British way of life so as to become good citizens. The secondary curriculum therefore reflected British curriculum models. The subjects decreed by law for the schools of Belize included Latin, English, history, literature, mathematics, arithmetic, chemistry, physics, biology, geography, hygiene or other sciences.

There was no set curriculum content for the lower secondary students. Teachers basically taught the contents of the textbook prescribed by the school for a particular subject. These were not necessarily meeting the attainment level of the students, and there was no link between the lower secondary and upper primary schools. The curriculum was classified as "Academic" with very limited vocational/technical options. The subjects were taught to the Royal Society of Arts Cambridge City and Guilds and Associate Examining Board levels. Vocational/Technical subjects were not offered at the Cambridge level. Secondary examination results were poor (see Appendices E-H). This may be attributed to the fact that the curriculum was irrelevant to the needs of the country. Curriculum Development was left to the initiative of the individual secondary principal and in some instances took into account the manpower skills and needs of the nation.

There is evidence that ideas concerning the new conception of education which propounded in the Hadow Report of 1929 were finding their way into other countries in the 30s -- via the Caribbean. The Hadow Commission had for its term of reference the adolescent and on this theme made the following points:

- (1) primary education should end at eleven years;
- (2) education should be according to the needs, aptitudes and abilities of adolescents;
- (3) That to provide the best kind of education to satisfy these varying needs, education at the secondary school stage should be given in Grammar, Technical and Modern Schools.

The recommendations of Hadow and the principles on which they were based undoubtedly filtered to the various parts of the British Commonwealth including the British West Indies. By the third decade of this century the various governments and church bodies in the British Caribbean were giving serious consideration to improving the state of secondary education. In the book A century of West Indian education, Gordon mentions the Marrioth Mayhew Report of 1933 which brought out the facts about secondary schools in the West Indies and made a detailed suggestion for a more modern secondary school with a more practical bias. This study was not the only one which levelled criticism at secondary education in the Caribbean, but it is worth mentioning because of the reference made to it in various reports on Belize education.

Reports of the Education Department and of persons and groups commissioned to study the secondary education system were critical of the Cambridge Examination syllabuses. The Education Report (1941) stated that:

Owing to the pressure from parents the schools are somewhat occupied with securing passes in the Cambridge Local Examinations. Unfortunately, the view generally prevails in the colony that the goal of the secondary education is a school certificate -- the never-failing talisman for obtaining employment -- the result being that children are so readily removed from school after having obtained this certificate that the schools make little provision for

higher studies (Education Department Report, 1945, p.2).

The lack of proper science courses in the syllabuses of the secondary schools was notable. So was that of provision for the teaching of handicraft, art and domestic science. The major reason for these curricular deficiencies seemed to have been monetary. Very soon after St. John's College was inaugurated there appeared in its prospectus courses such as astronomy, geology, and geography. However, these subjects must have been highly theoretical and bookish. By 1945, St. John's College and St. Catherine's Academy were both offering General Science. Proper laboratory facilities were still inadequate. By 1950 there was still no significant change in the state of science teaching in the secondary schools. The Education Department Report (1944) contended that "there is still practically no effective science teaching and lack of this has been a serious handicap to British Honduran students who are sent to the United Kingdom for higher studies" (p.18).

The secondary school curriculum were widened during this period. As has been indicated St. John's College and St. Catherine's Academy both offered courses in commercial subjects, but even this did not go without criticism. In the 1945 Triennial Report it was stated:

Many girls apparently elect to take a commercial course in preference to the full classical course offered -- a concession, it is understood to parents who wish their daughters to become proficient in shorthand and typewriting as early as possible in order that they may be able to earn a living as typist and stenographer. While shorthand and typewriting cannot be considered educational subjects . . . it must be said that pupils differ in ability and accordingly some treatment of these subjects may rightly be included in the secondary school control in the interests of pupils whose bent is nonacademic (p.19).

There was also evidence that in the 1950s domestic science was being taught at one of the girls' schools and that preparation was being made to introduce needlework. Social science -- (Credit Unionisms and Cooperatives were being taught at St. John's College).

The Belize Technical College was established in 1952. This was a milestone in the education system of Belize. Its curriculum offered a wide range of vocational/technical subjects to students: chemistry, physics, home economics, woodwork, building construction, commercial subjects, plumbing, auto-engineering, and electrical engineering and repair. By the 1960s the Jesuits at the Lynam Agricultural College had set up agricultural education and more students were offered other vocational options, e.g. typing, home economics and shorthand.

In 1964 the UNESCO Planning Mission, among other things, strongly recommended that educational authorities consider seriously re-organizing the curriculum of schools in order to relate more realistically to the development needs of the country. Subsequently, a number of senior primary or junior secondary schools were to be established, first in Belize City, and eventually in the districts. Transfer from the primary school to these schools would take place at the age of 11 or 12+ to pursue the following courses when appropriate:

- (a) A three-year course with a curriculum which was suppose to include Agriculture, General Science, Art and Handicraft, Home economics, and Wood and Metalwork, in addition to the traditional academic subjects;
- (b) An additional two-year period at the end of which students would take the

General Certificate of Education (GCE) "O" Level Examination, followed by;

- (c) A further two-year extension for those intending to sit the A Level G.C.E.

This structure was designed so that the first level of education (Junior Secondary College), would be geared to preparing students to earn some kind of livelihood in case they discontinued schooling at age 14 or 15. In an attempt to facilitate these changes Government expanded enrolment in the secondary sector.

Thus in January, 1969, the Belize Junior Secondary School Number One, later called the E.P. Yorke High School, under the principalship of Alexander Bennett, opened its doors to 146 young men and women. The Belize Junior Secondary School Number Two, later called Gwen Lizarraga High School, commenced classes in January of 1972 with 104 students, under the principalship of Basil Coleman. This was yet another attempt to implement one of the major recommendations of the UNESCO Educational Plan. These three-year institutions were originally meant to be terminal, to be comprehensive and to be orientated towards pre-vocational preparation. The curriculum included academic and vocational subjects, such as home economics, wood work, metal work and technical drawing. As it turned out the schools followed the existing school system in its enrolment procedures and its three-year scholastic objectives -- the weakest students joined the work force, while others completed their secondary education at the Belize Technical College or other secondary schools.

The Belmopan Comprehensive School was opened in 1970. This has been the only five-year secondary institution in Belize. The five-year comprehensive program

offered a wider variety of subjects to students. In addition to the academic subjects, students were exposed to: art and crafts, home economics, woodwork, metalwork, technical drawing, agricultural science and business education. These three institutions (two Junior High Schools and the Comprehensive High School) have been converted to regular four-year schools.

Since 1977, the content of the secondary school curriculum has been based on the syllabuses and examinations of the Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) which related primarily to the upper forms of the secondary school. Most principals chose to have their schools follow the CXC curriculum although it had a strong academic focus. This curriculum did not meet the needs of the majority of students (about 70%-75%) who choose not to enter or are advised by teachers not to sit the CXC examination process. This situation persisted because there was no unit specially responsible for curriculum development for secondary schools (Belize Sector Review Report, 1988).

The UNESCO Education Planning Mission (1983) contended that the lack of a binding curriculum in the lower forms of the secondary school was a big constraint to ensuring at least good minimum standards for all secondary students in the country. This was especially important given the variety of secondary schools and differences between schools in the same category, and this explained the diversity of curricula which were used in individual schools. The system needed to have a curriculum with shared objectives for all secondary schools which provided exposure to the same broad curriculum. The provision of curriculum for secondary schools was especially important since they were not subjected to any systematic supervision (UNESCO, 1988; Belize

Sector Review Report 1988).

In 1988, the Curriculum Development Unit began curriculum development for the secondary level. The intention was to produce a binding curriculum in the lower forms of secondary school in English language, mathematics, Spanish, social studies, integrated science, and to convert these into schemes so as to ensure at least good work, minimum standards for all secondary students in the country. This was especially important given to the variety of secondary schools and the differences between schools in the same category.

The Secondary Schools Curriculum Policy was developed and ratified in June of 1991. The stated purpose of the secondary schools curriculum policy was to "to articulate a common sense of purpose and direction for secondary education in Belize through a negotiated and acceptable level of standardization" (Ministry of Education Report, 1991, p.30). The Secondary Curriculum Policy can be summarized by saying that the purpose of secondary education is "to prepare students for all aspects of adult life through exposure to a generously conceived core curriculum in years one and two which will continue so as to underlie a flexible series of specialist options in years three and four" (Ministry of Education, 1991, p. 30).

To date, the only schemes implemented are English language, social studies year 1 and II and home room guides Year 1. In addition to these a mathematics course was provided through the revised mathematics textbook series and accompanying teachers' guide developed by Deacon Calvin Cathers. An integrated science course was also provided based on the prescribed text. The major focus in the Secondary Curriculum

development initiative was staff development and program evaluation (Ministry of Education, 1990).

The Curriculum Development Unit Report (1990) stated that "The Lower Secondary Curriculum Process involved coordination and participation, whereby the better trained and more experienced teachers spearheaded the necessary work so as to help those in the teaching force who were untrained and inexperienced" (p.45). Training, however, was available to only about 50% of teachers who needed it. Since training was not compulsory, it was left to the initiative of principals to allow teachers time off to attend workshops organized by the Curriculum Development Unit. Some principals organized inservice training for their teachers.

The system has now managed to share objectives for all secondary schools and provide an exposure to the same broad curriculum, at least at the lower forms. Systematic curriculum development activity continues to be done by the Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) which only conducts training programs on syllabi which they examine for the upper forms of secondary school.

All schools split into different vocational streams in the upper secondary school. Most schools have only two streams: academic and commercial. A handful of schools also offer vocational/technical subjects, such as, computer science, wood work, metal work, agricultural science and home economics. Very few offer art and crafts. While 43% of the schools split classes at the end of Form I, the other 57% delay the split until the end of Form II. After the split all schools have English language and mathematics as compulsory subjects and all but one has Spanish as a compulsory subject. (Ministry

of Education, 1990). The pattern with other subjects being compulsory after the split is as follows:

Table 17

Compulsory subjects after the split

Subject	Number of Schools
Religious Education	11
English Literature	11
Physical Education	9
Home Room	6
Biology	2
History	2
Music	2
Agricultural Science	1
Spanish	1

Source: Curriculum Development Unit Report, 1990.

Since at the end of First Form students "drop" certain subjects and are thus exposed to a very narrowly defined education. If the overall policy is to prepare all students for all aspects of adult life then this is not a suitable strategy (Ministry of Education, 1990).

The state requires that schools implement a four-year curriculum with a thirty-hour week and a six-hour school day. Each student must earn forty credits in each form to qualify for promotion to a higher form. (Some schools require students to pass English Language, regardless of how well they are doing in other subjects, while others allow students to fail up to two subjects).

Vocational Technical Education

Presently, there is growing concern about the quality and effectiveness of secondary schooling in Belize as well as elsewhere in the Caribbean. Various reports on the education system indicate that the secondary education system indicate that the secondary curriculum is not responsive to the needs of the country. Given the fact that only a small percentage of students go on to higher education in Belize, there is a need to question the effectiveness of a system which does not produce graduates with marketable skills in the secondary level -- especially those related to entrepreneurship, self employment and income generation. The development of marketable skills and the provision of sound education for further studies are not mutually exclusive (UNESCO Mission, 1983; Belize Education Sector Review Report, 1988; SPEAR, 1991).

In recent years the government has created three more technical high schools: The Mopan Technical, the Orange Walk Technical and Corozal Community, outside Belize City in an effort to extend training opportunities to rural students. In addition, the Belize Vocational Training Centre (the only one of its kind), which has been expanded in recent years with USAID assistance, provides training to about 155 trainees who have completed

primary school. Female trainees were enrolled for the first time in the 1987-88 school year. The one-year training program includes these subjects: areas of carpentry, masonry, plumbing, electricity, and automotive mechanics.

The Belize Technical College (BTC) continues to provide secondary level training to students who have completed three years of secondary education. The training areas are building trades, business, engineering, and general studies, and students may opt for a one or two-year training program. The enrolment capacity for the secondary level program is about 180.

The average quality of technical/vocational education is weak. Many teachers and instructors lack training in pedagogy or technical content. Opportunities for upgrading are seldom available due to financial constraints and when such opportunities arise, incentives, such as promotion or advancement in the salary scale, are not offered. Equipment is usually obsolete, though in some cases it continues to render service through the practice of outstanding maintenance. Although the need to upgrade equipment is urgent, financial constraints preclude its replacement and the installation of permanent maintenance programs. Inadequate funding also results in the shortage of workshop and laboratory materials (Belize Education Sector Review Report, 1988).

In the absence of standard technical/vocational curricula, institutions adopt and modify programs to their own needs. This approach could result in a flexible response to labour market needs. In practice, however, insufficient equipment and materials and inadequate instructional planning results in instructional programs that are theoretically based with minimal time devoted to practical training. Supervision is limited to the in-

house variety provided by the building principal or department head. While this type of supervision is needed, occasional external supervision could also benefit staff by encouraging ideas and approaches to problem solving. Student services, such as vocational counselling and job placement, are left to the initiative of the individual institution and are generally inadequate. Tracer studies and other follow-up activities, aimed at assessing the employment experience of graduates, are also lacking (Belize Education Sector Review Report, 1988; CARICOM, 1988; World Bank, 1992).

Examinations

Prior to the establishment of the Caribbean Examination Council Examinations (CXC) in 1973, students in the Caribbean, including Belize, wrote secondary school examinations administered by Overseas Boards, chiefly Cambridge and London. The General Certificate of Education "O" levels replaced the Cambridge certificate in 1965.

The UNESCO Planning Mission (1964) expressed concern about the restricted range of subjects taken and the small numbers taking the sciences. Of the 217 candidates taking the GCE "O" level examination in June 1964, 200 took English language, 143 bible knowledge, 70 Latin but only 146 mathematics, 21 physics, 34 chemistry, 21 biology, and 49 geography. Just three schools included chemistry and three physics (UNESCO Planning Mission, 1964).

The GCE "O" levels were intended to and did cater for the top 20% of the relevant age groups, who possessed the type of abilities which have to be described as "Academic". Since only about 40% of primary school leavers continue to secondary

schools in 1964, then 20% of the students must have pursued courses that they were unable to cope with (UNESCO Planning Mission, 1964). In 1968 for instance, the majority of students failed the English external examinations. As Le Page (1968) pointed out, these examinations were normally an indispensable key to white-collar jobs at home or scholarships abroad. However, these examinations did not adequately cater to the specific characteristics, cultures, needs and problems of the Caribbean region (Ministry of Education, 1990).

Secondary schooling throughout the English-speaking Caribbean focuses strongly on the CXC examinations and, to a lesser extent, the O-level examinations. The O-level examinations are conducted by various British examining boards. Post-primary students not being prepared for these examinations either take some type of secondary school graduating examination. Since the CXC examinations have been administered for several years, trends in Belize provide a valuable input for assessing the quality of the best secondary schooling. While these examinations are taken by only between one-quarter and two-thirds of the secondary school cohort, they hold a preeminent place in the minds of all entrants as well as their parents and teachers. Pass rates in these examinations are defined according to the conventional approach in the region, i.e., attainment of Grade I or Grade II at General Proficiency. This does not imply that passes at lower grades have no value (see Appendix I). However, Grades I and II were originally regarded as equivalent to a pass on the GCE O-level exams and, thus, were set as the formal entrance requirement for most post-secondary courses as well as salaried government employment. Over time a view has developed that these standards are somewhat higher than the GCE

O-level pass standard (World Bank, 1992).

In 1979 Belizean secondary school students wrote the CXC examinations for the first time in history. As CXC became an internationally known body more students registered to take more subjects, and Cambridge and London Examining bodies is gradually being phased out (see Appendices B-F).

The effectiveness of schooling for the majority of students in Belize can be reviewed in Table 18, which shows a trend of low quantitative performance of student in the Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) examination. The Subject Grade Point Average (SPGA) for both general and basic proficiencies, (2.22 and 2.55 respectively), are low. This would suggest that secondary schooling is not meeting its objectives for a large proportion of students.

Table 18

Trends in overall SGPA for all schools, 1984-1992

Year	Schools	General Grade Presented	SGPA	Schools	Basic Grade Presented	SGPA
1984	17	1695	2.40	17	912	2.09
1985	18	1991	2.47	19	927	2.17
1986	19	2443	2.53	21	967	2.07
1987	22	2780	2.64	25	1189	2.17
1988	24	2783	2.57	25	1496	2.27
1989	25	3282	2.62	25	1567	2.09
1990	25	3469	2.51	25	1885	2.14
1991	27	4204	2.50	27	2360	2.33
1992	29	4508	2.74	29	2396	2.70

Source: Belize Educational Statistical Digest, 1992, p.32 & p.148

Examining results across the Caribbean countries, Table 19 presents the pass rates for all subjects, and English and mathematics for 1984 and 1989. Pass rates in all subjects increased only in St. Vincent, St. Lucia, and Trinidad. Some of the decreases were severe, particularly in Antigua, Belize, Grenada, and Dominica. They also fell in St. Kitts, although it maintains the highest overall pass rate (55%) for all subjects. The overall pass rate in Guyana is extremely low, both in English and mathematics. In English, the pass rates fell between 1984 and 1989 in every country and in many cases very severely (e.g., Belize and Barbados). Results are very poor in Guyana, Grenada, Jamaica, and Dominica. In mathematics, only Grenada and Trinidad were able to increase the pass rates (in each case by just 1%). In all other countries they fell. In Guyana, Jamaica, Dominica, and Trinidad the mathematics pass rates

the pass rates (in each case by just 1%). In all other countries they fell. In Guyana, Jamaica, Dominica, and Trinidad the mathematics pass rates were below 40%: only in Barbados and Belize were they at least 40% (World Bank, 1992).

Students able to take CXC examinations represent a minority of all secondary students. On average about 60% of Belizean primary school graduates enter secondary schools, and thus are eligible to take the CXC examinations. Cox (1989) attempted to calculate the percentages of 15 to 19 year olds who entered and passed the CXC or GCE O-level English examinations in 1965 and 1984 in seven Caribbean countries. The results (Table 20) demonstrate the small percentages of students involved. From 1965 to 1984, the number of candidates taking the English exam in Belize almost doubled, while the pass rate more than tripled from 0.6% to 1.9%. Still, it is very clear that a highly selective group takes these examinations and an even more selective subgroup actually passes it. For example, in 1992 only about 10% of students passed four or more subjects, the entry requirement for tertiary level institutions.

Table 19

Caribbean - entrants achieving grade I and II in all subjects, English and mathematics,
1984 and 1989

Country/Year	<u>All Subjects</u>		<u>English</u>		<u>Mathematics</u>	
	1984	1989	1984	1989	1984	1989
Antigua	46	37 (-)	61	51 (-)	40	36 (-)
Barbados	57	52 (-)	62	41 (-)	52	42 (-)
Belize	65	48 (-)	64	30 (-)	54	40 (-)
Dominica	54	46 (-)	64	29 (-)	49	27 (-)
Grenada	43	35 (-)	46	22 (-)	30	31 (+)
Guyana	23	18 (-)	24	12 (-)	20	13 (-)
Jamaica	39	36 (-)	43	27 (-)	30	22 (-)
St. Kitts	62	55 (-)	61	42 (-)	45	35 (-)
St. Lucia	47	53 (+)	46	45 (-)	39	32 (-)
St. Vincent	46	49 (+)	40	38 (-)	43	32 (-)
Trinidad	36	43 (+)	42	38 (-)	28	29 (+)

Note: CXC offered 22 subjects in 1984 and 33 in 1989; sign in parentheses indicates whether pass rates rose or fell.

Sources: CXC computer printouts; World Bank Report, 1992.

Table 20

Caribbean - proportion taking and passing GCE and CXC English language examinations,
1965 and 1984 (In percentage of 15-19 year cohorts)

	<u>Taking exam</u>		<u>Passing exam</u>	
	1965	1984	1965	1984
Barbados	14.9	28.7	4.6	15.1
Belize	2.6	4.2	0.6	1.9
Grenada	5.6	12.9	1.1	2.8
Guyana	16.5	4.9	1.8	1.0
Jamaica	3.8	9.3	1.0	2.7
St. Lucia	2.3	5.2	0.7	2.1
Trinidad	8.5	11.2	2.0	3.4

Source: Cox, 1990; World Bank Report, 1992.

Table 21 shows that the pass rates in the CXC in 1990 the practical subjects were higher than the traditional academic subjects. Notably the pass rates in the science subjects were the lowest. This can be attributed to ineffectiveness due to poor time allocation to the subjects, irrelevant textbooks, ill-equipped laboratories and unqualified subject teachers. This situation also implies that there is a need for secondary schools to expand their highly academic curriculum to include more vocational/technical subjects or

practical subjects.

Table 21

Percentage pass rates by subject, 1990: Belize

Subject	Percent Pass
Arts and Craft	80%
Biology	36
Business	23
Chemistry	35
Language	46
Mathematics	18
Typing	76
Physics	29
Integrated Science	32
Food and Nutrition	71

Source: Belize CXC Results Analyses, 1990.

The Belizean society places great emphasis on examinations, and success or failure tends to have both an academic and a social interpretation. For students an examination measures their efforts in preparing for it. Teachers use it to shape both what they teach

and how they teach. Employers estimate the potential worth of their employees by examination results. However the variety of examinations may contribute to producing a stratification within society based on part on perceived ranking of examinations. The great number of examinations which certify student performance reinforce the tendency to overdiversify the programs at secondary level. In addition to the RSA, CXC, City Guilds and the GCE "O" level examinations, all Junior and full secondary schools award their own diplomas. In the face of weak performance and high fees for external examinations, these diplomas are the main for certification, but what matters most were the transcript. When students transfer from one school to the other it was not uncommon to find that what one school reckoned as an 80% student is what another reckons to be 60% student or vice-versa (Ministry of Education, 1990).

Employers are vaguely aware of this discrepancy and therefore reckon that diploma/transcript from some schools are "better" than those from others. The inequity in this system is that a really good student in a "poor" school might not otherwise be judged as a good student (Ministry of Education, 1990).

Resources and Their Use

Finance

Initially the Government of Belize did not give any assistance to secondary schools. Denominational schools were maintained solely by their respective denominations, their incomes being derived from fees and from the private resources of denominations.

Other than the provision of scholarships there was not a great deal of participation between church and state. But with the introduction of the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940, interests were aroused in secondary and higher education. S.A. Hassock, Colonial Secretary, like his predecessor, stressed the necessity of secondary education at a Legislative Council meeting on 13th February 1945 by moving the following resolution:

WHEREAS there is a wide diversion of opinion on the subject of government or denominational secondary schools and whereas it is recognized that there is a need for improvement of secondary education within the Colony:
BE IT RESOLVED that His Excellency, Sir John Hunter, the Governor appoint a commission to consider these points and make recommendations for the improvement of secondary education (Hassock, 1945, p.17).

As noted in Chapter III, in 1945 a commission on secondary education was appointed by His Excellency Sir John Hunter. The Acting Director of Education was head of the commission and as such drew up a comprehensive memorandum on the subject. In that same year the Acting Director for Education who was also appointed advisor of the Development Planning Committee was to draw up sketch plans for the whole of the development and welfare policy of the colony over a period covering the next five to ten years (1945-1950 or 1945-1955). In respect of educational development the committee submitted its report to the Governor in June 1947. Its principal recommendations were:

- (a) that a practical secondary school, with a bias towards prevocational training be established;
- (b) that grants-in-aid be given to existing secondary schools;

- (c) that steps be taken to limit the number of secondary school students pursuing academic courses;
- (d) that scholarships be provided to the University College of the West Indies for prospective secondary school teachers.

In 1947, S.A. Hammond, Educational Advisor to the comptroller for the Development and Welfare of the West Indies visited the country for the second time. On this occasion his term of reference was primarily to enquire into and advise on secondary and technical education. Among the recommendations Mr. Hammond proposed that the government should consider instituting a system of deficiency grants to secondary schools. This recommendation was given with the promise that the government would grant aid to secondary schools.

Subsequently, the Development Plan (1955-1960) prioritized secondary education. The plan made several proposals.

- (a) Deficiency grants should be offered to voluntary secondary school authorities.

Voluntary schools should meet the following conditions:

- (1) a stipulated minimum of qualified teachers should be employed;
- (2) joint classes, as far as practicable, for teaching Higher School Certificate students should be arranged open to boys and girls throughout the country;
- (3) The value of the scholarships, which included tuition and the use of textbooks, to each school in each year was estimated to be Bz.\$275;
- (4) Candidates for the Cambridge Local Examinations were required to pay a local fee of Bz.\$2 in addition to the fee charged by the university.

In return for this government assistance, the secondary schools became subject to a small measure of control with regards to their buildings, staffing, and curricula. The Board of Education also had to be satisfied before the schools were recognized as schools at which government scholarships were tenable.

In 1958 the Colonial Development and Welfare Scheme was approved to pay the salary of the principal and one graduate teacher on the staff of the three Anglican schools in Belize City. In 1961 the Roman Catholic schools applied for and received the same measure of help. The amount paid in 1962 was \$56,147.

In the 1970s the government increased its assistance to pay 60% of secondary level salaries, supplies, and maintenance expenditures, and 50% of capital expenditures. Table 22 shows the Ministry of Education's expenditure on secondary education for the period 1983/84 to 1988/89. Analysis of the amounts show that an average of approximately 24% of the budget was allocated to secondary education.

In 1989 the government's financial aid to private secondary schools increased to include 70% of teachers' salaries, supplies and maintenance expenditures, and 50% of capital expenditures. There was also a fixed government contribution of \$1,500 per month for each secondary school for maintenance expenditures. With the exception of a small government subvention per enrolled student for water bills, the various denominations pay for utilities. during the same fiscal year, 1989, the government spent US\$15.1 million on education. During this time the share of public education expenditure in Gross Domestic Produce (GDP) and in the central government budget for 1989 were 5.7% and 21% respectively.

Table 22

Recurrent expenditure on secondary education, 1983-1989 and percentage of national budget

Year	Budget (\$Bz,000)	Percentage of National Budget
1983/84	4,327	24.6
1984/85	4,389	24.0
1985/86	4,671	25.3
1986/87	4,790	25.1
1987/88	5,307	24.1
1988/89	5,679	24.1

Source: Government Budget Estimates (1983 to 1992).

Table 23

Expenditure on primary and secondary education as percentage of total education budget:
1983-1992

Subsector	1983/84	1985/86	1987/88	1991/92
Primary	52.7%	54.1%	56.4%	68.7%
Secondary	24.6%	25.3%	24.1%	24.3%
Total	77.3%	79.4%	80.5%	93.0%

Source: Government Budget Estimates (1983 to 1992)

The expenditure patterns of grant-aided and public secondary schools are not entirely comparable. The education background of parents, family income, and home environment, which are important determinants of student performance, favour grant-aided secondary schools. It is undeniable, however, that grant-aided secondary schools make more efficient use of their resources (Belize Education Sector Review, 1988).

Comparisons between government and grant-aided secondary schools indicate that grant-aided secondary schools operate more efficiently (Belize Sector Review, 1980). Table 24 provides indicators for comparison.

In addition to better management, successful competition for students with better test scores among grant-aided schools help to explain the differences. At the same time, the government's funding formula for grant-aided schools operates almost like a voucher system allowing students to shop for quality. This forces the grant-aided schools to be more efficient. Competitive pressures are keenest in the Belize City area where most of the grant-aided schools are located. The grant-aided schools further have administrative discretion over a substantial amount of tuition funds whereas the lower tuition charged by government secondary schools reverts automatically to the Ministry of Education (Belize Education Sector Review, 1988).

Other inefficiencies are encountered in control of new school openings. Responding to church and community pressure, the Ministry of Education has at times approved the opening of schools eligible to receive Ministry of Education funding in situations of poor cost-effectiveness. The Ministry of Education needs to exercise its authority to deny funding approval for new, uneconomic schools (Belize Education Sector

Review, 1988).

Table 24

Comparisons by type of school, 1987/88

Schools	Unit Cost in Bz\$	Salaries as Percentage of Budget	Education Services as Percentage of Budget	Pupil-Teacher Ratio*
Government	954	89	8	1:15
Church	784	74	23	1:17
Community	600	81	16	1:16

* Pupil-Teacher Ratio is slightly distorted because some staff is used part-time for post-secondary programs in some schools.

Board of Trustees/Managing Boards/Managers

Secondary schools are also managed under the church-state management. There are various forms of management: Board of Trustees, Managing Boards, and Religious Orders with the principal as manager. Their major responsibilities include:

- ensuring that the school is conducted in accordance with the policies and philosophy of education;
- approving rules for the general conduct of the schools' teachers and students;
- approving the appointment of staff after consultations with, or recommendations from, the principal;

- determining the terms and conditions of employment.

Most of these boards consist of people who are unfamiliar with the principles and philosophy of secondary schooling.

Principals

Principals are the chief executives of the school and are responsible for the operation of the entire organization. They are there to organize and manage the school efficiently and arrange for a structure which allows for fair and proper distribution of duties as well as delegation of authority.

The school principal is hired by the Board of Trustees/Managing Boards/ Manager and they are accountable to them. According to the Ministry of Education's Operation Manual (1992) the primary duties and responsibilities of the secondary school principal is as follows:

- 1) supervise the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the curriculum;
- 2) deploy staff and appraise their performance;
- 3) provide for staff development;
- 4) formulate policies and rules for the conduct and discipline of students and staff and monitor the proper implementation of these;
- 5) organize a counselling program for students;
- 6) develop plans for and monitor an extra-curricular program;
- 7) keep such records as may be required;

- 8) prepare budgets and monitor fiscal expenditures;
- 9) supervise the maintenance and use of school buildings and community relationships;
- 10) promote positive school and community relationships;
- 11) perform any other related duties and assignments (p.55).

The secondary principals, in contrast with those of elementary schools, enjoy a great deal of freedom in school administration and even in matters of curriculum. Most principals are university graduates, but are not necessarily trained teachers or trained administrators.

As James-Reid (1983) puts it:

What goes on in a school is a reflection of the principal. The busy hum which indicates work, the healthy interpersonal relationship that prevails, the willingness and determination to work and excel, the spirit of goodwill for all, do not happen; they are the results of seeds sown by the principal and nurtured by all (p.85).

There are principals who lack sufficient technical, human and conceptual skills to run their schools efficiently. Consequently, many secondary schools are not operating effectively.

Teachers

Student/teacher ratio in secondary schools in Belize (1:17), like elsewhere in the Caribbean, are substantially lower than those in other regions at similar levels of development. For example, pupil-teacher ratios in countries such as Jamaica, Grenada and St. Vincent are 1:20, 1:21 and 1:17 respectively. This low student-teacher ratio has

always been countered somewhat by the relatively low proportion of trained teachers.

There has always been a persistence of diversity in secondary teachers' qualifications in Belize. As shown in Table 25 there are four basic categories: university graduates with professional training; university graduates without professional training; trained teachers without degrees; and the untrained including Sixth Form (Junior College) graduates without professional training. The numbers of each of these types vary from school to school.

In 1962 there were 120 secondary school teachers with a pupil/teacher ratio of 1:24 in Belize -- 57 graduates and 63 non-graduates. About 24 of the graduate teachers were Peace Corps, and Papal Volunteer and VSO teachers who were serving on a temporary basis (UN Economic Survey Mission, 1963). These volunteer teachers were mostly used to teach mathematics, science and English. As the United Nations Economic Survey puts it "a number of schools would find it impossible to operate without this assistance" (UN Economic Survey Mission, 1963, p.9).

Non-graduates were those teachers who did not have a secondary education and were untrained. These were mostly teachers recruited from the Primary Teaching category and who had a First Class Certificate (i.e were certified but untrained). There were also teachers who had secondary education but were untrained. These were mostly High School Certificate students recruited to teaching direct from secondary schools. "In 1984 and 1987, the number of secondary school teachers increased 16% from 491 to 572, but during the same period, however, the number of qualified teachers decreased from 43% to 34% of the total" (Belize Sector Review Report, 1988, p.34).

Qualified teachers have a college degree (graduates) in any discipline. Most of the graduate teachers are concentrated in six of the well-known grant-aided schools. Further, most of the qualified teachers (80% to 90%) lack training in psychology, teaching methods, or evaluation of student classroom performance. Any effort to secondary education must assign priority to teacher training (pre-service and inservice).

Table 25 confirms that the number of trained teachers at the secondary level are appallingly low. The largest percentage of those trained were in primary education and moved later into secondary schools. A few of the trained teachers went through the Belize College of Arts, Science and Technology (BELCAST) - now defunct - and received training specifically for secondary education (Ministry of Education Annual Report, 1990; UNESCO Mission, 1983).

Some teachers attended Sixth Forms, and attained Associates Degrees in specific subject areas and may or may not have been successful at "A" level examinations in those subjects. These teachers make up the majority of teachers in secondary schools who usually do not know anything about teaching, but are allowed to teach anyway. To offset this problem, some school principals try to have some kind of pre-service and in-service training at their schools. This is evidently not enough, especially given the large staff turnovers each year. This problem is especially felt in the rural grant-aided schools which usually have vocational/technical or agricultural biases. It is difficult to find teachers who are trained in these fields (USAID, 1988; Ministry of Education Annual Report, 1991; SPEAR, 1991). In some instances there were a number of teachers hired directly from high school whose only attribute might be that they attained CXC passes in the subject

areas they teach.

The reliance on non-nationals to teach in secondary schools has therefore continued over the years. Most of these non-national teachers are still provided by volunteer programs (e.g. US Peace Corps; Canadian University Service Overseas, UK). Non-nationals whether volunteers or those West Indians employed in the system constitute approximately 25% of the graduate teachers. Since they are still frequently employed to teach mathematics and the sciences, they are more critical to the system than their numbers suggest (Ministry of Education, 1992).

Table 25

Secondary school teachers by qualification, 1986-1991

Type of Qualification	1986	1987	1988	1990	1991
University Graduates	195	197	201	213	261
(a) with professional training in teaching	100	111	69	78	120
(b) without professional training in teaching	95	86	132	135	141
Non-Graduates	320	375	375	351	361
(a) with trained teacher's diploma	80	100	96	90	97
(b) other members of staff	240	275	279	261	264

Source: Ministry of Education Annual Report, 1986-1991

Instructional Materials

Belize has a very deficient supply of educational materials. Instructional materials and equipment are still in short supply, limiting the effectiveness of classroom instruction. Financial resources for materials have always been scarce, especially in government schools where most of the budget is spent on salaries. Laboratory and workshop fees paid by students (Bz \$60-Bz \$100) do little to resolve the problem because most of the fees are used for general operating expenses (USAID, 1988).

"In extreme cases, science examinations involving school-based work cannot be taken due to a lack of equipment and consumables" (World Bank, 1992, p.97). Textbooks are a necessary part of education. They facilitate materials' provision of accessibility of schooling. The secondary school textbook selection is generally carried out by principals and their staff and actual purchase is the responsibility of the students or their parents. It is estimated that 80% to 90% of the students purchase their textbooks at costs per student that range from Bz \$100 to Bz \$350. As textbook costs continue to rise it is anticipated that the student dropout rate will rise accordingly as parents with limited economic means find that they cannot afford the cost. There is general concern over this problem among parents and educators, and measures to cope with it are being considered. For example, some schools have adopted limited bulk buying, lending and selling schemes. National bulk buying is precluded by the absence of textbook standardization among schools (UNESCO Mission, 1983).

Time Allocation

Teachers and educational materials are important inputs for the achievement of curriculum objectives. Effective timetabling is also essential. Time allocated for subjects at the secondary level varies. The allocations are influenced by availability of staff, facilities and examination requirements (World Bank, 1992), and therefore vary from school to school, as depicted in Table 26.

Table 26

Percentage of time allocated to four subjects in three secondary schools, 1992

School	School A	School B	School C
English	20	10	16
Mathematics	20	10	14
Social Studies	10	10	15
Science	10	30	13
Other Subjects	40	40	42

Source: Curriculum Development Unit Report, 1992.

This situation explains why many students enter and graduate from secondary schools with low literacy and numeracy skills. The inability to read and enunciate

accurately reduces students ability to learn other subjects effectively. This problem also limits the students ability to effectively use their textbooks. One possible response to redress this situation may be the time allocated to English and mathematics (Ministry of Education Annual Report, 1991; World Bank, 1992).

Physical Facilities

The UNESCO Mission (1964) recommended that attention be turned toward the provision of new school buildings and the expansion of already existing schools. This was to provide more school places for students, but most importantly to provide vocational/technical education where possible. In 1994 schools are overcrowded, furniture is in short supply, but the buildings housing secondary schools are generally in satisfactory condition. Most of the schools (55%) were constructed in 1975. In most cases school maintenance is also satisfactory with the schools meeting most of the expenses from their recurrent budget (Ministry of Education Annual Report, 1991).

Political pressure on the government to increase secondary school places has been sidespread and community based. Consequently there is a proliferation of small secondary schools serving local communities in Belize. The country has 31 secondary schools for a secondary school population of about 8,872 students, or an average of 286 per school.

While this distribution can bring some social benefits and ease access by lowering transport costs, it also reduces opportunities of economics of scale in the use of resources and limits curricular offerings. Furthermore, it undermines effective supervision and inspection of secondary schools by Education Officers (World Bank Report, 1992, p.100).

If secondary education is to meet the desired increase in access to secondary schooling in an economical manner, then it is necessary that attention be given to reducing the number of dispersed small schools in Belize.

Conclusion

Chapter V has attempted to illustrate the developments in secondary education under the headings of: coverage and access, quality and effectiveness and resources and their use. During this period in review, Belize witnessed a tremendous upsurge of interest in secondary education - an interest which has been reflected in a fairly consistent policy of expansion in that field. This expansion has for the most part taken the form of an increase in the visible facilities of secondary schooling. The gradual increase in the number of scholarships to secondary schools, the building of new schools, and the expansion of existing schools have provided opportunities for more and more children to attend secondary school. The changes have been related to and influenced by the growth of national feeling associated with the achievement of political independence, the growth and understanding of national needs and problems, and the growing acceptance by Belizeans that the solutions to problems must come from within the borders of Belize.

Access has been significantly improved. Secondary schooling is now accessible to those who merit it academically and not only to those who can pay for it. There are still obstacles in gaining access to secondary education. For example, rural students because of the quality of schooling they get very often do not meet the entry requirements.

The quality of secondary education is determined by interplay of several variables: quality of teachers, curriculum, attendance, economics and resource use. From the data presented on these variables, it can be concluded that high quality education is lacking in Belizean secondary schooling. Given the poor quality of teachers, irrelevant curriculum, lack of financial resources, inadequate numbers of administrative supervisory personnel, administrative inefficiency, secondary education has not been effective in achieving its goals. Chapter VI synthesizes this thesis and gives recommendations for improvement and further studies.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Despite the significant gains made in education over the past three decades following the UNESCO Report of 1964, there remains throughout Belize a widespread and well-founded concern about the quality and direction of schooling and the effectiveness and efficiency of the education system. High dropout rates, pressures to increase achievement levels, and declining financial resources have created demands for change. There is growing concern about whether the church-state system of education in Belize is fiscally efficient and educationally effective. In addition, there is a widely held and documented belief that educational standards are too low and too many graduates lack the basic and relevant skills required to function in the modern marketplace.

This study examined the history and evolution of preschool, primary and secondary education over the last century. The analysis of the history pinpointed various changes which have transformed the sectors into their present state. The issues which have transformed and retarded progress in the three sectors were also explored. This chapter synthesizes the principal issues which are discussed under these headings: coverage and access, quality and effectiveness, and resources and resource use. The chapter also offers suggestions for further studies.

Summary and Conclusions

Coverage and Equality of Access

Although tremendous strides have been made to improve access to schooling, 40% of primary school graduates do not receive any type of post-primary schooling. There still remain restrictions to access at the preschool and secondary levels. Because the majority of preschools and secondary schools are privately owned, they charge fees which parents find prohibitive. This partly accounts for the small percentage of students who gain access to these two sectors - 26.3% and 60% respectively. There is a need for more preschools in both urban and rural communities, but priority must be given to the rural areas. Preschool education is necessary for the social and cognitive development of all children for increasing their readiness for primary education. Access to secondary education is limited due to a combination of factors: students' inability to score passing grades (50% and over) in the Belize National Selection examination, parents incapability to meet costs, and a shortage of school places. Students who score marks between 50% and 69% are forced to enter schools of lower calibre while their counterparts with higher scores attend the older, more prestigious and well-resourced schools. Rural students are particularly under represented, mainly because they are unable to meet academic criteria. Some of those who meet the academic criteria either do not start their secondary schooling or, if they do, drop out soon after due to financial difficulties. More needs to be done to allow rural students access to preschool and secondary schools.

Quality and Effectiveness

Within Belizean education circles there is a general dissatisfaction with the level of academic achievement among students at all levels. While there is no consensus as to the cause of the perceived poor achievement, there is a general agreement that there needs to be an improvement in basic cognitive skills.

The main test taken by primary school students is the Belize National Selection examination. Students sit this examination at the end of the primary school cycle. These results are used to screen students for secondary schooling. The low marks in English, mathematics and science have particularly been a cause for concern. Because primary school graduates are leaving school lacking basic skills, teachers in the lower secondary school spend much of their time offering remedial instruction to students. In the process the secondary curriculum is neglected resulting in disappointing performances in the Caribbean Examination Council examinations. Consequently, one out of 10 students who sit the CXC examinations gain the minimum number of passes (four CXCs) in one sitting formally required for entry to tertiary institutions or for employment.

Employers do not think that students are adequately prepared for the world of work. They think that there should be more vocational/technical training in schools. If this is true then secondary education is not fulfilling its objective of preparing students for the world of work.

Low achievement levels in Belize can be attributed in part to inadequacies in the existing school curriculum and the time allocated within the curriculum to core subjects. The current process of curriculum development places minimal emphasis on finding out

the needs and wants of those being served -- students, parents, employers and communities. Curriculum is developed almost exclusively by educational professionals, and is driven more by the examinations than by proactive goals and desired outcomes. Weak school management and ineffective teachers and the poor physical state of many schools also contribute to low achievement. The poor condition of the schools is a result of low capital investment and maintenance over the years. The low socio-economic and nutritional status of many students and linguistic barriers to learning (with Creole and Spanish as the first languages of many students), lack of provisions for students with special needs also adversely affect learning outcomes.

Grade retention and high dropout rates contribute to low academic achievement. Having to repeat grades results in an increase in the length of the school cycle for approximately 9% of primary school students.

Based on data presented in this study it is evident that the main indicator of quality and effectiveness in the education system is students' achievement as measured by examinations. Given the dissatisfaction that has been voiced about the results of BNSE and CXC examinations it can be concluded that high quality education is lacking in the Belizean school system. Academic achievement however should not be the only criterion for quality and effectiveness. Students' social and physical development are also the concerns of schools and should be included in any education evaluation of quality and effectiveness of education.

Resources and Resource Use

The coverage, quality and effectiveness of educational provision depend largely on both the level and use of resources. The structuring of an educational organization involves the arrangement and deployment of resources so that the system is able to achieve its goals in an effective and efficient manner.

Effective resource management can be determined by four main factors: the structure of the management and organization system itself; the efficiency with which the system provides information; the capacity within ministries to analyze information, evaluate options, and inform policymakers and managers of policy and planning choices; and finally both the quality of the managers themselves, and the opportunities for and effectiveness of management training programs. In addition to these determinants is the effectiveness of communication systems among the schools, central administration and other agencies. Belize has a highly centralized administrative structure. This centralized system of education with its bureaucratic trappings sets limits on the decision-making process, which in turn hinders organizational effectiveness. The dysfunctional and inflexible nature of centralization with its red tape and numerous rules often results in wasted time and resources.

The resources are controlled from the central office in Belmopan along with the responsibility for policy, planning, curriculum development, materials production, maintenance of facilities, and recruitment and appointment of Ministry of Education officials. At the central office itself final decisions are made by the Minister of Education. The results of the present bureaucratic structure are threefold. First, senior

managers find themselves bound to perform in several roles which allows less time available for their main duties. Second, communication systems are not always reliable, roads are not always accessible, transportation costs are rising rapidly and there is limited flow of resources (books, equipment, other supplies), and information. This results in supervisory assistance often being erratic. These difficulties are particularly acute in remote areas. Third, centralization limits opportunities and incentives to take initiatives in response to the demands of the local communities and to attract additional resources outside the Ministry's budgets. The uncertain flow of information and decisions can lead schools to feel isolated and sometimes alienated from both the local community and the central office (World Bank, 1992).

The church-state system of education facilitates the tapping of resources that are beyond the reach of the government. In Belize, 50% of primary schools and 30% of all recurrent costs are provided by churches and community groups. "Recent estimates suggest that while unit costs are lower in the aided schools, expenditures on non-salary 'educational services' are greater (World Bank, 1992, p.36).

The churches have especially been known for their organization and management of schools. This is commendable, but concerns have been expressed about the effectiveness of this system of management. There is evidence of duplication of resources and fragmentation of schools.

Increases in education resources are necessary to improve access, quality and effectiveness in preschool, primary and secondary education. Given the limited resources available it will therefore be necessary to manage existing resources more efficiently. In

this context considerations must first be given to the teaching force where morale is low and attrition is high. They must be trained and encouraged to remain in the teaching profession by adopting career structures which will improve teachers' morale. It is customary for teachers to move to other parts of the public service or the private sector. Replacements require additional training costs and usually brings less experienced teachers into the system.

The teachers and children are partners in the teaching/learning situation. With the exception of the teacher, the child is the most important resource in the learning process. Of continuing concern in all three sectors are matters relating to efficient timetabling, as well as processes for production and distribution of instructional materials at a cost accessible to students. Many schools also need adequately equipped laboratories and facilities for practical work.

Another issue relates to the need for physical facilities. Belize needs more places for preschool, primary and secondary students. Equitable distribution of physical resources would require that more preschools be built in rural areas. Moreover, there are many overcrowded primary schools in the urban areas. These need expansion. There is at the same time evidence of the fragmentation of small primary and secondary schools in the rural areas. Consolidation of some of these schools would help to save limited financial resources and human resources.

Belize also needs facilities for vocational/technical education at the primary and secondary levels. Vocational/technical education is expensive, but if the objective is to provide quality education for students, then it is necessary that provisions are made.

Doing so must be seen as a long-term investment.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study outlined the historical development of preschool, primary and secondary education in Belize. Past and present issues relating to access, quality, efficiency and effectiveness were also discussed. Further research could be conducted in the following areas:

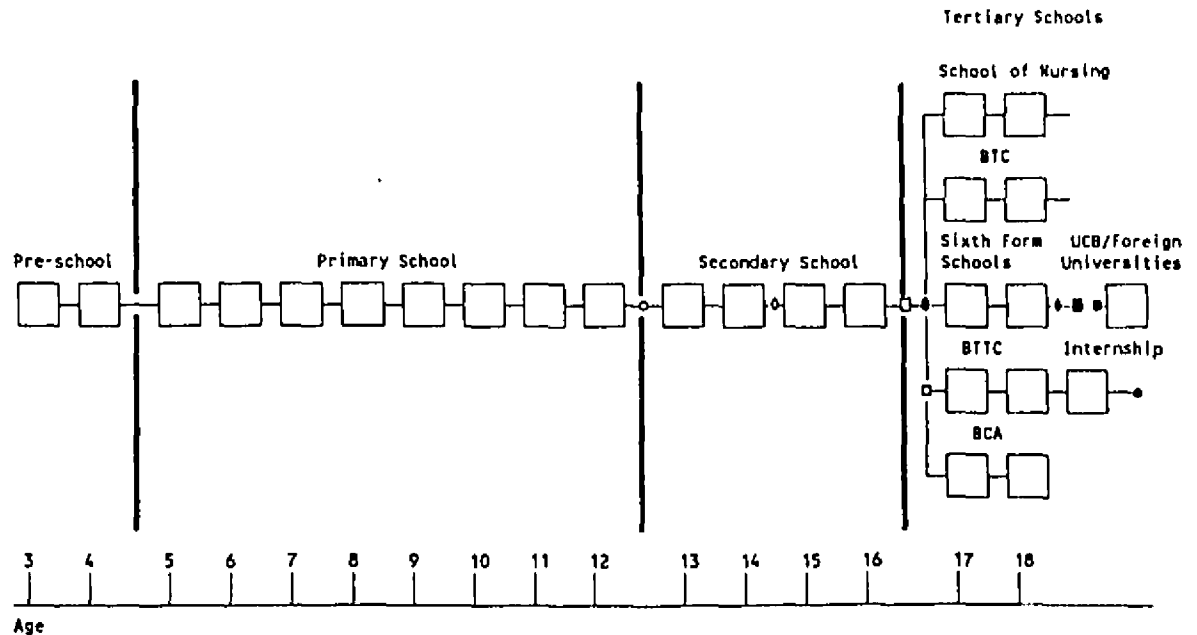
- 1) The church-state system of education. The denominational system of education in Belize has long been criticized on the grounds that it is both discriminatory and costly. No systematic research has been done on this topic. In order to obtain a broad unbiased picture of current public issues relating to denominational education, a scientifically designed survey could be conducted. Such a study would either confirm or refute the view held by individuals that there needs to be a change in the present church-state system of education.
- 2) The centralized system of management. The key goals of organizations should be to establish systems through which they achieve efficiency and cost effectiveness. In Belize, there is frequently evidence that the traditional centralized system of management is inefficient. No research has been done to determine the cause or causes of inefficiency. Inefficiency affects the distribution and effective use of resources which ultimately affect the quality of schooling. Research could be conducted to find out the root of the problem (inefficiency).
- 3) The dropout problem. Even though the dropout problem has constantly affected

the primary and secondary sectors no systematic research has been done on the topic. The dropout problem in Belize can be related to several underlying problems, such as, grade retention, irrelevant curriculum, ineffective teaching, language problems and socio-economic conditions. These factors can affect the quality and effectiveness of the learning process. With the continuing high dropout rates at the primary and secondary levels of education, it is crucial that research be done to find the root of this problem.

- 4) The curriculum. Fragmented reports have indicated that curriculum used in primary and secondary schools are irrelevant. Students are graduating without the basic skills needed for work. After graduation students are usually unable to find jobs. The academic achievement of students is unsatisfactory. A needs assessment survey could be conducted to determine the needs and aspirations of primary and secondary school students. Results from the study could provide information which could serve to guide curriculum planners in making the curriculum relevant and responsive to the needs of students. This would ultimately improve the quality and effectiveness of the systems.

APPENDIX A

Belize Education System - 1994



NOTES:

BCA: Belize College of Agriculture BTTC: Belize Teachers College
 BJCA: Belize Junior College of Agriculture CXC: Caribbean Examination Council
 BNSE: Belize National Selection Examination GCE: General Certificate of Education
 BTC: Belize Technical College UCB: University College of Belize

- Belize National Selection Examination
- ◊ National Diagnostic Tests - Secondary school level - started in 1990
- Secondary school leaving examination and Caribbean Examination Council - Exams
- American College Tests (ACT) and Sixth Form Placement Examinations
- ◆ Sixth forms - Associate degree examinations
- General Certificate of Education 'A' Level examinations
- Teacher's Training College Entrance Examination
- Teacher's College and Jamaica Joint Board of Teacher Education Examinations
- University Entrance Examination

APPENDIX B

Enrolment in Primary Schools, 1965-1992

Year	Number of Schools	Infant		Juniors			Seniors			VI/I(%) (8 years later)
		I	II	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	
1965	139	6379	3702	3278	2682	2828	2543	1902	1954	
1966	139	6034	3801	3464	3080	2828	2561	1192	2282	
1967	153	5730	3714	3699	3298	2967	2799	2392	3180	
1968	160	5620	3624	3751	3704	3121	3056	2538	2981	
1969	163	6279	4022	3712	3612	3439	3101	2598	2913	
1970	164	6045	4144	3897	3721	3414	3222	2631	2986	
1971	167	5926	4292	4096	3880	3527	3381	2806	2934	
1972	167	6130	4068	4050	3884	3631	3403	2636	2949	46
1973	171	6124	4291	4028	3963	3705	3464	2911	2861	47
1974	173	6131	4334	4267	3832	3751	3586	2278	2931	51
1975	179	6150	4311	4221	4160	3624	3458	3023	2791	49
1976	183	6281	4320	4311	4115	3982	3525	2986	3047	54
1977	185	6602	4384	4330	4062	3871	3775	3064	3017	58
1978	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1979	196	6590	4784	4422	4240	4186	3819	3372	3309	56
1980	197	6609	4655	4537	4410	3942	3779	3297	3386	55
1981	197	6147	4958	4409	4635	4036	3923	3173	3323	54
1982	196	6477	4697	4710	4441	4322	3896	3285	3250	53
1983	199	6566	4848	4774	4677	4193	4068	3391	3469	56
1984	225	6991	5125	4875	4832	4599	4230	3628	3473	55
1985	225	7157	5168	4992	4764	4588	4324	3809	3709	56
1986	226	7357	5155	5218	4831	4493	4364	3996	3798	n/a
1987	226	7449	5376	5049	4841	4667	4409	4074	3914	59
1988	226	7835	5643	5375	5088	4859	4570	4206	4010	61
1989	243	8035	5775	5579	5214	4933	4619	4234	4005	65
1990	249	8427	6045	5920	5466	5122	4744	4358	4089	63
1991	258	8827	6319	6271	5721	5311	4928	4479	4167	63
1992	259	9082	6658	6201	5789	5459	5231	4542	4248	61

Sources: The Ministry of Education Annual Report, 1961, p.8; Sanchez's Report, 1963, p.7; The Ministry of Education Triennial Report, 1952-1954, p.17; Survival Rates, 1972-1992.

APPENDIX C

Primary School Performance in the B.N.S.E. by District, 1992

District	Top Quarter		2nd Quarter		3rd Quarter		4th Quarter		All Pupils	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Belize	386	27	291	20	315	22	445	31	1437	100
Urban										
Belize City	341	32	221	20	213	20	307	28	1982	100
San Pedro	9	23	7	18	14	35	10	25	40	100
Rural										
Belize	36	11	63	20	88	28	128	41	315	100
Cayo	247	30	266	32	205	25	115	14	833	100
Urban										
Belmopan	61	50	31	25	26	21	5	4	123	100
Benque Viejo	26	36	35	48	11	15	1	1	73	100
San Ignacio	92	36	88	35	54	21	19	8	253	100
Rural										
Cayo	68	18	112	29	114	30	90	23	384	100
Corozal	176	34	124	24	122	24	92	18	514	100
Urban										
Corozal	95	52	36	20	22	12	28	15	181	100
Rural										
Corozal	81	24	88	26	100	30	64	19	333	100
Orange Walk	154	24	191	30	191	30	100	16	636	100
Urban										
Orange Walk	126	37	111	32	76	22	29	8	342	100
Rural										
Orange Walk	28	10	80	27	115	39	71	24	294	100
Stann Creek	62	16	122	31	107	28	97	25	388	100
Urban										
Dangriga	44	30	67	46	32	22	4	3	147	100
Rural										
Stann Creek	18	7	55	23	75	31	93	39	241	100
Toledo	30	8	46	12	110	28	210	53	396	100
Urban										
Punta Gorda	19	15	22	18	30	24	54	43	125	100
Rural										
Toledo	11	4	24	9	80	30	156	58	271	100
Totals	1055	25	1040	25	1050	25	1059	25	4204	100
Urban	813	34	618	26	478	20	457	19	2366	100
Rural	242	13	422	23	572	31	602	33	1838	100

APPENDIX D

Growth in Secondary School Enrolment: 1937 - 1961

Year	Number of Schools	Enrolment
1937	4	491
1941	5	588
1945	5	727
1949	5	909
1953	9	1029
1957	9	1294
1961	13	1924

APPENDIX E

Cambridge G.C.E. Ordinary level: 1967 and 1968: Subject entries and passes

Subjects	Number Sat	Number Passed	Percentage Passed
Cookery			
1967	10	6	60
1968	-	-	-
Needlework			
1967	7	6	86
1968	9	2	22
General Science			
1967	12	-	-
1968	13	3	23
Agricultural Science			
1967	12	12	100
1968	16	8	50
Art			
1967	-	-	-
1968	5	3	60
Geometry and Building Drawing			
1967	3	-	-
1968	2	-	-
Economic and Public Officers			
1967	7	1	14
1968	-	-	-
Total Scores			
1967	1509	700	46
1968	1610	730	45

Source: Ministry of Education Annual Report, 1968

APPENDIX F

London G.C.E. Ordinary Level: January and June 1968

Subjects	Number Sat	Number Passed	Percentage Passed
Biology	7	0	0
Br. Const.	1	0	0
Chemistry	2	1	50
Commerce	1	0	0
Cookery	1	1	100
English Language	47	9	19
English Literature	7	0	0
Economics	2	0	0
Elementary Surv.	2	1	50
Geography	4	0	0
History	6	0	0
Human Anatomy	5	0	0
General Sciences	1	0	0
Mathematics	11	3	27
Needlework	1	1	100
Physics	1	1	100
Principles of Accounting	2	2	100
Religious Knowledge	9	4	44
Spanish	10	4	40
Technical Drawing	1	1	100

Source: Ministry of Education Annual Report, 1969

APPENDIX G

London G.C.E. Ordinary Level: January and June 1969

Subjects	Number Sat	Number Passed	Percentage Passed
Biology	8	3	37
Chemistry	6	3	50
Economics	2	0	0
English Language	46	15	33
English Literature	3	2	67
Geography	2	1	50
History	7	1	14
Human Anatomy	4	1	25
Mathematics	9	2	22
Physics	2	0	0
Religious Knowledge	4	3	75
Spanish	14	1	7

Source: Ministry of Education Annual Report, 1969

APPENDIX H

Royal Society of Arts Examination, 1969

Subjects	Number Sat	Number Passed
Arithmetic I*	281	121
English Language I	438	171
English for Foreigners	1	1
Spanish I	181	78
Typing I	149	30
Shorthand I	129	18
Bookkeeping I	3	1
Mathematics I	69	23
Arithmetic II	26	2
English Language II	25	15
Spanish II	44	27
Shorthand II	32	1
Bookkeeping II	1	1
Typewriting II	27	7
English Language III	2	1
Spanish III	15	7
Typing III	11	0
Bookkeeping III	1	1

*Stage

Source: Ministry of Education Annual Report, 1969

APPENDIX I

The Caribbean Examination Council Examinations

The Caribbean Examination Council Examinations

The Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) was established in 1972 when 15 Caribbean governments including Belize made a decision to set up a regional examination board at the secondary level.

CXC was seen as an organization which could influence the region's secondary school system through the syllabuses and examinations. Qualified teachers were identified from all 15 countries to work on the subject panels. Subject panels had among their specialists experienced classroom teachers who were teaching at that level of the examinations, members of regional universities, and members of the curriculum development departments of the various ministries of education.

The major objectives of CXC were as follows:

- (1) to provide a relevant secondary school leaving examination to replace those traditionally set by Overseas Boards;
- (2) to establish an examination which would test a wide variety of mental abilities;
- (3) to abolish the pass/fail concept;
- (4) to expand examinations in a wide area than GCE; and
- (5) to ensure that the standard of those examinations is regionally and internationally recognized.

The examination was offered to students at two levels, namely, the Basic Proficiency and General Proficiency. The Basic proficiency connotes a level in subject activity designed to complete a secondary course in the specific subject. This would allow students and teachers to take a number of subjects without an overload as

the Basic examination is two-thirds the size of the General Proficiency. The General Proficiency connotes subject activity designed to provide foundation for further studies in the specific subject area beyond the fourth year of secondary schooling. CXC is associated with a grading system. These are the overall grades:

- (1) Grade 1 means that the candidate has a comprehensive working knowledge of the syllabus;
- (2) Grade 2, means that the candidate has a working knowledge of the syllabus;
- (3) Grade 3, means that the candidate has a limited knowledge of a few aspects of the syllabus;
- (4) Grade 4 means that the candidate has a limited knowledge of a few aspects of the syllabus; and
- (5) Grade 5 means that the candidate has not produced sufficient evidence on which to base judgement.

These five points associated with the grading system also have profiles associated with them.

A profile identifies a particular attribute to the syllabus. For example: (1) a profile A signifies above average; (2) B signifies average; (3) C signifies below average and (4) NA signifies no assessment possible.

One advantage of CXC is that some subjects have a school-based component. School-Based Assessment (SBA) is the teacher's evaluation of a student's coursework assignments which are set over a specified period of time. School-based assessment affords a greater teacher participation in the final assessment of candidates and avoids complete reliance on one-shot examinations. Based on teachers' knowledge of the

work of the candidates and because evaluation takes place over an extended period, the final assessment is likely to be more representative of the candidate's ability. For example, in the case where a candidate does not perform as expected on the day of the examination, there is at least the assurance that the work done over the period of the coursework will not count on purpose of final assessment in the subject. The total marks for coursework as a percentage of the final examination mark range from 22% to 40% in some subjects.

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