

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS

GOVERNMENT OF MONTSERRAT

SOFT MARKET TEST

OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this soft market test is to gain a measure of the capacity in the regional education landscape to undertake the development of a national curriculum for Montserrat. To that end, a questionnaire is attached and the responses provided will help us to determine the best pathway towards achieving that goal.

CONTEXT

Paragraph 138 of the Education Act requires the Minister of Education to establish and to keep under review a national curriculum for all public and assisted schools in Montserrat. Under that national curriculum, attainments targets, programs of study and assessment strategies which reflect the attitudes knowledge and skills required for the core subjects are to be prescribed.

Ideally the curriculum should be so articulated that the transition from early childhood to primary to secondary is seamless in terms of core subject content, assessment strategies and performance targets for each child. These should be continuous for each subject and for each child as he advances across sectors.

Unfortunately this is not currently the case. There is a perceived 'end of curriculum' when children exit primary which is followed by a 'starting over' at entry to secondary. The very designations assigned to the various teaching groups (where Primary schools use 'Grade' to differentiate between year levels and where secondary uses 'Forms'), only serve to reinforce the notion of 'starting' at secondary rather than a continuation or a building on what was learnt at primary.

Early Childhood

There is little articulation between the curriculums in use at 2+ years and 5+ years. The focus of the years spent at ECE centres is initially on learning through play but complaints have been made about the readiness of pupils for primary education. Developmentally appropriate practices guided by the Learning Outcomes for Early Childhood Development in the Caribbean and aspects of SPICES from SERVOL, the Project Approach, HighScope and thematic approach are used as curriculum guides for ECE practitioners.

Primary

Students at the primary schools pursue a curriculum which is common among the islands of the OECS in Social Studies (Civics), Mathematics, Language Arts and Science. This curriculum prescribes the depth to which each topic is to be treated at each grade and recommends assessments strategies appropriate for each grade. To these extents the curriculum at primary is well articulated but training is provided from time to time as needed in its implementation.

Secondary

Students who are judged to be capable pursue the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) from the Caribbean Examination Council (CXC). This is a curriculum which is done right across the Caribbean and typically begins in Form 4 (Age 15) for the final 2 years of secondary education. These students typically choose to study 7 or 8 subject areas from subject clusters. Some students pursue fewer than the prescribed number depending of their abilities.

Students who are judged to be unable to pursue the CSEC curriculum pursue a more skills-based education and training (SBET) which does not enjoy any acceptable measure of accreditation.

The decision as to which path a child will take is determined at Form 3 (age 13/14) and is made by the school. The result is that some children get a quality of education which is not on par with that offered to others. This is an issue of equity.

In most subjects areas there is no curriculum which links the primary curriculum with the CSEC curriculum. In other words there is no formal curriculum for Forms 1-3 (age 11-13/14) in most subjects at secondary. In recent years attempts to address this long standing deficit have begun and so far a curriculum have been agreed within the Ministry in English and Mathematics and work has started on curriculum for ICT, Social Studies and Science.

Post-Secondary

Currently, post-secondary education is essentially an extension of the secondary cycle by two years for CXC CAPE studies leading to an Associate Degree pursued within a Community College. Entrants to the program are expected to have passed mathematics and English at the CSEC level other than that they choose core specialisms according to anticipated career paths and CSEC successes in Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Business, and Information Technology. The curriculum of the College is determined by what students choose. Modern Languages, Humanities, and vocational subjects are significantly under-represented because so few students choose them perhaps as a result of how subjects clustered or what was on offer at secondary. Technical and Vocational Education is almost no-existent. So is basic education for those who did not engage well with the academic program offered at secondary due to English as an additional language, behavioral and or learning difficulties. Post-secondary education is at present exclusionary and does not aligned well with workforce needs, or civic engagement. There is a need for a portion of the curriculum which deals explicitly with ethics, social justice, emotional intelligence, commitment, responsibility and others that are foundations for lifelong learning and the building of 21st century citizens of a reconstructing Montserrat. Support for curriculum change should include training and reskilling of teachers in new and appropriate pedagogy.

IMPERATIVES

The Government of Montserrat is considering the development of a national curriculum but is unsure at this time which is the best approach to take. What it is absolutely clear about is that the national curriculum must

- prescribe the attainment targets that include the knowledge, skills and understanding which students of different abilities and maturities are expected to have by the end of each key stage;
prescribe the program of study that include the matters, skills and processes which are required to be taught to students of different abilities and maturities during each key stage; and
- prescribe the assessment arrangements that include the arrangements for assessing students at or near the end of each key stage for the purpose of ascertaining what they have achieved in relation to the attainment targets
- enjoy broad national consensus and must not be limited by any current set of factors;
- satisfy the developmental needs of the country as its first priority;
- It should be one of hope in the future.

RESPONSES

The Ministry of Education, Montserrat appreciates your time in responding to this soft market test and responses will help us to determine the capacity within the market place to deliver the service within the strictures outlined about.

Responses should be sent to

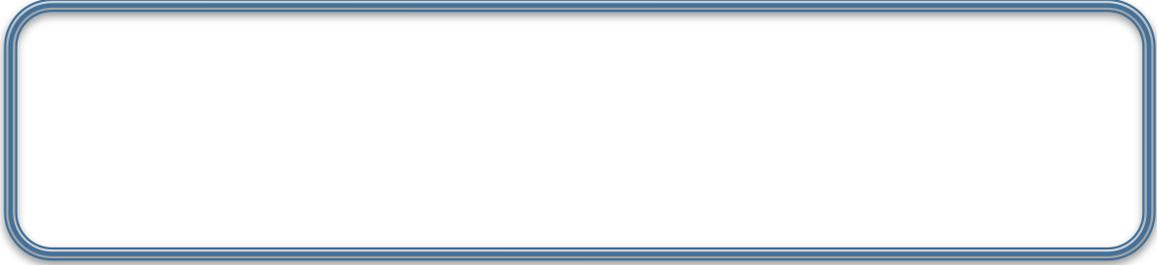
The Director of Education
Government Headquarters
Brades
Montserrat
Email: francisg@gov.ms
Tel: 664 491 3209/2542/2541

By March 3rd, 2017

SOFT MARKET TEST QUESTIONS

Kindly complete your responses to each question and forward the test sheet to the address given above

1. Has your organization undertaken and successfully completed any works of this scope within the last 10 years? Please provide details if you can.



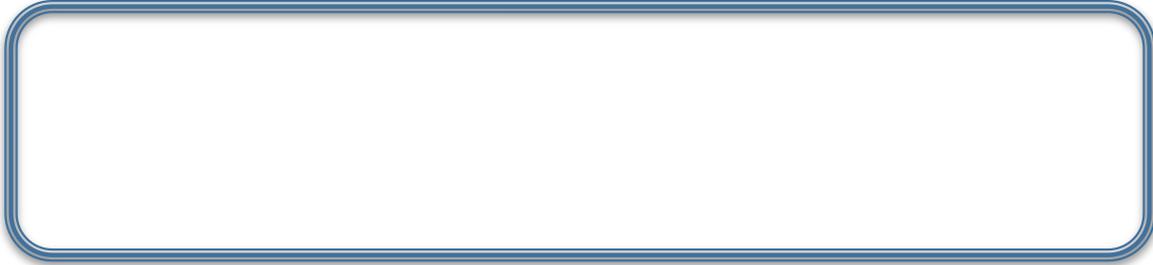
2. How many professional persons (not including clerical support) would you assign to undertake a project such as this?



3. How familiar are you with the history culture and aspirations of the Caribbean?



4. What are your academic credentials and/or those of your principals?



5. For a work of this nature and scope, what is your estimated minimum and maximum cost inclusive of per diem, travel and other expenses?



6. What is your estimated duration for a project of this nature and scope?



THANK YOU FOR YOUR VERY KIND COOPERATION!!