



# **SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION POLICY AND STRATEGY**

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION,  
GOVERNMENT OF ST.LUCIA**

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## **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

This policy and strategy aim to provide guidance for the Government of St. Lucia (GOSL) through the Department of Education (DOE) to effectively respond to 'the needs of *all* learners and align the public education system with the requirements of the 21<sup>st</sup> century labour market'. The policy is underpinned by a rights-based, non-discriminatory philosophy that equally values the presence, participation, and contribution of *all* children regardless of where they are on the abilities spectrum. The Education Act (2005) entitles *all* children the right to a quality education; this places a statutory obligation on the Government of St. Lucia to account for diversity and difference in the student population and provide appropriate resources, services, and support systems. In addition, the Government is a signatory to, and has ratified the following international agreements on inclusive and special education:

- Convention of Rights of the Child (CRC 1989),
- The Salamanca Agreement (1994),
- the Convention on the Rights for Persons with Disabilities (CRPD, 2006), and,
- the Cali Commitment (2019)
- The Sustainable Development Goals (2015)

At the regional level, the Government shares ownership of the CARICOM Human Resource Development (HRD) Strategy 2023, as well as the OECS Education Sector Strategy (2021-2026). The philosophical core of these regional and international agreements is interrelated and, as such, are therefore appropriate for anchoring the development of the policy and strategy.

## Situational Analysis

The Government of St. Lucia's general objective for public education *"is the continued quality adjustments and transformation of Saint Lucia's education system by making it responsive to the needs of all learners and more aligned with the requirements of the 21<sup>st</sup> century labour market"*. However, evaluation of the education system with specific emphasis on services and supports for special education needs and disabilities (SEND) highlighted the current situation:

- There are five special schools with a student population of 348 and 72 teachers, 62% of students in special schools are males.
- Among the students in special schools, learning disabilities/mentally challenged/autistic accounted for the greatest prevalence (1.03) compared to multiple handicaps (0.18) and visually impaired (0.16).
- Data about children with SEN in the public education system is sparse, and recommended indicators (UNICEF 2021) or the indicators in the government's estimates of expenditure are not reported. The structure of the data presented in the Education Statistics 2020 highlights the practice of segregation in the school system and the belief that the children in the general education system do not have special needs and therefore require SEND support and services. Indeed, this creates invisibility of the needs of students in general education.
- In addition, the number of accommodations provided for national and regional examinations and the outcomes of students are not reported; as such, the impact of the accommodations is not known. This raises the question of fairness in the examination system.
- Stakeholders argued that a cohesive and coordinated system of special education and the existing legislation does not provide sufficient coverage. They highlighted gaps in the delivery of the curriculum, programmes, assessment, accountability, and support and services.

- Grade repetition at the primary school level was prolific across grade levels but is especially remarkable at K, grades 1 and 3, which accounted for 78% of all repetition in the 2019/2020 academic year.
- Analyses of the 2006/2007 to 2014/2015 cohorts show that drop-out occurred across the grades in all the cohorts. The number of dropouts increased in forms 4 and 5, which accounted for up to 82% over the time period.
- Academic performance in the primary school system was marked by a performance gap between boys and girls in the Minimum Standards Test (MST2), Minimum Standards Test (MST 4), and the Common Entrance Examination (CEE). Further analysis showed that in respect of:
  - Grade 2 English Language, the total proportion of children in tier one was 72%, and 61% in mathematics. This means that 8% and 19% of grade 2 children in the general education system were at risk of failure.
  - Grade 4, the results in the English Language Test indicated the proportion of children at risk was 2016 - 35%, 2017 - 23%, and 2018 - 27%. In the case of mathematics, the incidence of risk was 2016 - 19%, 2017 - 31%, and 2018 - 45%.
  - Grade 6 results showed that just slightly above one-half of the children sitting the CEE examination obtained a score at or above the national average, and this means that the proportion of children at risk was as follows: 2018 - 47%, 2019 - 48% and 2020 - 45%
- The conclusion is that the risk of failure is a trend evident from MST 2, which has a knock-on effect on the CEE results. Given that the children are not being recovered by grade 6, these patterns are transferred to the secondary school system.
- In terms of secondary schools, in 2019/2020, the net enrolment rate for forms 1 to 5 was 82%, suggesting that 18% of children of secondary school age were not enrolled in a school.

- One of the effects of the low numbers of students attaining the mean score in the primary school examinations is that the results of CSEC examinations are less than expected compared to the cohort.
- Analysis of the CSEC results based on the cohort shows that for 2013/2014<sup>1</sup> and 2014/2015<sup>2</sup>, 49% and 39% of students, respectively, of the cohort exited secondary school without an outcome in English A. In respect of mathematics, this was 65% and 63%, respectively.
- For the 2015/2016 cohort, the number of students without an outcome in English was 712 (32%). In addition, the examination of the population shows that although there were 2560 children in the age 12 group, it was noted that grade 6 enrolment for the cohort was 2340, and the number assigned to secondary school was 2256, while only 1856 sat the English A and 1914 sat the mathematics examinations. Notably, the number of dropouts and transfers out of the system does not reflect the total number of students at the end of secondary school not accounted for in the data. Notwithstanding likely issues with double counting and overlaps in the data, we suggest that there are clear gaps that point to the likelihood of higher-than-expected levels of SEN not addressed at the secondary level.
- Stakeholders indicated that at the secondary school level, there are gaps in the curriculum and instruction for students with SEN, assessment, skills, competencies, and support and services.

### **Rationale for the Special Education Policy and Strategy**

The situation analysis illustrates the urgent need to provide opportunities for children's potential to be optimised in the school system. Given the GOSL's commitment to providing *quality* education to *all* children, the policy and strategy are grounded in the notion of inclusive special education (Ainscow & Miles, 2009; Hayes & Bulat, 2017; Hornby, 2015) and draw on the human rights framework of the United Nations

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<sup>1</sup> CSEC Examination year was 2017/2018.

<sup>2</sup> CSEC Examination year was 2018/2019

Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). In addition, the thematic elements of the policy reflect the purpose and rationale of the Salamanca Statement (1994) and the Sustainable Development Goals (2015). Consequently, the rationale for each thematic area is presented below. The overarching rationale is to account for all forms of special needs, including the needs relating to the intersectionality between gender and special education needs and disability. The policy and strategy, therefore seek to address the challenges of:

- I. limited human capital and financial resources in the special education sub-sector.
- II. conflicting definitions of the key concepts such as inclusive education, inclusion, special education, and special educational needs, which has limited the framing and the reach of service provision and supports.
- III. the absence of collaboration and cooperation across the sectors of education, health, equity, and other social development agencies.
- IV. equitable and timely assessment and placement options
- V. parent and stakeholder involvement.

## **Goal**

The goal of the Special Education Needs Policy and Strategy is to ensure that all learners with special education needs are provided with the best quality education, which allows them to achieve their fullest potential.

## **Objectives**

1. To provide equal treatment to all children in the provision of quality education.
2. To ensure that Special Education Needs is recognised as an integral part of the education system.
3. To ensure that all children who need educational support are provided with such support at every school and by every teacher.



## Values and Commitment<sup>3</sup>

### i. Flexibility

We will live this value by...

- Responding to the developmental needs of learners.
- Providing differentiated curriculum and instruction.
- Facilitating activities that enhance student learning.
- Accommodating learners with exceptionalities.

### ii. Diversity

We will live this value by...

- Providing an open educational environment that appreciates and ensures inclusion.
- Respecting individual differences of all learners within the learning environment.
- Providing a variety of teaching approaches/ strategies that cater to the multiple intelligences of learners.

## Relevant Legislation

The Education Act (amended Act 2005) makes provision for Special Education.

According to the Act:

83. (1) The Chief Education Officer shall provide special education programmes for students of compulsory school age who by virtue of intellectual, communicative, behavioural, physical or multiple exceptionalities are in need of special education.

(2) A student who is entitled to a special education programme shall have the programme delivered in the least restrictive and most enabling environment to the extent that resources permit and it is considered practicable by the Chief Education Officer in consultation with professional staff of the school and the Ministry of Education and the parents, having due regard for the educational needs and rights of all

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<sup>3</sup> Adapted from the The Education Sector Development Plan (2015 - 2020).

students.

The Education Act of 2005 outlines a process for the determination of SEN to include the following:

- (1) Before a determination is made under subsection (2), the following procedures shall be followed—
  - (a) the student shall be referred to the Chief Education Officer for a determination of the assessments that may be required to be performed;
  - (b) the parent of the student shall receive written information concerning the procedures outlined in this section;
  - (c) prior written informed consent by a parent for the administration to the student of the psychological and other specialised tests that are not routinely used by teachers shall be obtained;
  - (d) where possible, the assessment shall be multi-disciplinary;
  - (e) the results of the assessment reports shall be provided and explained to the parent;
  - (f) a parent and, where appropriate, the student shall be consulted prior to the determination of and during the implementation of the special education programme; and
  - (g) the parents shall be provided with information concerning the right of appeal to the Education Appeal Tribunal.
- (2) Subject to subsection (1), the principal in consultation with professional staff and parents or, where a child is not in attendance at a school, the Chief Education Officer, in consultation with professional staff and parents, shall determine whether a student is a student with special educational needs; and, if so, what special education programme is appropriate to meet the needs of that student.

- (3) Parents shall have the right to request for their children a determination in accordance with this section.
- (4) A principal may invite a parent to be a member of a school-based team that is established for the provision of a special education programme for a student.
- (5) The school-based team referred to in subsection (4) shall comprise persons selected on the basis of their expertise by the principal of a school to advise on a programme specified to the needs of a particular student or group of students.

## The Fundamental Principles

### Definitions

The definitions presented are primarily drawn from the CARICOM HRD 2030 Strategy Report (pp 59-68). They were modified to further capture the applied interpretations of the CRPD in daily practice and were validated by regional partners. The modified terms are *access, equity, quality, and inclusiveness*. Based on the regional partners' descriptions of services and Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) provision, the modified definitions for *special education, special educational needs, inclusion, and inclusive education* are *proposed*. These definitions are complementary to the existing definitions of the CRPD, and are the standards internationally.

Definitions	
Access	The policy-based conditions, modalities, procedures, and considerations that enable all learners to be admitted, matriculated, and successfully integrated into educational or vocational institutions, or social, cultural, and recreational environments with opportunities to participate that are equitably distributed.

<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>Accommodations</b></p>	<p>Accommodations change how content is accessed or tested but do not change the content of what is expected to be mastered.</p> <p>The term "accommodation" may be used to describe an alteration of environment, curriculum format, or equipment that allows an individual with a disability to gain access to content and/or complete assigned tasks. They allow students with disabilities to pursue a regular course of study. Since accommodations do not alter what is being taught, instructors should be able to implement the same grading scale for students with disabilities as they do for students without disabilities.</p> <p>Examples of accommodations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- sign language interpreters for students who are deaf;</li> <li>- computer text-to-speech computer-based systems for students with visual impairments or Dyslexia;</li> <li>- extended time for students with fine motor limitations, visual impairments, or learning disabilities;</li> <li>- large-print books and worksheets for students with visual impairments; and</li> <li>- trackballs and alternative keyboards for students who operate standard mice and keyboards.</li> </ul> <p><a href="https://www.washington.edu/doit/what-difference-between-accommodation-and-modification-student-disability">https://www.washington.edu/doit/what-difference-between-accommodation-and-modification-student-disability</a></p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>Adaptation</b></p>	<p>Adaptation involves adjusting the environment, materials, or methods to make them more accessible for a student with a disability without fundamentally changing the content or expectations. The goal of adaptation is to provide support that allows a student with special needs to participate in the same activities or assignments as their peers, but with adjustments to meet their unique learning requirements.</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>Assessment</b></p>	<p>Assessment refers to the process of gathering information and evidence about a student's knowledge, skills, abilities, and performance. The primary purpose of assessment is to evaluate and measure learning outcomes, providing valuable insights for educators, students, parents, and other stakeholders. Assessments serve various purposes, including determining the effectiveness of instruction, guiding instructional planning, and making informed decisions about student progress.</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>Assistive Technology Device (ATD)</b></p>	<p>Assistive technology device means any item, piece of equipment or product system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a child with a disability. The term does not include a medical device that is surgically implanted, or the replacement of that device.</p>
<p><b>Definitions</b></p>	

<b>At-Risk</b>	A term used to refer to individuals whose experiences or circumstances create a higher probability of failing academically, dropping out of school, or exhibiting socially maladaptive behaviours
<b>Disability</b>	<p>Long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder an individual's full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.</p> <p>Adapted from CRPD (UN Division for Social Policy and Development: Disability, 2006)</p>
<b>Equity</b>	The practice of unbiased, fair, relevant, and appropriate provision of educational and training opportunities, and other critical services and support to learners regardless of gender, ethnicity, language, religion, locale, socio-economic status, disability, indigenous origin, or any other personal circumstances.
<b>Inclusion</b>	The practice which ensures universal and unbiased acceptance of all learners regardless of gender, ethnicity, language, religion, locale, socio-economic status, disability, indigenous origin, or any other characteristics, thus allowing them full access to educational opportunities, assessment, and support, and equitable and participatory learning experience and environment that best corresponds to their requirements and needs.
<b>Inclusive Education</b>	<p>Educational practices that ensure that all learners, including those with special educational needs, are provided with educational opportunities that are fair, equitable, relevant, rights-based, and non-discriminatory, and enable them to attend their community school to receive high quality instruction, interventions and supports that enable them to meet success on the core curriculum, unless it is clearly demonstrated that education in general education classrooms is incapable of meeting the child's educational or social needs, or when it is required for the welfare of the child or that of other children.</p> <p>Adapted from the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (1994)</p>
<b>Definitions</b>	
<b>Individual Education Plan (IEP)</b>	An Individual Education Plan (IEP) is a documented plan developed for a student with special education needs that describes individualised goals, adaptations, modifications, placement, the services to be provided, and includes measures for tracking achievement. It is based on the result of assessments conducted to determine the individual's levels of functioning.

<b>Modifications</b>	A modification is a change to the instruction, curriculum, assignment or assessment for a student in which the content of the instruction or the performance expectations are altered. Modifications are usually required for students who need additional measures to help them progress in the general education curriculum, primarily due to the skill deficits they may have in areas such as reading or mathematics which make it difficult for them to achieve the curricular goals set for all students.
<b>Quality Education</b>	Educational provisions and outcomes that are developmentally and pedagogically appropriate, relevant, and sound, and lead to cognitive, social, emotional, creative, physical, occupational, and life-skills development, and promote the values and attitudes for responsible citizenship.
<b>School-Based Team (SBT)</b>	A School-Based Team refers to a collaborative group of professionals within a school who work together to support students with special needs. The team is involved in the initial assessment of student needs, planning, implementation, and monitoring of appropriate educational programmes and services for students who require additional support due to learning, behavioural, or developmental challenges. They may make referrals to the Department of Education’s Multi-disciplinary Team for a comprehensive assessment of a child’s special education needs. The composition of the SBT can vary, but it often includes key stakeholders such as the principal, education officer, special education teacher, general education teacher, parent/guardian, reading specialist or any other professional providing services at the school level.
<b>Special Education Needs</b>	The educational considerations and provisions resulting from a diagnosed disability, advanced abilities, or other non-traditional learning need that requires specialized support or services to facilitate learning and development.
<b>Definitions</b>	
<b>Special Education</b>	A range of educational and social service provisions designed to facilitate the learning of individuals who, for a wide variety of reasons, have special education needs and, therefore, require additional support and adaptive pedagogical methods in order to participate and meet learning objectives in an educational programme.
<b>Special Educator</b>	A teacher trained in the specialized pedagogies, approaches, and strategies to teach learners who, for a wide variety of reasons, require additional support and adaptive pedagogical methods in order to participate and meet learning objectives in an educational programme.

Groups of learners within a country who, due to their situational characteristics and circumstances, are likely to be excluded from quality educational provisions, and are therefore at-risk. Within the BMCs, there is a wide range of vulnerable groups whose vulnerability may be based on their disabilities, gifts and talents, low socio-economic status, gender, indigenous origin, cultural identity, ethnicity, religion, language, locale (urban inner-city, rural, remote rural, hinterland, riverine, coastal, family islands), and other groups such as young offenders, teenage parents, refugees, and new migrants.

## **Thematic Principles**

The policy and strategies are underpinned by the guiding principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 1989), the Convention on the Rights for Persons with Disabilities (CRPD, 2006), and the Strategic Developmental Goals (SDGs, 2020) at the international level, and the CARICOM Human Resource Development (HRD) Strategy 2023, as well as the OECS Education Sector Strategy (2021-2026), at the regional level. The core elements of the framework are interrelated and anchored by the principles of the CRPD, CRC, SDG4, CARICOM, and the OECS (see Figure 1). Each theme is a critical element in an enabling and supportive legislative and policy environment.

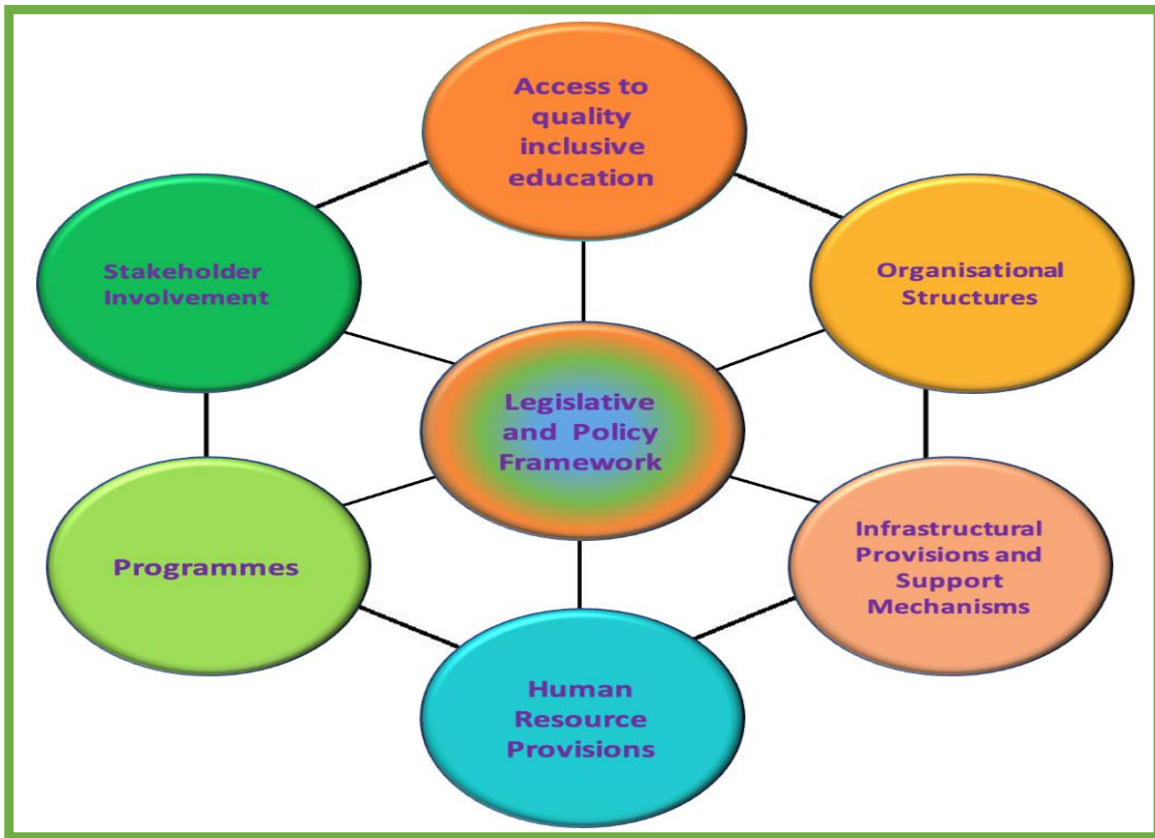
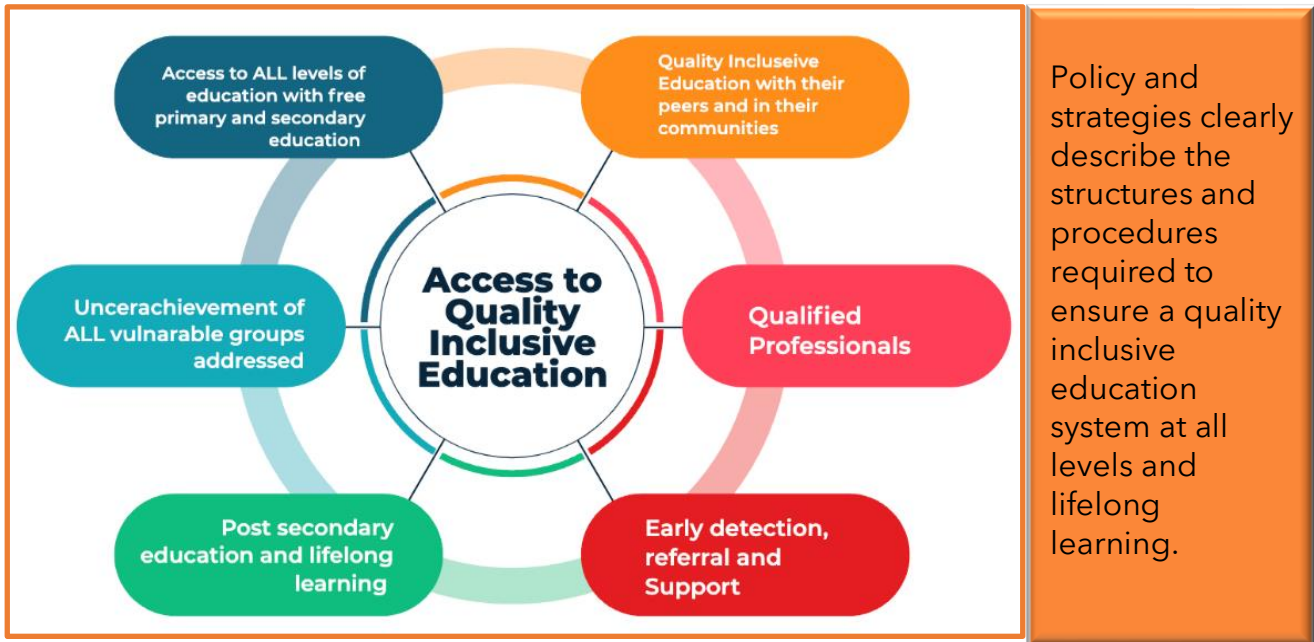


Figure 1: Policy and Strategy Themes



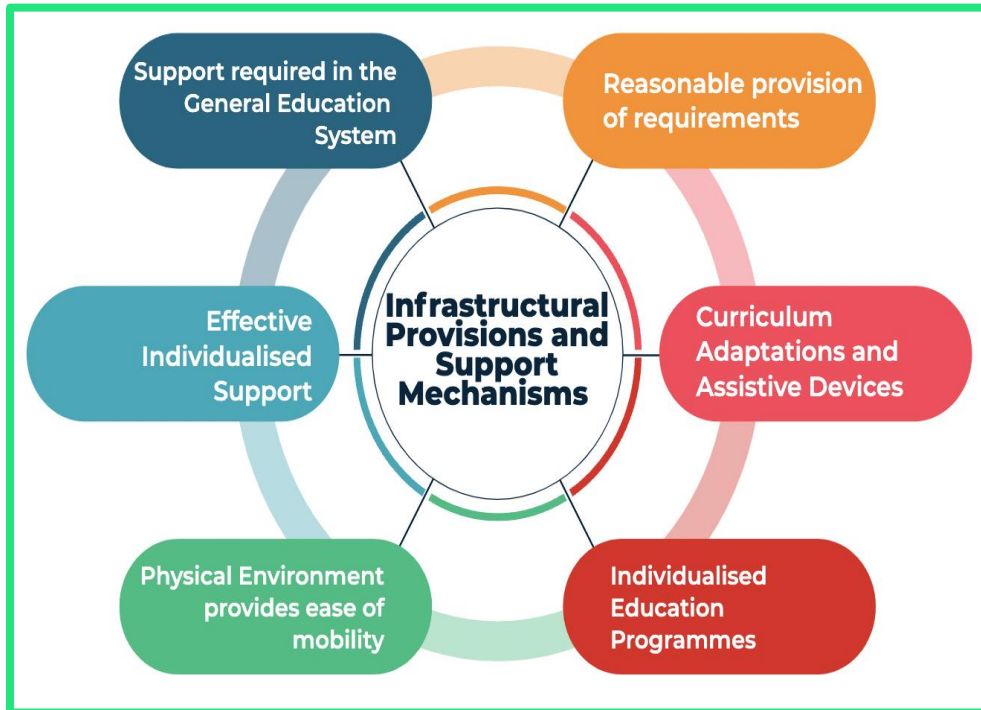
## Theme 1: Access to Quality Inclusive Education



## Theme 2: Organisational Structures

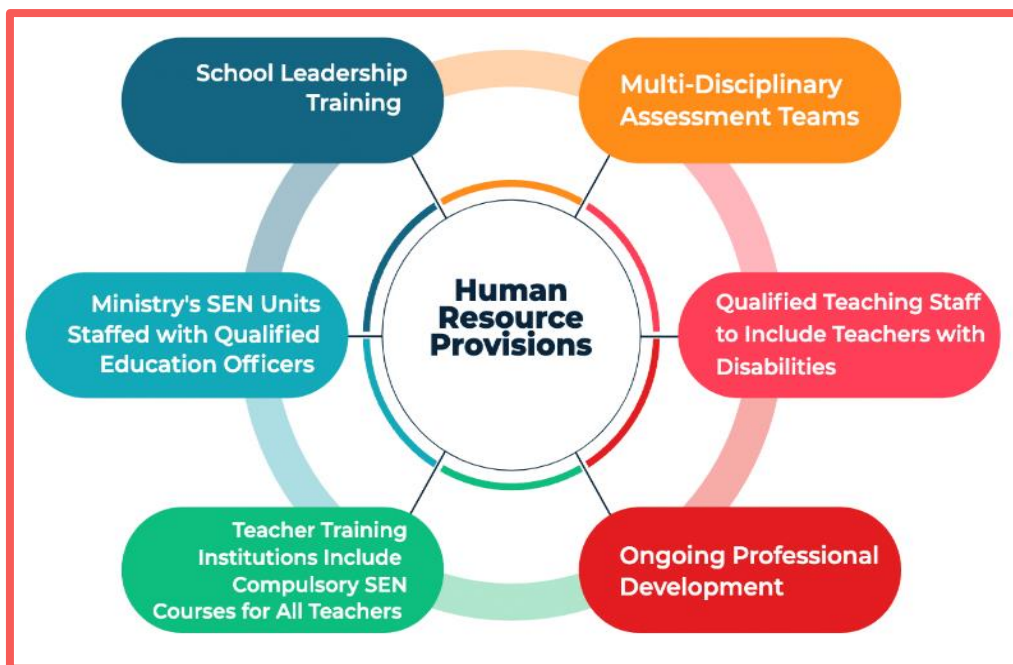


### Theme 3: Infrastructural Provisions and Support Mechanisms



Policy and strategy ensure that reasonable accommodation of the individual's requirement is provided.

### Theme 4: Human Resources Provision



Policy and strategies support the development of high quality and appropriately trained professionals in Special Education Needs.

## Theme 5: Programmes



Policy and strategies ensure that the education of persons, and in particular children, who are visually and hearing impaired, is delivered in the most appropriate languages and modes and means of communication for the individual, and in environments which maximize academic and social development.

## Theme 6: Stakeholder Involvement



Policy and strategies ensure the full involvement of families in all educational processes is outlined in legislation and policy.

## **Status of the Policy and Strategy**

The ownership of the policy and strategy belongs to the Department of Education and is effective from [date]. The policy and strategies serve as a guide for the Department of Education through the Special Education Unit in operationalising the duty of providing a quality and equitable education to all children. The policies and strategies are guidelines for executing general decisions in relation to the management and operations of special education as a sub-sector in the public education system. The Special Education Unit and Ministries such as the Health and Wellness, and Elderly Affairs, Youth and Sports Equity, Social Justice and Empowerment are expected to give regard to the policy and strategy in relation to dealing with special education needs and disabilities in the schools.

## **Implementation**

The implementation of the policy and strategy rests with the Department of Education and the Special Education Unit, which have a statutory obligation to provide resources, support, and services to children with SEND. Implementation is expected to be coordinated through the creation of an Inter-Ministerial Committee on SEND, which will incorporate the role and functions of the Ministries of the Health and Wellness, and Elderly Affairs; Youth and Sports; Equity, Social Justice and Empowerment, non-government organisations and the private sector as key partners.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Inter-Ministerial committee comprising the Department of Education, SEU, and the Ministries of the Health and Wellness, and Elderly Affairs; Youth and Sports; Equity, Social Justice and Empowerment, non-government organisations, and the private sector will regularly review the policy using the targets and outcomes set out in the section titled: *Strategies for Implementation*. Consequently, reviews should lead to modifications of the policies and strategies to ensure quality service delivery.

# SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION POLICY

## Access to Quality Inclusive Education

### Rationale

The *Salamanca Statement* (1994)<sup>4</sup>, established the concept of equitable considerations as follows:

*... schools should accommodate children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic, or other conditions. This should include disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from remote or nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic, or cultural minorities, and children from other disadvantaged or marginalised areas or groups. (p. 6)*

The Incheon Declaration – Education 2030 and Framework for Action (2015) underscores the imperative for states to ensure access to inclusive and equitable educational systems as its overarching goal, by:

*"...guaranteeing inclusive, equitable and quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all."*

Target 4.5 of the UN Strategic Developmental Goals, expects member countries to engage in efforts to: *"... eliminate gender disparities in education, and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and children in vulnerable situations."* The reform efforts for improvement in inclusive support and services require the singular commitment of the government of St. Lucia to evaluate and restructure their educational systems via legislative reform.

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<sup>4</sup> Undertaken in Salamanca Spain at the World Conference on Special Needs Education, Access and Quality (2004)

Access to quality inclusive education is essential for several reasons, grounded in both ethical considerations and practical benefits. Regardless of ability or disability, there must be a commitment to provide all students with access to quality inclusive education. The following provide the rationale for the need for inclusive education:

**Social Justice and Equity:**

Inclusive education is founded on the principle of social justice and equity, asserting that every student has the right to access a quality education. It promotes the idea that all students, regardless of their abilities or disabilities, should have equal opportunities for learning and personal development.

**Diversity Enriches Learning:**

Inclusive classrooms bring together students with diverse backgrounds, abilities, and experiences. This diversity enriches the learning environment by exposing students to different perspectives, fostering understanding, and preparing them for the real-world diversity they will encounter later in life.

**Fostering a Culture of Respect:**

Inclusive education helps cultivate a culture of respect, acceptance, and understanding among students. When children grow up learning and interacting with peers who have different abilities, they develop empathy, compassion, and a more inclusive worldview.

**Academic and Social Benefits for All:**

Research suggests that inclusive education can lead to academic and social benefits for all students. Students with disabilities benefit from exposure to grade-level curriculum and high expectations, while their peers without disabilities gain valuable social skills, increased tolerance, and enhanced problem-solving abilities.

**Preparation for the Real World:**

Inclusive education mirrors the diversity of the real world. By learning and collaborating in inclusive settings, students are better prepared for future workplaces and communities where individuals of varying abilities work and live together.

**Enhanced Self-Esteem and Self-Advocacy:**

Inclusive education can contribute to developing positive self-esteem and self-advocacy skills in students with disabilities. When students feel included and supported, they are more likely to develop a sense of belonging and confidence in their abilities.

**Compliance with Legal and Human Rights Standards:**

St. Lucia, as indicated earlier, has laws and policies that emphasize the right to inclusive education for students with disabilities. Inclusive education aligns with international human rights standards, emphasizing equal access to education for all individuals, regardless of disability.

**Reduced Stigmatization:**

Inclusive education helps reduce the stigmatization associated with disabilities. When students with disabilities are included in regular classrooms, it sends a powerful message that diversity is valued and that everyone has unique strengths and contributions.

**Cost-Effective Interventions:**

Research indicates that, in many cases, providing inclusive education is more cost-effective than segregating students into separate educational settings. Inclusive practices can lead to more efficient use of resources and personnel.

**Parental Involvement and Satisfaction:**

Inclusive education promotes parental involvement and satisfaction. When parents see their children learning alongside their peers and receiving appropriate support, it enhances their confidence in the educational system.

In summary, access to quality inclusive education is not only a matter of human rights but also contributes to creating a more inclusive, compassionate, and diverse society, with benefits that extend to all students, regardless of their abilities.

## **Access to Quality Inclusive Education: Policy Goal 1**

Based on the findings, the overall policy goal is presented along with five specific goals.

### **The Overall Policy Goal**

The Chief Education Officer shall provide access to quality, appropriate inclusive education at all levels for learners with SEND, and all vulnerable groups, with free and compulsory primary and secondary education in their communities with their peers, unless it is clearly demonstrated that the child's educational, welfare and social needs, may not be adequately met in a general education classroom.

**Policy Goal 1.1** Inclusion in general education will aim to address the underachievement of all vulnerable groups without discrimination based on disabilities, varying socioeconomic status, gender, indigenous origin, cultural identity, ethnicity, religion, language, and locale (urban, urban inner-city, rural, remote rural), and other learners in migrant, displaced, or refugee populations.

**Policy Goal 1.2** All learners will have access to quality and equitable, inclusive education with their peers in their communities and at all levels of education (Early Childhood, Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary), with free and compulsory primary and secondary education.

**Policy Goal 1.3** Early identification systems (EIS) shall be established, along with referral and assessment mechanisms to identify screening, placement, intervention, and support needs of learners at the earliest stage.



**Policy Goal 1.4** The Department of Education will collaborate with ministries responsible for Youth, Social Welfare, Health, and Gender Affairs, for example, and third sector organisations to establish a long-term multi-level policy framework for implementing quality, inclusive, and equitable education in schools.

**Policy Goal 1.5** Schools at all levels (Early Childhood, Primary, Secondary and Tertiary) will be equipped with the necessary human and material resources to implement inclusive education to support all learners.

**To achieve these Policy Goals, the following actions are recommended:**

1. Examine existing legislative and public policy documents to ensure inclusion and Special Education Needs are mandated to reflect non-discriminatory principles and approaches in access to education for all, based on the basic human rights to non-discriminatory, universal access to education.
2. Remove caveats that undermine the right of the child with special needs to an inclusive education and do not apply to the general population, such as, **“to the extent that resources permit, and it is considered practicable by the Chief Education Officer.”**
3. Ensure that ‘Inclusion’ and ‘Special Education Needs and Disability’ (SEND) are clearly defined and that all SEND-related terminologies are updated to reflect current usage.
4. Examine education policy to ensure that it aims to address the underachievement of all vulnerable groups within the country without discrimination based on disabilities, varying socioeconomic status, gender, cultural identity, ethnicity, indigenous origin, religion, language, locale (urban, urban inner-city, rural and remote rural), migrant, displaced and refugee children, and any other category of vulnerable groups in the country.

5. Ensure that gifted and talented children are included in the policy as having special educational needs and therefore require special education programmes tailored to meet their needs, thereby maximising their potential.
6. The policy includes provision for transportation for learners with limited or no access to service because of their remote geographic location.
7. All categories of disability are included to ensure that no category of disability is excluded, in that regard a:

Child with a disability means a child evaluated as having an intellectual disability, a hearing impairment (including deafness), a speech or language impairment, a visual impairment (including blindness), a serious emotional disturbance (referred to in this part as “emotional disturbance”), an orthopaedic impairment, autism, traumatic brain injury, an other health impairment, a specific learning disability, deaf-blindness, or multiple disabilities, and who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services<sup>5</sup>.

Table 1: Categories of Disability and Description

Category	Description
<b>Autism Spectrum Disorder(ASD)</b>	Autism spectrum disorder is a lifelong developmental disability that includes autistic disorder, Asperger's syndrome, and other pervasive developmental disorders, as described in the current version of the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. The disability is generally evident before three years of age and significantly affects verbal, nonverbal, or pragmatic communication and social interaction skills and results in an adverse effect on the student's educational performance.

<sup>5</sup> <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/b/a/300.8>

Category	Description
<b>Blind or Low Vision (BLV)</b>	Blind or low vision, which may be referred to as a visual impairment, means a disability that even with best correction affects the student's ability to use vision for learning, which adversely affects the student's educational performance. The term includes a reduced ability or a complete inability to utilize the visual system to acquire information; and may include or be limited to a reduction in field of vision.
<b>Intellectual Disability (ID)</b>	An intellectual disability is manifested during the developmental period. It is characterized by significant limitations in intellectual functioning and it is demonstrated through limitations in adaptive behavior and adversely affects educational performance.
<b>Deaf or Hard of Hearing (DHH)</b>	Deaf or hard of hearing, which may be referred to as a hearing impairment, means a disability that, with or without amplification, adversely affects the student's ability to use hearing for developing language and learning; educational performance; and developmental progress. The hearing loss may be permanent or fluctuating; mild to profound; or unilateral or bilateral. Students who are deaf or hard of hearing may use spoken language, sign language, or a combination of spoken language and signed systems.
<b>Deaf-Blind (DB)</b>	Deaf-blind, which may be referred to as dual sensory impaired, means a disability that is a concomitant hearing and vision loss or reduction in functional hearing and vision capacity. Deaf-blind causes significant communication and adaptive behavior deficits; adversely affects the student's educational performance; and cannot be accommodated by use of a program or service designed solely for students who are deaf or hard of hearing; or blind or have low vision.
<b>Developmental Delay (DD)</b>	Developmental delay is a disability category solely for students who are at least three years of age and less than nine years of age. Developmental delay means a delay of either two standard deviations below the mean in one of the following developmental areas or one and one-half standard deviations below the mean in any two of the following developmental areas: gross or fine motor development, cognitive development, receptive or expressive language development, social or emotional development, and self-help or other adaptive development.
<b>Emotional Disability (ED)</b>	Emotional disability means an inability to learn or progress that cannot be explained by cognitive, sensory, or health factors. The student exhibits one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects educational performance: a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems, a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression, an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships,

Category	Description
	inappropriate behaviors or feelings under normal circumstances, or episodes of psychosis.
<b>Language or Speech Impairment (LSI)</b>	A language or speech impairment is characterized by one of the following impairments that adversely affects the student's educational performance: language impairments in the comprehension or expression of spoken or written language resulting from organic or nonorganic causes that are non maturational in nature. Language impairments affect the student's primary language systems, in one or more of the following components: word retrieval, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics. Speech impairments that may include fluency, articulation, and voice disorders in the student's speaking behavior in more than one speaking task that are non maturational in nature, including impairments that are the result of a deficiency of structure and function of the oral peripheral mechanism.
<b>Multiple Disabilities (MD)</b>	Multiple disabilities means coexisting disabilities, one of which must be a significant cognitive disability. The coexisting disabilities are lifelong and interfere with independent functioning, and it is difficult to determine which disability most adversely affects educational performance. The term does not include deaf-blind.
<b>Other Health Impairment (OHI)</b>	Other health impairment means having limited strength, vitality, or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment that is due to chronic or acute health problems, such as: asthma, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder; diabetes; epilepsy; a heart condition; hemophilia; lead poisoning; leukemia; nephritis; rheumatic fever; sickle cell anemia; and Tourette syndrome; and adversely affects a student's educational performance.
<b>Orthopedic Impairment (OI)</b>	An orthopedic impairment is a severe physically disabling condition that adversely affects educational performance. The term may include impairments caused by any of the following: a congenital anomaly; a disease, such as: poliomyelitis, or bone tuberculosis; other causes, such as: cerebral palsy; amputations; or fractures or burns that cause contractures.
<b>Specific Learning Disability (SLD)</b>	Specific learning disability means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that adversely affect the student's educational performance, including conditions referred to, or previously referred to, as perceptual handicaps, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia.
<b>Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)</b>	A traumatic brain injury is an acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, that adversely affects a student's

Category	Description
	educational performance. The term applies to open or closed head injuries resulting in impairments in one or more areas, such as the following: cognition, language, memory, attention, reasoning, abstract thinking, judgment, problem solving, sensory, perceptual and motor abilities, psychosocial behavior, physical functions, information processing, and speech. The term does not apply to brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative, or induced by birth trauma.

8. Outline in policy, Early Identification Systems (EIS), and assessment mechanisms to identify the screening, placement, intervention, and support needs of learners at the earliest stage.
9. Update existing draft policy to implement quality inclusive education, and ensure policy is endorsed and validated by stakeholders, and legislated for enactment.
10. Policy describes an effective framework of support for schools to implement equitable and inclusive education.
11. Design a reliable and confidential data system for monitoring SEND prevalence, educational planning targets, and cross-sectoral targets which will enable the measurement of gains based on set targets.
12. Design the data-capture and dissemination process to allow the approved involvement of key sector partners and government ministries providing shared services to access and populate the data system.
13. Collaborate with professionals who conduct assessments to evaluate the appropriateness of instruments used to diagnose disabilities and giftedness to ensure that they are culturally relevant, valid, and reliable for the intended purpose.
14. Engage in cross-disciplinary team reviews to standardise assessment instruments to

ensure the best fit for use in St. Lucia.

## **Organisational Structures**

### **Rationale**

Stakeholder groups in St Lucia were unified in their desire for established pathways and processes and a coordinated approach to supporting students with SEND. Specifically, they pointed to the need for the Department of Education to become more actively involved in policy directives to ensure that the services for students with SEN are provided and their special needs are addressed and for the DOE assessment team to be fully staffed to deal with the timely assessment of students referred. The purpose of the organizational structure for the special education unit (SEU) at the strategic and operational levels in the DOE is to ensure that all students with special education needs and disabilities (SEND) receive the services and support they need to succeed in school. Specifically, the structure seeks to ensure:

- Definition of roles and responsibilities.
- Promotion of collaboration, cooperation, and open communication.
- A clear framework for decision-making and how to allocate resources and support the staff of the SEU.
- Compliance with the Education Act (2020) and other rights-based legislation to ensure that all requirements are met.
- Improvement in student outcomes.
- Provision of support and resources for schools and teachers.
- The creation of a positive and inclusive school culture in the public education system.

The organisational structure described in this policy is underpinned by the legal and philosophical principles of the rights of children and the centrality of educating all children. The aim is to ensure that the systems of oversight to govern the successful undertaking of the SEND sub-sector in St Lucia include fairness, accountability, transparency in their dealings, inclusion in their structure, and accessibility to the public.

Notably, the organizational structure emphasises the strategic implementation and monitoring of policy priorities through collaboration and cooperation within the DOE and in conjunction with other Ministries such as Health and Wellness and Elderly Affairs; Youth and Sports, Equity, Social Justice and Empowerment, as well as non-government organisations and the private sector. The complex interplay between the students' needs and the social and economic structure warrants a centrally collaborative and cooperative framework to ensure optimal academic and social benefits to *all* learners. This relies on joint planning and coordination of the layers of service delivery and adherence to relevant policy priorities reinforced by standards to evaluate access, appropriateness, relevance, and availability to ensure the integrity of the service systems.

### ***Monitoring and Evaluation***

Successful implementation of the policy priorities requires monitoring structures that will identify and address inequities in the system, implement mechanisms to evaluate the effectiveness, quality, and demand for services, establish common cross-sector standards, and ensure the broad-scale involvement of stakeholders in evaluating service quality. Specifically, establishing an inter-ministerial committee or council is paramount for enforcing the protection and promotion of the rights of children with special education needs and disabilities. The responsibilities of the inter-ministerial committee are to monitor the provision of services, as well as the treatment of fiscal and policy commitments to ensure fair and equitable practices. This is a data-driven process that relies on data collection and analysis as the basis for effective monitoring and evaluation. Prevalence data on childhood poverty, disability, types of special education needs, and other developmental risk factors should be accessible from the various government entities that house these data sets. Organizational arrangements to facilitate access to information, evaluation, and data-sharing are important for the forecasting of fiscal planning for school improvement plans, , human resources, and service provision for long-term support of inclusive education. Structures to support flexible cross-sectoral



arrangements are vital to the efficiency and effectiveness of a coordinated monitoring system.

The dynamics of education and the research-based evolution in the field of special education, as well as the range of specialized skills required for diagnostic and therapeutic services, demand a level of alertness in the system to ensure consistency in service standards. Service sectors should adhere to similar expectations across all sectors of service. Common goals and common commitments to services should be the hallmark of an integrated and collaborative system.

Once developed, standards for the provision of services and the organization of service systems should be monitored to assess the relevance of equity and access to services and support provided. Monitoring should focus on whether systems are inherently promoting and maintaining prohibitive factors and biases or inequitable distribution and provision of resources. The quality of services and support and the extent to which the implementation goals are served should be presented, evaluated, and reported with integrity through monitoring and reporting structures. The DOE will then be guided in discharging constitutional and legislative commitments with fidelity.

## Organisational Structures: Policy Goal 2

The overall policy goal is presented along with four specific goals.

### The Overall Goal

#### Organisational Structures

The Department of Education will establish organizational structures and systems to maintain, strengthen, and oversee the effective implementation and preservation of related legislation and policies for inclusion and equity in education.

- Policy Goal 2.1** The roles and responsibilities of the Department of Education, Ministries responsible for Health, Youth, Gender Affairs and Social Welfare, and other agencies will be clearly defined, and inter-ministerial /cross sectoral collaboration established to support the SEU to effectively implement inclusive education.
- Policy Goal 2.2** The operational remit, roles, and function of the Special Education Unit will be clearly outlined to ensure that assessment and intervention reach *all* students requiring services at each level of the education system.
- Policy Goal 2.3** The Department of Education will provide long-term national-level financial support and resources linked to system-wide Inclusive Education strategies, and systems will be established to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and quality of inclusive education provided.
- Policy Goal 2.4** Monitoring procedures will be established to ensure that inequalities in access to educational resources and services nationally and at the district level are addressed at the organisational level.

**To achieve these Policy Goals, the following actions are recommended:**

1. Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the Ministries of Education, Health, Gender Affairs, Youth, and Social Welfare, and other Ministries and Agencies (Inter-Ministerial/Cross Sectoral).
2. Strengthen the Special Education Unit in the Department of Education with qualified *Education Officers in SEND and specialists in Behaviour, Occupational and Physical Therapy, Instructional Intervention, and Speech and Language Pathology*. In addition, appropriate diagnostics assessments should be provided.
3. Describe clear mechanisms for financing quality inclusive education and ensure that national-level inclusive education strategies are linked to long-term financial support through an established budget line item in the Department of Education budget and that systems are in place to evaluate effectiveness and quality.
4. Develop funding policies and structures that provide flexible resourcing systems that promote inclusion.
5. Establish or strengthen monitoring bodies and procedures to ensure that inequalities in access to educational resources and services nationally are addressed at the organisational level.
6. Establish an oversight body or strengthen existing oversight bodies to support the implementation and preservation of the tenets related to inclusive educational services and provision.
7. Design and implement financing mechanisms to support the participation of vulnerable children which should involve an inter-ministerial collaboration among other stakeholders like NGOs and the Third sector.

## **Infrastructural Provisions and Support Mechanisms**

### **Rationale**

The review of special education services provision (See Progress Report, April 2023) showed that stakeholders believed that there were multiple and overlapping gaps in the provision of equipment, tools, and learning materials for teachers, caregivers/parents, and students. The primary reason is the lack of financing and funding for these resources to support teaching and learning. Adequate infrastructure, support, and services are prerequisites for ensuring equity in education for children with special educational needs and disabilities. The aim is to provide all children, regardless of abilities, opportunities for access without discrimination or disadvantage. Essentially, the lack of appropriate resources and services is only a partial or limited fulfillment of the entailment of the right to an education. Equitable provisions for educational purposes, therefore, may be evaluated according to the extent to which materials, resources, and services are available, accessible, and distributed. This aspect of the policy aims to define educational arrangements, infrastructural provisions, support mechanisms, resources, materials, and systems of support to meet the educational, developmental, social, and economic needs of learners.

### ***Infrastructural Provisions***

Universal design, as a model for construction, focuses on flexible, accessible, simple, and practical designs. Universal design for learning environments includes considerations for infrastructural features for easy access to enter and navigate the built environment with adequate layout of the learning space to facilitate unencumbered movement for access to and transitioning within the space for classroom and all other school-related activities.

The Policy considerations for infrastructural provisions ensure that where school buildings are limited in accommodation, infrastructural features such as access ramps, rails, entry and exit points, restroom support rails, lowered basins, water coolers, and classroom lab

tables, designated parking areas for pick up and drop off are all part of the expectations for accessibility features. Considerations in the built environment should also include appropriate systems for lighting, sound, and ventilation, as well as the types of paints and materials used.

### ***Support Mechanisms***

Learning challenges in the classroom may be created and reinforced by barriers in communication. The policy provisions indicate purposeful attention to the socio-cultural, linguistic experiences and backgrounds of the learner. Further, the policy seeks to ensure that strategic funding approaches are used to finance and facilitate the delivery of education in appropriate language and communication modes, as well as suitable adaptations to learning material and resources.

Instruction should be provided in the formal language of instruction, with flexibility and modification in how instruction is delivered to ensure learning is reinforced in the home language, as the case warrants. Where other language modalities, such as sign language systems are used, allowance should be made for interpreters or the provision of cultural facilitators. Modified learning materials, such as large print, braille, or digital modes of alternative or augmented communication to optimize learning opportunities and maximize the potential of the learners to succeed, must be provided.

The overall policy goal is presented along with two specific goals.

### **The Overall Goal**

The Government of St. Lucia through the Department of Education will establish structures and systems to provide reasonable accommodations in the form of adaptations, resources, and support to optimise learning opportunities and outcomes for learners with SEND in an inclusive environment.

**Policy Goal 3.1** The Department of Education will provide reasonable accommodation of the individual’s requirements to maximise potential.

**Policy Goal 3.2** The capacity of all schools will be increased to meet a greater diversity of educational needs so that learners may be supported within their local communities.

**To achieve these Policy Goals, the following actions are recommended:**

1. Improve current infrastructural provisions and systems of support to ensure that the educational structures are easily accessible and systems of support are consistent with the needs of all learners.
2. Define the responsibilities and commitment of The Department of Education to provide resources, services, and support to facilitate positive learning outcomes for all learners.
3. Ensure that the built environment is designed for universal and inclusive access, is unencumbered, and equipped with accessibility features (ramps, rails, textured surfaces, etc.) to aid ease of access and mobility and promote safety and convenience in accessing amenities.
4. Include and define universal building standards for infrastructure and infrastructural modifications, repurposing, or renovation to include accessible toilets with sanitation and hygiene considerations, lowered water fountains and laboratory tables, and recreational spaces and school cafeterias and playgrounds outfitted with accessibility features to include entry and exit points of buildings.

5. Create frameworks to provide relevant, appropriate, and enriching support systems to enhance the learner's holistic development.
6. Ensure that the provision of services and support are consistent with recommendations of the formal evaluation process and SEND eligibility criteria and conditions set out in the Education Act.
7. Define and outline in policy reasonable accommodations that are available, relevant, appropriate, safe, and consistent with the needs of the learner.
8. Outline the requirements for general education schools to have so they can accommodate a diverse learner population to include learners with SEND.
9. Review curricula at all levels and make modifications and adaptations, and ensure that instructional resources address cultural and learning diversity.
10. Establish in-house assessment services within the Department of Education to diagnose SEND, which should be accessible to all parents/guardians free of cost and be done in a timely manner to facilitate access to the intervention process at the earliest possible time.
11. Outline clear steps to be taken by parents/guardians to address no-action, inappropriate action, failure to assess or implement agreed commitments in educational learning plans, or other recommendations for the learner's benefit.

## **Human Resource Provisions**

### **Rationale**

Currently, the education system in Saint Lucia is unable to adequately serve the needs of the SEN population because of several recorded gaps in terms of human resource provisions, which hinder efforts at establishing a truly inclusive system.

The CARICOM HRD 2030 Strategy policy strategies of *access and participation, equity, quality, and relevance* are consistent with the expectations for the representation of qualified professionals in the field, including persons with disabilities, as role models. In fact, the regional assessment of qualified teachers for SEND indicated comparatively low numbers of special educators to general educators. Consequently, there exists a critical need for an education system that is equipped with qualified educators and other allied professionals with the specialized skills to serve the special education population in Saint Lucia.

### **Human Resource Provisions: Policy Goals**

The overall policy goal is presented along with six specific goals.

#### **The Overall Goal**

The Government of Saint Lucia will undertake appropriate measures to improve the quantity and quality of teachers, educational leaders, teacher educators, and specialists who support school communities in implementing inclusive education.



**Policy Goal 3.1** The Department of Education will provide appropriately trained teachers who are qualified to teach learners with SEND in inclusive classrooms.

**Policy Goal 3.2** The Department of Education will recruit teaching staff from diverse backgrounds, including teachers with disabilities.

**Policy Goal 3.3** Principals and teaching staff will be trained to meet the diverse educational needs of learners.

**Policy Goal 3.4** Training pathways will be outlined to prepare specialists who support school communities to implement inclusive education, thereby ensuring that members of the Multi-Disciplinary/Inter-Disciplinary Teams are qualified.

**Policy Goal 3.5** The Department of Teacher Education and Educational Leadership (DTEEL) (SALCC) will offer compulsory SEND courses for all pre-service teachers to prepare them to teach all learners.

**Policy Goal 3.6** The Special Education Unit (SEU) in the Department of Education will be staffed with Education Officers qualified in SEND.

**To achieve these Policy Goals, the following actions are recommended:**

1. Establish a bachelor's degree as the minimum qualification for special education certification and practice.
2. Modify, where necessary, policy to guide teacher training institutions to offer compulsory SEND courses for all pre-service teachers to prepare them to teach all

learners in an inclusive classroom and provide the option for pre-service teachers to major in Inclusive and Special Education.

3. Provide continuous pre-service training to ensure that all pre-service general educators are prepared to teach using inclusive approaches and strategies.
4. Establish guidelines for continuous professional development for general education teachers to sensitise them about the nature and needs of children with disabilities and equip them with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and strategies to teach all learners in an inclusive classroom.
5. Recruit teaching staff from diverse backgrounds, including teachers with disabilities.
6. Make provisions for recruitment and training where gaps exist in the available cohorts of qualified teachers in SEND.
7. Make provision for special education teacher training represented in strategic development plans and in fiscal commitments.
8. Provide continuous capacity-building to sensitise general educators about the nature and needs of learners with disabilities and equip them with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, strategies and approaches in inclusive education.
9. Outline the recruitment of, and training pathways for specialists who support school communities to implement inclusive education, including members of a multi-disciplinary team to provide assessment, plan interventions, and assist in the delivery and supervision of the execution of such plans at the home and school levels.

10. The Special Education Unit of the Department of Education should be equipped with qualified multi-disciplinary staff in various areas of SEND expertise, including diagnostic and support services.
11. Increase and rectify the underrepresentation of special educators in the education system to support a high-quality SEND/inclusive education system.
12. The Department of Education and other relevant capacity-building professional development bodies shall provide opportunities for continuous professional development, training, and capacity building for supervisory teams, educational leaders, and support staff across education sectors.
13. Provide continuous capacity-building training for principals and other school leaders in the effective management of inclusive education systems.
14. Make provisions for highly qualified special education teams with varying specializations in the Ministries of Education to monitor the provision of inclusive and special education for quality outcomes.
15. Create a Memoranda of Understanding and other instruments and opportunities for cross-sectoral collaboration to allow shared services for specializations not represented in the education sector.
16. Decentralise services from existing solely in major towns to increase availability and access for people who live in remote rural areas.

# Programmes

## Rationale

The provision of programmes for students in special education is grounded in various rationales that emphasize the importance of meeting the unique needs of students with disabilities. These rationales encompass ethical, educational, and societal considerations. A list of key reasons supporting the provision of special education programmes is as follows:

- 1. Equal Educational Opportunities:**
  - Special education programs aim to provide students with SEND equal access to quality education. This aligns with the principle of equal opportunities, ensuring that all students have the chance to reach their full potential, regardless of their abilities or challenges.
- 2. Individualized Support:**
  - Students with SEND often require individualized support tailored to their specific needs. Special education programmes are designed to offer personalized strategies, accommodations, and interventions to address the diverse learning requirements of each student.
- 3. Legal and Regulatory Compliance:**
  - The government of St. Lucia has laws and regulations mandating the provision of special education services. These legal frameworks emphasize the right of students with disabilities to receive a free and appropriate public education.
- 4. Promotion of Inclusive Practices:**
  - Special education programmes contribute to the promotion of inclusive practices within educational settings. By acknowledging and addressing the diverse needs of all students, these programmes foster an inclusive culture that values diversity and ensures that every student is welcomed and supported.

#### 5. **Development of Life Skills:**

- Special education programmes often include a focus on the development of life skills that are essential for independent living and functioning within the community. These skills may include communication, socialization, self-advocacy, and daily living skills.

#### 6. **Preparation for Future Employment:**

- Special education programmes aim to prepare students with SEND for future employment. This involves providing relevant skills, vocational training, and transition planning to enhance their ability to participate in the workforce.

#### 7. **Enhanced Academic Achievement:**

- With tailored instructional approaches and interventions, special education programmes can contribute to improved academic achievement for students with SEND. Addressing specific learning needs can lead to better outcomes in terms of literacy, numeracy, and overall educational progress.

#### 8. **Social and Emotional Development:**

- Special education programmes recognise the importance of addressing the social and emotional development of students with SEND. By fostering a positive and supportive environment, these programmes contribute to the overall well-being of students and their ability to build meaningful relationships.

#### 9. **Support for Families:**

- Special education programmes provide support not only to students but also to their families. By collaborating with parents and caregivers, these programmes create a partnership that extends beyond the classroom, facilitating a holistic approach to the child's development and education.

#### 10. **Cultural Competence and Diversity:**

- Special education programmes contribute to building cultural competence and recognizing the diversity of learners. This includes understanding and respecting the cultural backgrounds, languages, and unique needs of students with disabilities.

In summary, the provision of special education programmes is essential for promoting equity, inclusivity, and the holistic development of students with SEND, ensuring that they have the support and resources needed to succeed in education and beyond.

### **Policy Goal 5: Programmes**

The overall policy goal is presented along with six specific goals.

### **The Overall Goal**

The Chief Education Officer will institute programmes promoting equity and quality inclusive education that will ensure that the varying needs of learners will be facilitated through curricular accommodations, modifications and adaptations, and adaptive and assistive technology which will allow all children to optimise their potential.

- Policy Goal 5.1** The Department of Education will facilitate the learning of braille, alternative script, augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication (sign language) orientation and mobility skills, and facilitating peer support and mentoring in schools.
- Policy Goal 5.2** The Department of Education will provide curricula that are adapted and modified for use with learners with SEND who are in inclusive and special education classrooms.
- Policy Goal 5.3** A range of placement options will be provided in the Least Restrictive Environment/Most suitable educational arrangement.
- Policy Goal 5.4** A mechanism will be developed to guide the transition across phases and levels of education.
- Policy Goal 5.5** Career counsellors and transition officers will be provided alongside school personnel to support learners and employers regarding school-to-work transition, training, and employment possibilities.
- Policy Goal 5.6** Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approaches will be outlined in School Strategic Plans to show how UDL will be used to provide a variety of teaching methods that give all learners equal opportunities to succeed.

**To achieve these Policy Goals, the following actions are recommended:**

1. Institute the learning and use of braille, alternative script, augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication (sign language), and orientation and mobility skills.
2. Provide formal and informal courses in Braille and sign language systems, as well as assistive and adaptive technology in training activities for pre-service and in-service teachers.
3. Provide budgetary commitment to support the purchase and maintenance of assistive and adaptive technology.
4. Provide programmes that are gender sensitive and require teachers to engage in gender-responsive teaching.
5. Design or modify materials that support the curriculum are designed for gender-responsive teaching and are free of and/or challenge gender stereotypes.
6. Ensure curriculum is adapted and modified to meet the diverse educational needs of learners with SEND.
7. Institute the development and mandatory use of an Individualised Education Programme (IEP) for all learners with SEND who are placed in the Least Restrictive/Most Suitable Environment.
8. Provide a range of placement options in the Least Restrictive/ Environment with appropriate programmes based on an Individualised Programme Plan, which is focused on the highest quality instructional goals and objectives.

9. Describe clear approaches for adopting Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Differentiated Instruction (DI) in curriculum implementation, to provide individualised opportunities to maximise each learner’s potential.
10. Include career counsellors and transition officers among school personnel to support learners and employers in school-to-work transition, training, and employment possibilities.
11. Document the process to support the transition from grade to grade, level to level, and school exit.
12. Provide curricula focusing on goal-oriented and outcomes-based instruction and readiness for post-secondary education, career preparation, and employment.
13. Expand career and vocational programmes to facilitate learners with SEND, to be arranged and delivered with gender-sensitivity and non-discriminatory practices.
14. Expand matriculation procedures to include learners with SEND who have met matriculation requirements on an equal basis as their peers for post-secondary, vocational, and higher education programmes.
15. Institute clear instructions for non-discriminatory and rights-based provision for learners with SEND in post-secondary, vocational, and higher education programmes.



# Stakeholder Involvement

## Rationale

For access to quality inclusive education to be achieved for students with SEND, the participation of a wide cross-section of stakeholders is of paramount importance. The culture of SEND inclusivity in St. Lucia is supported primarily by ministries responsible for education, health, and social. Additionally, there must be buy-in from parents, teachers, and the wider society. Stakeholders believed that more effort is necessary to sensitise the nation about SEN. They indicated that government agencies need to provide greater support and that the necessary policies should be put in place to guarantee the rights of students with SEN to an appropriate, quality inclusive education at all levels of the education system. They advocated for more qualified special educators and other specialists such as speech and language pathologists and occupational therapists, improvement in the capacity of the MDT to assess students, and to provide improved support to the general education schools that facilitate the inclusion of students with SEN.

## Policy Goals

The overall policy goal is presented along with three specific goals.

### The Overall Goal

The Department of Education will establish a framework that will identify stakeholders and the role they will play and outline strategies to engage them to support the implementation of special and inclusive education.

**Policy Goal 6.1** Outline the full involvement of families in all educational processes and actions for inclusive education.

**Policy Goal 6.2** Outline the strategies for awareness-raising with all stakeholders in inclusive education.

**Policy Goal 6.3** Outline strategies for the involvement of the third sector and international organisations.

**To achieve these Policy Goals, the following actions are recommended:**

1. Clearly outline the full involvement of parents/guardians and state how they will be involved in the process of referral, assessment, programme planning, and intervention.
2. Establish guidelines for supporting parental interaction and communication with professionals.
3. Outline how families will be involved in the process of evaluating the quality of services provided.
4. Outline the types of support available for families to recognise and understand the needs of their child with SEND.
5. Document clear strategies for awareness-raising with all stakeholders on inclusive education.
6. Document the Involvement of the third sector and international organisations.
7. Create and implement policies that ensure the support of the focal oversight body with responsibility for implementing inclusive education and enforcing the national agenda for inclusion.

8. Create a fair and balanced representation of a cross-section of stakeholders to ensure compliance with national legislative commitment to inclusion and a collaborative approach for quality monitoring activities.
9. Establish clear goals, objectives, and policy-related concerns for effective and efficient systems of inclusive and special education services.
10. Outline the purpose of stakeholder relationships and partnerships and the intended monitoring agenda to promote and facilitate high-quality inclusive and special education.
11. Provide guidelines for stakeholder contribution of time, expertise, technical skills, cash, kind, or other forms of support.
12. Clearly state the terms and expectations for stakeholders and the period of their involvement.
13. Outline processes for gathering, interpreting, analysing, and disseminating reports to ensure the trustworthiness of information to be disseminated, including the execution of pledges, and educational and policy commitments.

# SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION STRATEGY

## Strategies for Access to Quality Inclusive Education

### The Overall Goal

The Chief Education Officer shall provide access to quality, appropriate inclusive education at all levels for learners with SEND, and all vulnerable groups, with free and compulsory primary and secondary education in their communities with their peers, unless it is clearly demonstrated that the child's educational, welfare and social needs, may not be adequately met in a general education classroom.

### Cross-cutting Policy Goals 1.1 and 1.2

**Policy Goal 1.1** Inclusion in education will aim to address the underachievement of all vulnerable groups without discrimination based on disabilities, varying socioeconomic status, gender, indigenous origin, cultural identity, ethnicity, religion, language, and locale (urban, urban inner-city, rural, remote rural).

**Policy Goal 1.2** All learners will have access to quality and equitable inclusive education with their peers in their communities, and at all levels of education (Early Childhood, Primary, Secondary and Tertiary), with free and compulsory primary and secondary education.

## Strategies to Achieve Policy Goals 1.1 and 1.2

Targets	Outcomes	Action	Responsible MDA and other Stakeholders
<p>Within 1 – 2 years, the Education Act will be amended to include a definition of inclusive and special education, and will outline the provisions for SEND and all vulnerable groups in an inclusive environment with free and compulsory primary and secondary education.</p>	<p>Education Act defines inclusive education and provides access for all learners with SEND and all who are vulnerable under the Act, and which stipulates that every effort must be made that they are educated with their peers and in their communities with free and compulsory primary and secondary education.</p>	<p>Review and revise existing legislation and policy which may be in draft, may have gaps, or may be non-existent.</p> <p>Examine existing legislative and public policy documents to ensure Inclusion and Special Education Needs are defined and mandated to reflect non-discriminatory principles and approaches in access to education for all, based on the basic human rights to non-discriminatory principles and universal access to education.</p> <p>Update existing draft policy to implement quality inclusive education and ensure the policy is endorsed and validated by stakeholders and legislated for enactment.</p>	<p>Department of Education, Innovation and Gender Relations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Senior Executives, including the Permanent Secretary, the Chief Education Officer</li> <li>- Officer(s) responsible for SEND in the Ministry of Education (Unit)</li> <li>- Legal officers</li> <li>- Ministries responsible for health, social welfare, and youth</li> <li>- Representatives of other stakeholders (e.g., parents, teachers, principals, learners, SEND activists, local, regional, and international agencies, NGO’s, and private sector)</li> <li>- Persons with disabilities</li> </ul>
	<p>Potential barriers to access in existing policy and</p>	<p>Remove caveats that undermine the right of the learner with special needs</p>	<p>Department of Education</p>

Targets	Outcomes	Action	Responsible MDA and other Stakeholders
	<p>legislation reviewed and revised to guarantee access and equity in provisions for all learners.</p>	<p>to an inclusive education and do not apply to the general population, such as seen in the Education Act 1999 and amended in 2005 for Special Education,</p> <p><b>“to the extent that resources permit and it is considered practicable by the Chief Education Officer.....”</b></p> <p>Articulate a commitment to identify and address barriers to access, participation, and equity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Senior Executives including the Permanent Secretary, the Chief Education Officer</li> <li>- Officer(s) responsible for SEND</li> <li>- Legal officers</li> </ul>
	<p>Categories of disability are identified and defined and are included in the Education Act</p>	<p>Clearly define “inclusion”, and “special education needs and disabilities” (SEND), and update all SEND related terminologies to reflect current usage.</p> <p>Specify all categories of disability and include in policy all categories for SEND as outlined in The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). Include the Gifted and Talented and all vulnerable groups identified within the country to ensure that no learner is excluded under each country’s Education Act.</p>	<p>Department of Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Senior Executives</li> <li>- Officer(s) responsible for SEND</li> <li>- Legal officers</li> </ul>

Targets	Outcomes	Action	Responsible MDA and other Stakeholders
	<p>Education Act includes the definition of all vulnerable groups in the country.</p> <p>Inclusion of vulnerable groups in legislation and policy such as, refugees, persons in remote rural communities, persons from the lower SES strata, and persons whose first language is French Creole.</p>	<p><a href="https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/b/a/300.8">https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/b/a/300.8</a></p> <p>Establish a Multi-disciplinary team of experts to collaborate and identify and define all vulnerable groups within the country.</p> <p>Examine education policy to ensure that it aims to address underachievement of all vulnerable groups within the country without discrimination based on disabilities, varying socioeconomic status, gender, migrant, displaced or refugee status, cultural identity, ethnicity, religion, language, locale (urban, urban inner-city, rural, remote rural), migrant, displaced and refugee children, and any other category of vulnerable groups in the country.</p> <p>Include in the policy, provisions for learners who are gifted and talented as having special educational needs and therefore require special education programmes tailored to meet their needs, thereby maximising their potential.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Department of Education in collaboration with Ministries responsible for social welfare, youth, gender, and health.</li> <li>- Advocacy groups</li> <li>- Persons with disabilities</li> </ul>

## Cross-cutting Policy Goals 1.3, 1.4 and 1.5

- Policy Goal 1.3** Early identification systems (EIS) shall be established, along with referral and assessment mechanisms to identify screening, placement, intervention, and support needs of learners at the earliest stage.
- Policy Goal 1.4** The Department of Education will collaborate with ministries responsible for Youth, Social Welfare, Health, and Gender Affairs, for example, and third sector organisations to establish a long-term multi-level policy framework for implementing quality, inclusive and equitable education in schools.
- Policy Goal 1.5** Schools at all levels (Early Childhood, Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary) will be equipped with the necessary human and material resources to implement inclusive education to support all learners.

## Strategies to Achieve Policy Goals 1.3, 1.4 and 1.5

Targets	Outcomes	Action	Responsible MDA and other Stakeholders
Within 3 - 5 years an Early Identification System (EIS) and assessment mechanisms are in place for early	Policy describes an effective EIS and the assessment strategies to be used to determine SEND and programme development.	Outline in policy, the design of an Early Identification System (EIS) and assessment mechanisms to identify learners' screening, placement, intervention, and support needs at the earliest stage.  Establish School-Based Teams (SBT) to initiate the referral process, review cases	Department of Education - Senior Executives, including the Permanent Secretary, the Chief Education Officer



Targets	Outcomes	Action	Responsible MDA and other Stakeholders
<p>detection of SEND and for intervention programme development.</p>		<p>and attempt interventions prior to making referrals to the Special Education Unit</p> <p>Establish a special educator post in each district with the responsibility for coordinating SEND in the Districts. They will review cases and offer support to SBT with the initial assessment and intervention prior to making referral to the Special Education Unit.</p> <p>Design a referral system as a component of the EIS.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Officer(s) responsible for SEND</li> <li>- Ministries responsible for Health, Social Welfare, Gender Affairs and Youth</li> <li>- Members of a Multidisciplinary/Inter-disciplinary team</li> <li>- Advocacy groups</li> </ul>
	<p>Policy indicates that instruments used for diagnosis of SEND are culturally relevant and standardised for use in the region and St. Lucia in particular.</p>	<p>Collaborate with professionals who conduct assessments regionally to evaluate the appropriateness of instruments used to diagnose disabilities and giftedness to ensure that they are culturally relevant, valid, and reliable for the intended purpose.</p> <p>Design and standardise instruments in instances where none exist, or those being used are deemed by professionals conducting SEND assessments, to be unfit for use in St. Lucia.</p>	

Targets	Outcomes	Action	Responsible MDA and other Stakeholders
	<p>Policy describes how the data from the EIS will be used to indicate incidence and prevalence of different types of disabilities and to assist in setting targets and support for groups of learners with SEND.</p>	<p>Design a reliable and confidential data system for monitoring SEND prevalence, educational planning targets, and cross-sectoral targets, which will enable the measurement of gains based on set targets.</p> <p>Design the data-capture and dissemination process to allow the approved involvement of key sector-partners and government ministries providing shared services to access and populate the data system.</p>	
<p>Within 3 – 5 years, a multi-level policy framework is designed and in place to guide the development and sustainability of quality education that is universal and inclusive in all schools.</p>	<p>The policy describes an effective framework of support for schools to implement inclusive education at all levels.</p>	<p>Examine the current structure of school services to ensure that the design facilitates the education of all children at all levels (ECE, Primary, Secondary, tertiary).</p> <p>Conduct an analysis to identify the needs at each level of the education system to facilitate inclusive education.</p> <p>Specify the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders in the implementation and maintenance of SEND programmes, and for all vulnerable populations of learners.</p>	<p>Department of Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Senior Executives, including the Permanent Secretary, the Chief Education Officer</li> <li>- Officer(s) responsible for SEND in the Department of Education</li> <li>- Legal officers</li> <li>- Ministry of Finance</li> <li>- Ministries responsible for health, gender</li> </ul>

Targets	Outcomes	Action	Responsible MDA and other Stakeholders
		<p>Provide schools at all levels (Nursery, Early Childhood, Primary, Secondary, tertiary) with policy guidelines and support to implement inclusive education.</p> <p>Include in policy, provision for transportation for those learners who have limited or no access to service because of their remote geographic location.</p> <p>Outline in policy, the equitable provisions to be provided for special education schools, and other full-time facilities where vulnerable learners are placed such as homes, hospitals, juvenile detention centres, reformatory schools, and schools for teenage mothers, which will require inter-ministerial collaboration, coordination and cooperation.</p>	<p>affairs, youth, and social welfare</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Advocacy groups</li> <li>- Parents</li> <li>- Persons with disability</li> </ul>
<p>Within 2 - 4 years the Department of Education will collaborate with ministries such as Youth, Social Welfare, Health and Gender Affairs,</p>	<p>Policy describes how the Department of Education will collaborate with ministries such as Youth, Social Welfare, Health, Gender Affairs, and third sector organisations.</p>	<p>The Department of Education should identify Ministries and third sector organisations that are essential to the education, health and welfare of all learners, and establish a Memorandum of Understanding that will facilitate the collaboration among the Ministries to develop long-term multi-level policy for</p>	<p>Department of Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Senior Executives, including the Permanent Secretary, the Chief Education Officer</li> </ul>

Targets	Outcomes	Action	Responsible MDA and other Stakeholders
<p>and third sector organisations to develop a long-term multi-level policy framework for implementing quality inclusive and equitable education in all schools.</p>		<p>working together to implement quality inclusive education.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Officer(s) responsible for SEND in the Department of Education</li> <li>- Legal officers</li> <li>- Ministries responsible for health, gender affairs, youth, and social welfare</li> </ul>

Table 2: Suggested Policy Modifications based on the Education Act (2005)

Education Act 2005		Reference	Recommended Amendments
<b>Right to Education</b>	Subject to available resources, all persons are entitled to receive an educational programme appropriate to their needs in accordance with this Act.	Division 1 14	Remove the caveat “subject to available resources.”
<b>Compulsory School Attendance</b>	Every child shall attend school from the beginning of the school year in which that child attains the age of 5 years until the end of the school year in which that child attains the age of 15 years.	Division 3 27 (1)	Extend the school age for learners with special education needs to 21 years where necessary.
<b>83. Special Education</b>	The Chief Education Officer shall provide special education programmes for students of compulsory school age who by virtue of intellectual, communicative, behavioural, physical or multiple exceptionalities are in need of special education	Division 4 83 (1)	<p>The Chief Education Officer shall provide access to quality, appropriate inclusive education at all levels for learners with SEND, and all vulnerable groups, with free and compulsory primary and secondary education in their communities with their peers, unless it is clearly demonstrated that education in a general education classroom is incapable of meeting a child’s educational or social needs, or when it is required for the welfare of the child or that of other children.</p> <p>These learners include:</p> <p>(i) children with a diverse range of learning difficulties and/or challenges that arise from</p>

Education Act 2005		Reference	Recommended Amendments
			<p>the presence of a disability or special education need.</p> <p>(ii) children identified as gifted learners.</p> <p>(iii) children who may be hospitalized, institutionalized or experiencing other such conditions. children who may be home schooled.</p>
<b>Placement Options</b>	<p>A student who is entitled to a special education programme shall have the programme delivered in the least restrictive and most enabling environment to the extent <b>that resources permit and it is considered practicable by the Chief Education Officer</b> in consultation with professional staff of the school and the Ministry of Education and the parents, having due regard for the educational needs and rights of all students.</p>	Division 4 83 (2)	Remove the caveat “to the extent <b>that resources permit and it is considered practicable by the Chief Education Officer.</b> ”
<b>Individual Education Plan</b>	<p>A special education programme may take the form of an individual education plan in that the plan is tailored to the specific or individual needs of the student.</p> <p>Where it has been determined that a student will require an individual education plan, the costs of developing, providing and maintaining that plan</p>	Division 4 83  (3)Division 4 83 (4)	<p>A learner who will require special education must have an individual education plan tailored to the specific or individual needs of the learner.</p> <p>The full cost of the developing and providing the IEP must be borne by the Government of St. Lucia through the Multi-disciplinary Team housed in the</p>

<b>Education Act 2005</b>		<b>Reference</b>	<b>Recommended Amendments</b>
	shall be apportioned between the student if over 18 years of age, or the parent of the student as the case may be and the Ministry of Education in such manner as may be prescribed by regulations made under this Act.		Special Education Unit at the Department of Education.  The MDT would have accepted the referral from the School-Based Team or parent, and conducted the assessment to determine the needs of the learner. The team in consultation with the parent(s) and the School-Based Team would then collaborate to design the IEP and determine placement options.
<b>Determination of Special Education Needs</b>	(1) Before a determination is made under subsection (2), the following procedures shall be followed—  (a) where possible, the assessment shall be multi-disciplinary;	Division 3 (114) (d)	Remove the caveat “where possible.” A multi-disciplinary team is required to diagnose SEND
<b>Prohibition of Discrimination</b>	Subject to the provisions of this Act, a person who is eligible for admission to a public educational institution or an assisted school as a student shall not be refused admission on any discriminatory grounds including race, place of origin, political opinion, colour, creed, sex, or subject to the provisions of this Act, mental or physical handicap.	Division 2 (29)	Delete the terms “mental or physical handicap” as they are both no longer in use. Instead use children with SEND which covers disabilities and all other vulnerable learners who are underachieving.
<b>Council on Special Education</b>	(1) The Minister may establish a Council on Special Education to advise him or her on guidelines for the implementation of this Division.	Division 3 (86) 1, 2	Outline who is to be considered for membership of the Council. State explicitly the procedures and define its powers and functions as seen in the Act, for example, in 58 (Members of the Board of

<b>Education Act 2005</b>	<b>Reference</b>	<b>Recommended Amendments</b>
<p>(2) Where a Council on Special Education is established the Minister may by order provide for its—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) membership;</li> <li>(b) procedures for its business; and</li> <li>(c) its powers and functions.</li> </ul>		<p>Management) and 59 (Functions of a Board of Management).</p>



## Process for Assessment and Diagnosis of Learners with Special Education Needs and Protocols for Referrals

The referral process for the assessment and diagnosis of learners with special education needs involves several steps to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the student's strengths, challenges, and educational requirements. The process typically includes the following stages:

Table 3: Stages in the Referral and Placement Process

<b>1. Referral:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Identification of Concerns:</b> Teachers, parents, or other school staff may identify concerns regarding a student's academic, behavioural, or developmental progress. Referral may also be made based on Universal Screening of all students at the beginning of the academic year and throughout the year. A student's performance on the Department of Education national assessments may be used to make referrals at both the upper and lower end of the spectrum to provide remediation and enrichment.</li> <li>• <b>Referral to Special Education Services:</b> When concerns arise, a referral is made to the School-Based Team (SBT) to review documentary evidence of a student's underperformance and to make decisions about assessment, interventions and placement.</li> </ul>
<b>2. Pre-referral Intervention:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Intervention Strategies:</b> Before initiating the formal assessment process, the SBT may implement pre-referral interventions, such as differentiated instruction, behaviour interventions, or additional support in the general education setting.</li> <li>• <b>Data Collection:</b> Progress is monitored, and data are collected to assess the effectiveness of interventions.</li> </ul>
<b>3. Formal Referral:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Parental Consent:</b> If pre-referral interventions do not sufficiently address the concerns, a formal referral for special education assessment is made. This process requires obtaining written consent from the student's parents or guardians.</li> </ul>
<b>4. Assessment Planning:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Formation of an Assessment Team:</b> Depending on the reasons for referral, the District team may review the case and determine if the student should be referred to the Department of Education's Multi-Disciplinary Team (SBT), for a comprehensive assessment which may include professionals such as speech and language pathologist, occupational therapist, and other specialists as needed. If the case can be handled at the District level, then a team of professionals is assembled to conduct the assessment.</li> <li>• <b>Assessment Plan:</b> The team develops an assessment plan outlining the specific assessments, tools, and methods that will be used to gather information about the student's strengths and areas of need.</li> </ul>
<b>5. Assessment:</b>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Comprehensive Evaluation:</b> The assessment process includes a variety of measures, such as standardized tests, observations, interviews, and reviews of academic and developmental history.</li> <li>• <b>Areas of Assessment:</b> Assessments cover areas related to the suspected disability, including academic achievement, cognitive abilities, social-emotional functioning, and any relevant health or medical information.</li> </ul>
<b>6. Data Analysis:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Interdisciplinary Collaboration:</b> The assessment team collaborates to analyse the gathered data and determine the student's eligibility for special education services.</li> <li>• <b>Identification of Disability:</b> If the evaluation indicates that the student has a disability that requires special education services, the team identifies the specific disability category.</li> </ul>
<b>7. Development of Individualized Education Program (IEP):</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>IEP Team Meeting:</b> An Individualized Education Program (IEP) team meeting is convened, including parents, teachers, and relevant specialists.</li> <li>• <b>IEP Development:</b> The team develops an individualized education plan that outlines the student's unique needs, goals, services, and accommodations.</li> </ul>
<b>8. Implementation of Services:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Service Delivery:</b> The special education services and placement options for delivery are outlined in the IEP, implemented, and progress is regularly monitored.</li> <li>• <b>Parental Involvement:</b> Parents are involved in the ongoing review and adjustment of the IEP as needed.</li> </ul>

The referral process for special education assessment is designed to be collaborative, involving parents, teachers, specialists, and other professionals to ensure a thorough understanding of the student's needs and the development of appropriate educational interventions.

## The Referral Process

### Who may refer a child?

In the context of special education, a child may be referred for testing by various individuals or entities. The referral process is typically initiated when there are concerns about a child's academic, behavioural, or developmental progress. Those who may refer a child for testing for special education include:

Table 4: Who may refer a child?

<p><b>Parents or Guardians:</b> Parents are often the first to notice any signs of learning difficulties, behavioural challenges, or developmental delays in their child. They can initiate the referral process by expressing concerns to teachers, school administrators, or special education professionals.</p>
<p><b>Teachers:</b> Classroom teachers who observe persistent academic struggles, behavioural issues, or other challenges in a student may recommend that the child be referred for special education testing. Teachers play a crucial role in identifying students who may benefit from additional support.</p>
<p><b>School Administrators:</b> Principals, vice principals, or other school administrators may initiate a referral if they notice that a student is struggling academically or behaviourally. They may also be involved in the decision-making process regarding special education services.</p>
<p><b>Guidance Counsellors or Psychologists:</b> School guidance counsellors or psychologists may be involved in the referral process, particularly if there are concerns about a student's social-emotional well-being or if there is a need for a comprehensive assessment of a student's strengths and challenges.</p>
<p><b>Healthcare Professionals:</b> Paediatricians, therapists, or other healthcare professionals may recommend special education testing if they observe developmental delays, physical disabilities, or health-related issues that may impact a child's ability to learn.</p>
<p><b>Early Intervention Programmes:</b> For younger children, those involved in early intervention programmes or services may recommend testing if developmental delays or disabilities are identified during early childhood assessments.</p>
<p><b>State or Local Education Agencies:</b> In some cases, educational agencies at the state or local level may become involved in the referral process, particularly if there are concerns about systemic issues or if a school is struggling to meet the diverse needs of its students.</p>

It's important to note that the referral process is a collaborative effort that involves communication and cooperation among parents, educators, and other professionals. Once a referral is made, a comprehensive evaluation is typically conducted to determine if the child is eligible for special education services and to inform the development of an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

## When should a child be referred?

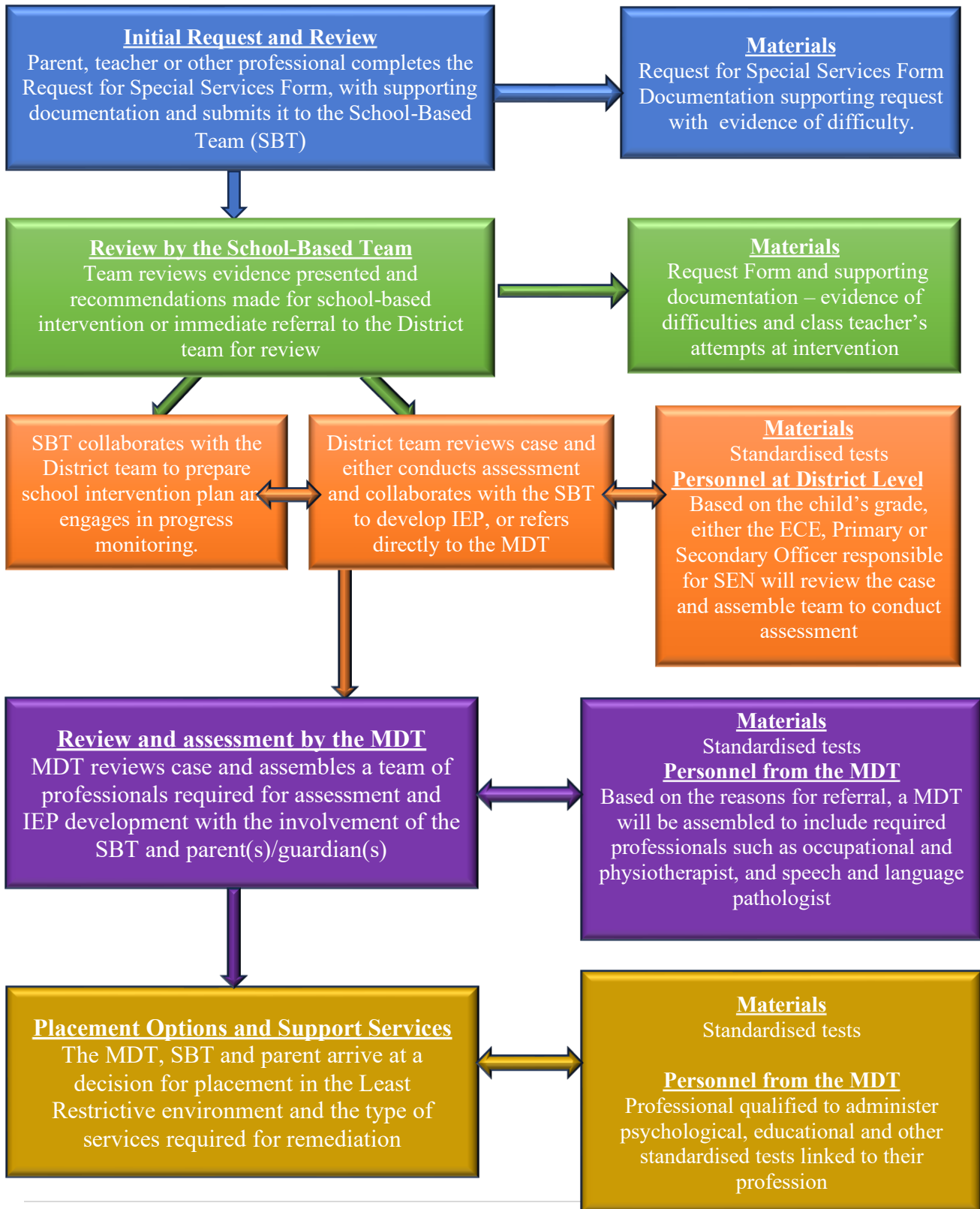
A child should be referred for assessment for special education when there are concerns about their academic, behavioural, or developmental progress that may indicate the need for additional support or services. The decision to refer a child for assessment is typically based on the observation of persistent difficulties or delays that significantly impact the child's ability to learn and participate in the general education curriculum. Below are some indicators that may prompt a referral for special education assessment:

*Table 5: Special Needs for Referral*

<b>Academic Struggles:</b> Persistent difficulties in acquiring basic academic skills (reading, writing, math) that are not responsive to typical classroom interventions.
<b>Behavioural Challenges:</b> Frequent and severe behavioural issues that impede the child's ability to participate in learning activities and maintain appropriate social interactions.
<b>Developmental Delays:</b> Observable delays in physical, cognitive, social, or emotional development compared to peers.
<b>Lack of Progress with Interventions:</b> When the child does not make adequate progress with targeted interventions or accommodations provided within the general education setting.
<b>Health-Related Concerns:</b> Health-related issues or disabilities that may impact the child's ability to access and benefit from the general education curriculum.
<b>Social or Emotional Concerns:</b> Persistent social or emotional difficulties that interfere with the child's ability to engage with peers, follow classroom routines, or participate in learning activities.
<b>Parental Concerns:</b> Expressions of concern from parents or guardians about their child's development, academic progress, or behaviour.
<b>Input from Teachers and School Staff:</b> Observations and feedback from teachers, school psychologists, counsellors, or other school staff members who notice consistent challenges or delays.
<b>Inability to Keep Pace with Peers:</b> A significant gap between the child's skills and the expected developmental or academic milestones for their age.

It is important to emphasize that the decision to refer a child for special education assessment is a collaborative process involving parents, teachers, and other professionals. Typically, schools should have established procedures for initiating the referral process, and parents must be involved in the decision-making and assessment planning stages. If there are concerns about a child's development or learning, early intervention and assessment are crucial to identify the appropriate supports and services to help the child succeed in the educational setting.

Figure 2: The Referral Process



## Critical Steps in the Referral Process

Developing a protocol for referrals to special education involves a systematic approach to identify and support students with potential special education needs. Below is a suggested protocol:

Table 6: Steps in the Referral Process

- 1. Initial Observation and Data Collection:** a. Teachers, parents, or other school staff identify concerns related to a student's academic, behavioural, or social-emotional performance. b. Teachers conduct initial classroom observations and gather relevant data on the student's performance.
- 2. Teacher Consultation:** a. The referring teacher consults with colleagues, grade-level teams, or other professionals to gain insights and diverse perspectives on the student's needs.
- 3. Preliminary Interventions:** a. Implement targeted interventions within the general education setting to address the identified concerns. b. Monitor the student's response to interventions and document progress.
- 4. Formal Referral:** a. If concerns persist after initial interventions, the referring teacher submits a formal referral to the school's Student Support Team or Child Study Team. b. The referral should include documentation of observations, interventions, and relevant data.
- 5. School-Based Team (SBT):** a. The SBT conducts a meeting to review the referral and gathered information. b. Collaboratively determine additional interventions or assessments needed, or make referral to the District team.
- 6. Comprehensive Assessment:** a. comprehensive assessment involving specialized professionals at the District and/or MDT level (psychologists, special education teachers, speech and language pathologist, occupational therapist...etc.) is undertaken b. Assessments may include academic, behavioural, social, and emotional evaluations. The MDT team reviews assessment results, considering the student's strengths and challenges. b. Determine eligibility for special education services based on established criteria.
- 8. IEP Implementation and Monitoring:** a. Implement the IEP with ongoing monitoring of the student's progress. b. Regularly review and update the IEP as needed.
- 9. Parental Involvement:** a. Maintain open communication with parents throughout the referral and assessment process. b. Ensure parents are active participants in decision-making regarding their child's education.
- 10. Review and Continuous Improvement:** a. Periodically review the effectiveness of the referral process. b. Seek feedback from teachers, parents, and staff to make continuous improvements.

This protocol aims to ensure a systematic and collaborative approach to identifying and supporting students with special needs, promoting a student-centred and inclusive educational environment.

### The School-Based Team

A School-Based Team (SBT) refers to a collaborative group of professionals within a school who work together to support students with special needs. The team is involved in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of educational services for students who require additional support due to learning, behavioural, or developmental challenges. The composition of a school-based team includes key stakeholders such as:

Table 7: Membership of the School Based Team

1. <b>Special Education Teacher:</b> Special education teachers have expertise in working with students with disabilities. They play a central role in developing and implementing Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for students with special education needs.
2. <b>General Education Teacher(s):</b> Regular classroom teachers are an integral part of the team, especially since many students with disabilities may spend at least part of their day in general education classrooms, and others may be in general education on a full-time basis. Collaboration between special education and general education teachers is essential for creating inclusive learning environments.
3. <b>School Principal:</b> Principals or other school administrators, such as the vice principal, may be involved in the team to provide leadership, allocate resources, and ensure that the school is meeting legal requirements related to special education.
4. <b>Parents or Guardians:</b> The involvement of parents or guardians is crucial in the special education process. They are considered valuable team members and are actively involved in the decision-making process, especially when it comes to developing the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP).
5. <b>Special Education Coordinator or Case Manager:</b> At the District level, a Special Educator responsible for SEND for students at the ECE, Primary or Secondary level should be a designated special education coordinator or case manager who helps facilitate communication and coordination among team members and ensures that services are provided as outlined in the IEP. They also are the liaison between the school and the Department of Education, Special Education Unit and the MDT

The school-based team collaborates to assess student needs, plan appropriate interventions and accommodations, monitor progress, and make adjustments to support the student's learning and development. Effective collaboration among team members is essential for providing a comprehensive and individualized education for students with special needs.



## Responsibilities of the School-Based Team

Table 8: Responsibilities of the School Based Team

<b>1. Identification and Referral:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Collaborate to identify students who may need additional support due to learning, behavioural, or developmental challenges.</li><li>• Initiate the referral process for special education assessment when concerns are identified.</li></ul>
<b>2. Assessment and Evaluation:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Work together to conduct comprehensive assessments to determine the presence of a disability and assess the student's strengths and needs.</li><li>• Analyse assessment data to inform the development of an Individualized Education Program (IEP).</li></ul>
<b>3. Development of Individualized Education Program (IEP):</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Collaborate with parents, teachers, and other professionals to develop an IEP tailored to the unique needs of the student.</li><li>• Ensure that the IEP includes measurable goals, appropriate services, and accommodations to support the student's learning.</li></ul>
<b>4. Service Delivery and Instruction:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Implement the services and accommodations outlined in the IEP to support the student in the general education setting.</li><li>• Collaborate with general education teachers to ensure that instructional strategies are adapted to meet the student's individual needs.</li></ul>
<b>5. Monitoring and Progress Reporting:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Regularly monitor the student's progress toward IEP goals.</li><li>• Provide ongoing feedback to parents, teachers, and other team members on the student's academic and social development.</li></ul>
<b>6. Collaboration and Communication:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Foster open communication and collaboration among team members, including special education teachers, general education teachers, parents, administrators, and related service providers.</li><li>• Collaborate on strategies to promote inclusive practices and create a supportive learning environment.</li></ul>
<b>7. Transition Planning:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop transition plans for students transitioning between grade levels or from school to post-school activities.</li><li>• Collaborate on strategies to prepare students with disabilities for life after high school.</li></ul>
<b>8. Professional Development:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Engage in ongoing professional development to stay informed about best practices in special education.</li></ul>

- Share knowledge and expertise within the team to enhance the overall effectiveness of special education services.

**9. Advocacy for Students:**

- Advocate for the rights and needs of students with disabilities within the school system.
- Collaborate with parents to ensure that the student's voice and preferences are considered in the decision-making process.

By working collaboratively, the school-based team in special education helps create an inclusive and supportive learning environment, ensuring that students with disabilities have access to a quality education that meets their unique need.

## Strategies for Establishing the Organisational Structures

### The Overall Goal

The Department of Education Youth and Sports, will establish organizational structures and systems to maintain, strengthen, and oversee the effective implementation and preservation of related legislation and policies for inclusion and equity in education.

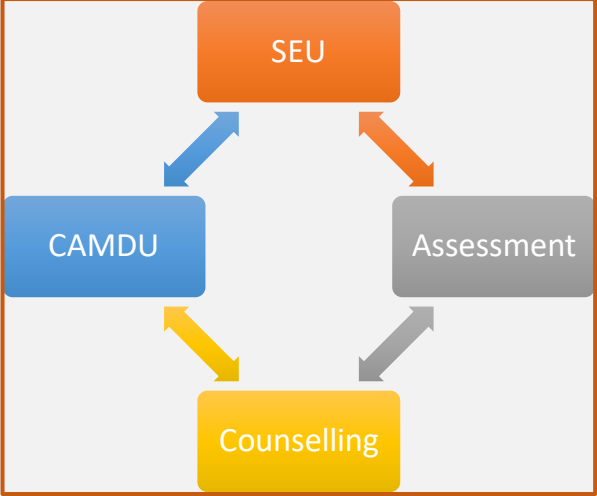
**Policy Goal 2.1:** The roles and responsibilities of the Department of Education, as well as the Ministries responsible for Health, Equity, Gender Affairs and Social Welfare, and other agencies are clearly defined, and an inter-ministerial committee is established to support the SEU to effectively implement inclusive education.

### Strategies to Achieve Policy Goal 2.1

Targets	Outcomes	Action	Responsible MDA And Other Stakeholders
Within 6 months obtain approval of the recommendations in the policy.	The policy recommendations are approved by the Executive Leadership of the Department of Education, Youth and Sports and the Ministerial Cabinet.	Seek approval from the Executive leadership of the DOE and the Ministerial Cabinet for approval of the policy recommendations in this policy.	The Permanent Secretary and the Chief Education in the Department of the Education, Youth and Sports.

Targets	Outcomes	Action	Responsible MDA And Other Stakeholders
<p>Within 2 years strengthen the appropriate framework for implementing the SEND policy as part of the institutional arrangements of the Department of Education.</p>	<p>Memorandum of Agreement and Cooperation between the Department of Education and the Ministries of Health, Gender affairs, Equity, Welfare to share and manage information and to provide a monitoring and evaluation oversight for the operations of the SEND in the public education system.</p>	<p>Write and submit a Cabinet Submission to the Government of St Lucia Ministerial Cabinet to seek approval for the memorandum of agreement and collaboration between the Department of Education and the Ministries of Health, Wellness and elderly Affairs, Equity, Social Justice and Empowerment, Youth and Sports. . The memorandum should define the role and functions of each of the partners in relation to the delivery implementation of the policy and the delivery of special educational needs services. In turn, the terms of the agreement should be written into the Education Sector Plan to ensure that the Department of Education is able to rely on the delivery of relevant services from each Ministry.</p>	<p>Senior Executives including the Permanent Secretary, the Chief Education Officer/Chief Technical Director from each of the relevant Ministries. The legal officers and corporate services department in each Ministry are integral to creating the memorandum and seeking approval.</p>
	<p>The Inter-Ministerial Committee formed with a signed Memorandum of Collaboration and Cooperation, and roles and responsibilities of each Ministry clearly defined.</p>	<p>The memorandum of agreement indicated should describe the inter-ministerial committee with responsibility for oversight of implementation of the national SEND policy and strategy. The committee’s establishment, role and responsibilities of the partners are defined in the policy and in the legislation (see figure ## - Purpose of the Inter-Ministerial Committee).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Department of Education in collaboration with, for example Ministries of Health, Welfare or Social Protection, Youth</li> </ul>

Targets	Outcomes	Action	Responsible MDA And Other Stakeholders
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Based on the institutional arrangement of Ministries, Departments and Agencies, each country will decide which agency should be included.</li> <li>- The Heads of Ministries and Agencies.</li> <li>- Legal Officers</li> </ul>
	<p>The organisation chart of the DOE S and the practice of the department/units show clear line of communication and collaboration between the Units in the School Operations Division (Assessment, Early Childhood Education and Counselling) as well as CAMDU with emphasis on providing services to <i>all</i></p>	<p>Establish clear lines of <i>communication, collaboration, cooperation and coordination</i> between the SEU, Assessment, Early Childhood Education, Counselling and the Curriculum Unit (CAMDU) to join up working and information sharing in relation to referrals, assessment, intervention programmes, and social work.</p>	<p>Department of Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Senior Executives including the Permanent Secretary, the Chief Education Officer.</li> <li>- Ministry of Finance</li> <li>- Legal Officers</li> </ul>

Targets	Outcomes	Action	Responsible MDA And Other Stakeholders
	students and on inclusive education approaches		
<p>Within 3 years strengthen the organisational structure of the Special Education Unit in the Department of Education.</p>	<p>The Special Education Unit (SEU) is recognized as part of the established organisational structure in the School Operations Division of the Department of Education reporting to the Chief Education (CEO).</p>	<p>Given that the current SEU reports to the CEO and was established at the same level of autonomy and authority of other Units in the School Operations Division, with the specific focus on assessment and interventions the Unit can be reorganized to embed the MDT and the referral process in the organisational structure. The SEU should operate at the management and operational level and is therefore central to this policy (see figure # : Proposed Organisation Chart).</p>	<p>Department of Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Senior Executives including the Permanent Secretary, the Chief Education Officer</li> <li>- Ministry of Finance</li> </ul>

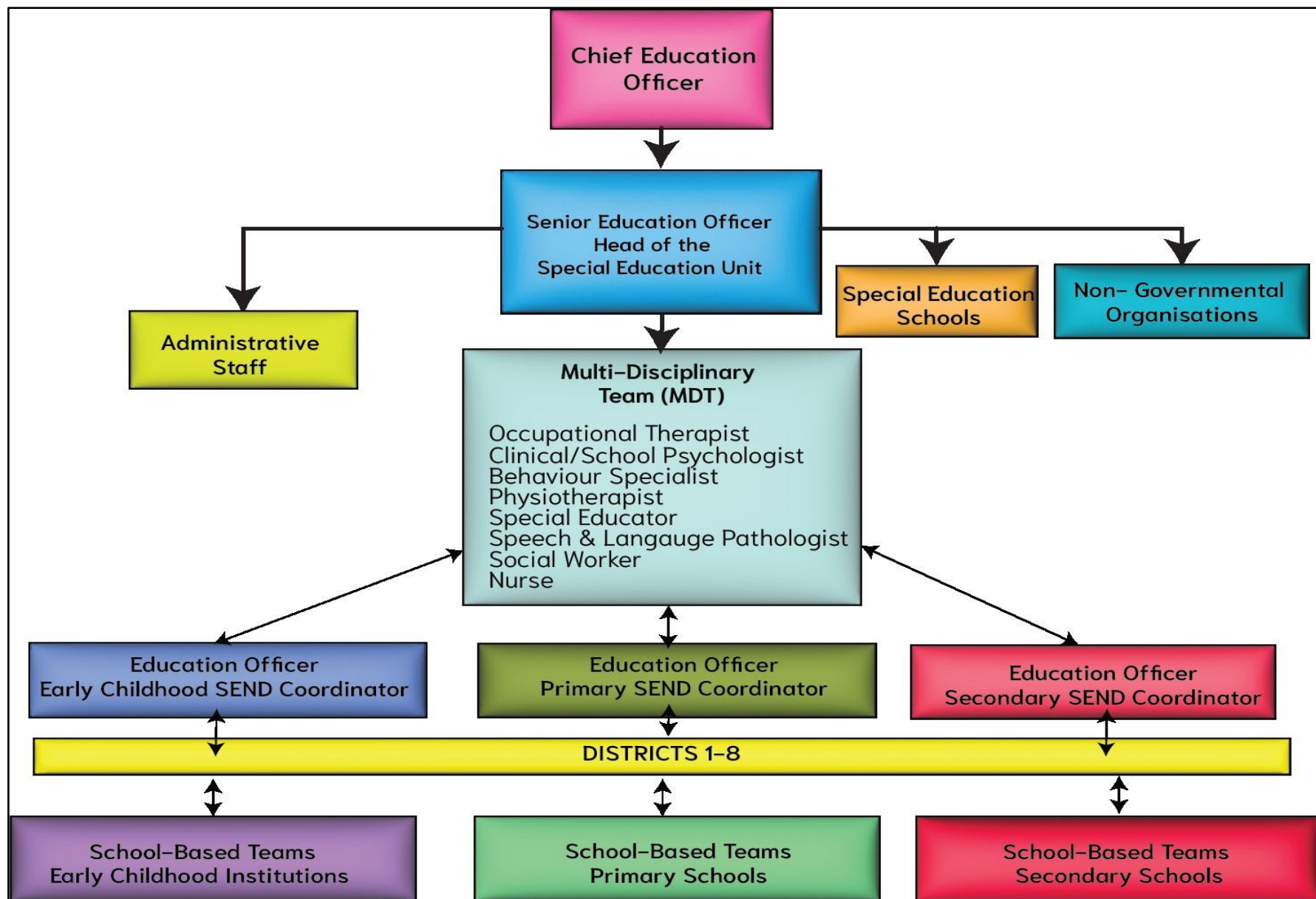


Figure 3: Organisation of the Special Education Unit

<b>Characteristics of the Proposed Organisation Structure</b>	
i.	The Unit should include specialised personnel in clinical/school psychology, speech and language pathology, occupational and physical therapy.
ii.	School-based teams and districts are integral to early identification and services provision.
iii.	With the arrangements in the School Operations Division, the Unit should be able to draw on: i. the Counsellors in the Counselling Unit; and ii. Social Workers from the Ministry of Equity and Social Welfare, and Medical Practitioners from the Ministry of Health.
iv.	Within this organisational structure NGOs should have a direct link with the Unit and form part of the service delivery model.
v.	The assessment and intervention services should be decentralized to the district level to enable ease of access for all children in need regardless of their location, and to reduce the long waiting list for services.



### **The Roles and Responsibilities of the Inter-ministerial Committee**

- (i) provide a governance framework to give oversight and support to the implementation of the Special and Inclusive Policy and Strategies.
- (ii) Ensure that special education needs and supports are established as a core part of the public education system in St Lucia.
- (iii) Advise the Minister of Education and the Heads of other Ministries, Departments and Agencies on matters related to the implementation of the policy, the effectiveness of service delivery, outcomes for children with special education needs, and the creation of responsive programmes for SEND.
- (iv) address the fragmentation service delivery through joint planning and coordination of intersectoral systems and supports to improve educational services to children with special education needs.
- (v) Create and implement a monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the progress of implementation of the policy, and the effectiveness of service delivery with emphasis on the outcomes for children with special needs.
- (vi) Facilitate productive partnerships between relevant ministries, agencies and departments, non-governmental organisations and the private sector.
- (vii) Develop protocols for information sharing, use and management as it relates to the access, service delivery and outcomes for children in the SEN sub-sector. Conduct financial forecasting of resources required to effectively meet the needs of children with special education needs.

*Figure 4: Role and Responsibilities of the Inter-Ministerial Committee*

The Special Education Unit within the Department of Education plays a crucial role in overseeing and supporting the implementation of special education services and policies. Its responsibilities are diverse and may include the following:

Table 9: Role and Responsibilities for the Special Education Unit in the Department of Education

<b>1. Policy Development and Implementation:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Develop and implement policies related to special education to ensure that the needs of students with disabilities are addressed within the broader education system.</li></ul>
<b>2. Legal Compliance:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Ensure compliance with national and international laws and regulations related to special education, including the rights of students with disabilities to receive an inclusive and quality education.</li></ul>
<b>3. Coordination and Collaboration:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Collaborate with other units, departments, and stakeholders within the Department of Education, Districts, and schools to ensure a coordinated approach to special education services and policies.</li></ul>
<b>4. Professional Development:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Provide professional development opportunities for teachers, administrators, and other education professionals to enhance their knowledge and skills in addressing the needs of students with disabilities.</li></ul>
<b>5. Resource Allocation:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Allocate resources, including funding, personnel, and materials, to support the effective implementation of special education programmes and services.</li></ul>
<b>6. Curriculum Development:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Collaborate in the development and adaptation of curricula to ensure that they are inclusive and accessible to students with diverse learning needs.</li></ul>
<b>7. Assessment and Evaluation:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Develop and implement assessment and evaluation processes to determine the effectiveness of special education programmes and identify areas for improvement.</li></ul>

#### 8. **Individualized Education Program (IEP) Oversight:**

- Oversee the development and implementation of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) for students with disabilities, ensuring that these plans are tailored to meet the unique needs of each student.

#### 9. **Data Collection and Reporting:**

- Collect and analyse data on students with disabilities, including enrolment, academic progress, and other relevant metrics. Prepare and submit reports to inform decision-making.

#### 10. **Parent NGO and Community Engagement:**

- Facilitate communication and collaboration between the education system, NGOs, parents, and the community to ensure that the needs and perspectives of families with children with disabilities are considered in decision-making processes.

#### 11. **Research and Innovation:**

- Promote and support research initiatives and innovations in the field of special education to enhance the quality of services and outcomes for students with disabilities.

#### 12. **Advocacy:**

- Advocate for the rights and needs of students with disabilities at the policy level, seeking to create an inclusive and supportive educational environment.

#### 13. **Monitoring and Quality Assurance:**

- Regularly monitor the implementation of special education policies and services to ensure they align with established standards and quality benchmarks.

#### 14. **Transition Planning:**

- Develop and implement transition programmes to support students with disabilities as they move between educational levels and into post-school activities.

#### 15. **Crisis Intervention:**

- Develop and implement crisis intervention plans to address the unique needs of students with disabilities during emergencies or crises.

The Special Education Unit serves as a central authority within the Ministry of Education, working to ensure that students with disabilities have equal access to quality education and that educational systems are inclusive, responsive, and supportive of diverse learning needs.

## Policy Goal 2.2

The Department of Education will establish Special/Inclusive Education Units/Departments with clearly defined roles and outline effective leadership management for inclusive schools.

### Strategies to Achieve Policy Goal 2.2

Targets	Outcomes	Action	Responsible MDA and Other Stakeholders
Within 5 years, provide a full complement of specialist staff for assessment and intervention services	Specialist staff are part of the organisational structure of the SEU Unit.	<p>Amend the Education Act (2005) Section 83 #3 to specify that decisions about special education services and individual education plans must be made by a Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) in the Special Education Unit.</p> <p>Define the required specialist personnel for the Multi-Disciplinary Team for the SEU Unit. the Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) , representing various areas of SEN expertise, should include diagnostic and support services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- clinical psychology</li><li>- speech and language pathology</li><li>- occupational therapy</li><li>- social workers</li></ul>	<p>Department of Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Senior Executives including the Permanent Secretary, the Chief Education Officer.</li><li>- Lead SEND Officer or Head of Department/Unit</li><li>- Ministry of Finance</li><li>-</li></ul>

Targets	Outcomes	Action	Responsible MDA and Other Stakeholders
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- physical therapy</li> <li>- trained special educators</li> <li>- medical doctor/nurse</li> </ul> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p><b>Purpose of the MDT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evaluate special education referrals.</li> <li>- Conduct assessments of students referred.</li> <li>- Generate appropriate placement decisions.</li> <li>- Provide programme planning and evaluation.</li> <li>- Facilitate relevant assessment and follow-up outcomes.</li> </ul> </div> <p>Given the dearth of specialist personnel in St Lucia in the current period and into the near future, the SEU should continue to develop and institutionalize the arrangements with NGOs and private sector providers. To achieve the development of capacity in these fields in the medium to long term the Department of Education should include in the education sector plan the training of personnel in a specific field each budget year for at least 5 years.</p>	
Within 3 years, principals and other teachers holding senior	Principals and other school leaders are trained in the	Develop and implement a training plan for all principals and other school leaders aimed at sensitising them about the nature and needs of learners with SEND, and how to effectively	Department of Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Senior Executives including the Permanent</li> </ul>

Targets	Outcomes	Action	Responsible MDA and Other Stakeholders
positions within schools are sensitised and trained in the effective management of inclusive schools.	management of inclusive schools	<p>manage an inclusive school.(see Capacity Development Plan)</p> <p>The performance appraisal of principals should include a component to monitor and evaluate performance in the management towards inclusivity in schools and provide re-training if necessary. See sample performance indicators at table 9.</p>	<p>Secretary, the Chief Education Officer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Officers responsible for SEND</li> </ul>

Table 10: Sample Performance Standards and Key Performance Indicators for Principals (Adapted)

Performance Standards	Sample Key Performance Indicators
<p>1. Instructional Leadership The principal fosters the success of <i>all</i> students by facilitating the development, communication, implementation, and evaluation of a shared vision of teaching and learning that leads to student academic growth and school improvement.</p>	<p>1.1. Analyses (and disaggregates) current academic achievement data and instructional strategies to make appropriate educational decisions to improve classroom instruction, increase student achievement, and improve overall school effectiveness.</p> <p>1.2. Works collaboratively with staff to identify student needs and to design, revise, and monitor instruction to ensure effective delivery of the required curriculum to all students.</p>
<p>2. School Climate The principal fosters the success of <i>all</i> students by developing, advocating, and sustaining an academically rigorous, positive, and safe school climate for all stakeholders.</p>	<p>2.1 Consistently models and collaboratively promotes high expectations, mutual respect, concern, and empathy for students, staff, parents, and community.</p> <p>2.2 Maintains a positive, inviting school environment that celebrates, promotes and assists in the development of the whole child/student, and values every child/student as an important member of the school community</p>
<p>3. Human Resources Management The principal fosters effective human resources management by assisting with selection and induction, and by supporting, evaluating, and retaining quality instructional and support personnel.</p>	<p>3.1 Assigns qualified and effective staff in a fair and equitable manner based on student and school needs, assessment data, and Ministry of Education requirements.</p> <p>3.2 Maximizes human resources by building on the strengths of teachers and staff members through the collaborative development and implementation of the professional growth plan that aligns with the school and/or district plan.</p>
<p>4. Organizational Management The principal fosters the success of all students by supporting, managing, and overseeing the school’s organization, operation, and use of resources.</p>	<p>4.1 Implements strategies for the inclusion of staff and stakeholders in various planning processes, shares in management decisions, and delegates duties as applicable, resulting in an effective and efficient workplace.</p> <p>4.2 In collaboration with the school management board, seeks to ensure that the resources are available to support the school’s mission of inclusion in both long- and short-term.</p>



Performance Standards	Sample Key Performance Indicators
<p>5. Communication and Community Relations The principal fosters the success of all students by communicating and collaborating effectively with stakeholders.</p>	<p>5.1 Collaborates and networks with colleagues, non-government organizations, and private sector stakeholders to effectively utilize the resources and expertise available in the local community.</p> <p>5.2 Advocates for students and acts to influence district level and national decisions likely to affect student learning.</p>
<p>6. Professionalism The principal fosters the success of all students by demonstrating professional standards and ethics, engaging in continuous professional learning, and contributing to the profession.</p>	<p>Creates a culture of respect, understanding, sensitivity, and appreciation for <i>all</i> students, staff, and other stakeholders, and models these attributes daily.</p>

**Policy Goal 2.3**

The Department of Education will provide long-term national-level financial support and resources linked to system-wide Inclusive Education strategies, and systems will be established to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and quality of inclusive education provided.

**Policy Goal 2.4**

Monitoring procedures will be established to ensure that inequalities in access to educational resources and services nationally are addressed at the organisational level.

**Strategies to Achieve Policy Goals 2.3 and 2.4**

Targets	Outcomes	Action	Indicative Responsible MDA and Other Stakeholders
Within one year the Education Sector Plan reflects implementation towards building inclusion in the public education system.	Strategies for developing inclusive education are included in the Education Sector Plan and included as line items in the Estimates of Expenditure.	Include the strategies related to this policy in the Education Sector Plan and the Estimates of Expenditure.	The Inter-Ministerial Committee Corporate Planner - Department of Education Lead SEND Education Officer
Within 3 years, there is a clearly defined approach to funding SEND strategies and support services.	Operationalization of approach to funding SEND service provision.	Create and promulgate a clear approach to financing SEND services and supports. For example, either full-cost by the government, cost-sharing with parents, or cost-sharing between the government, parents, and NGO's. This will include a percentage of the national	The Inter-Ministerial Committee Department of of Education - Senior Executives including the Permanent Secretary,

Targets	Outcomes	Action	Indicative Responsible MDA and Other Stakeholders
		<p>education budget that goes to financing SEND strategies and support services.</p> <p>If the full cost is to be borne by the government then the cost per student should be intricately worked out to cover the range of services to be provided based on the nature of the needs.</p> <p>If a cost-sharing approach is devised, the Inter-ministerial committee in agreement with the SEU should decide on a comprehensive list of services to be provided making a distinction between those to be fully paid by the Department of Education, those should be paid for by parents, and those that require joint payment between the DOE and the parents/guardians.</p> <p>Use the direct costing approach to indicate the cost of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assessments</li> <li>- IEPs</li> <li>- Occupational therapy intervention</li> <li>- Physiotherapy</li> <li>- Assistive technology</li> </ul> <p>This will enhance the development of the estimates of expenditure for SEND.</p>	<p>and the Chief Education Officer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Corporate Planner</li> <li>- Lead SEND Education Officer or Head of Department</li> <li>- Ministry of Finance</li> </ul>

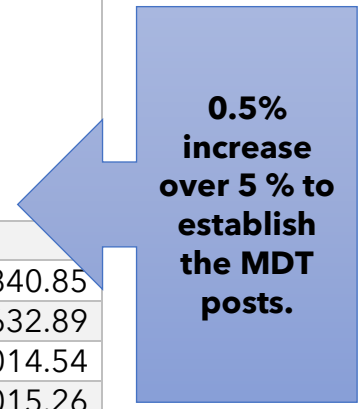
Targets	Outcomes	Action	Indicative Responsible MDA and Other Stakeholders
		<p>Given that only 2.55% of the expenditure on education is spent on SEND, to ensure that services are adequately provided, the DOE should seek to incrementally increase this percentage by 0.5% over a five-year period to bring proportion of the expenditure to 4.55%. As shown in table 10 this will provide additional funds for recruiting specialist personnel required for the Multi-Disciplinary Team.</p>	
<p>Within 3 years, inclusive education strategies and programmes are line items in the national education budget.</p>	<p>Inclusive strategies and programmes included as line-items in the national education budget.</p>	<p>Cost national inclusive education strategies, programmes, infrastructure and supports and include these as line items in the national education budget. The cost should include the cost of services to support children with low, medium and high needs. Costing should be based on prevalence rates to ensure accuracy and inclusion in the national budget. Sources of funding including government, NGO, and international development partners should be included.</p> <p>The costing model used should be aligned to identified outcomes for the SEND sector in education sector plans and the key performance indicators.</p>	
<p>Within 3 to 5 years, a Monitoring and Evaluation System is</p>	<p>Key Performance Indicators specified and described in</p>	<p>Create key performance indicators to monitor the implementation of the policy and strategy, the operations of the SEU, the quality-of-service</p>	<p>The Inter-Ministerial Committee Department of Education</p>

Targets	Outcomes	Action	Indicative Responsible MDA and Other Stakeholders
in place to gauge the quality of programmes and outcomes for all learners.	the strategic plans for the education sector.	delivery, and the outcomes for children with special needs and their schools. The aim is to establish a common language about inclusive and special education. In addition, the assessment of KPIs will provide a picture of how services are being delivered and the extent to which strategic objectives are being met.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Senior Executives including the Permanent Secretary, the Chief Education Officer.</li> <li>- Lead SEND Officer or Head of Department</li> <li>-</li> </ul>
	Educational Management Information Systems (EMIS) was established with access provided to relevant ministries, departments and agencies providing services and supports to learners.	<p>EMIS based on an inter-ministry/ department/ agency platform to allow for collection and analysis of data in respect of access, participation, socio-demographic profile, availability of services etc. The Inter-Ministerial Committee should develop the data-sharing protocols to be as in the M&amp;E framework and for case management.</p> <p>For guidance see:  <a href="https://inclusive-education.org/sites/default/files/uploads/booklets/IE_Webinar_Booklet_6.pdf">https://inclusive-education.org/sites/default/files/uploads/booklets/IE_Webinar_Booklet_6.pdf</a></p>	<p>The Inter-Ministerial Committee Department of Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Senior Executives, including the Permanent Secretary, and the Chief Education Officer.</li> <li>- Lead SEND Officer or Head of Department</li> <li>- Information Technology Lead in the Ministry</li> </ul>
	The prevalence and incidence of children in the population with SEND is known and disaggregated by the type of disability and gender	<p>Collect and analyse census data about children and adults with SEND to inform financing and resource allocation.</p> <p>Collect and analyse data on the number of children with SEND enrolled in schools who are eligible for services, and those receiving</p>	<p>The Inter-Ministerial Committee Department of Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Senior Executives including the Permanent Secretary, the Chief Education Officer.</li> </ul>

Targets	Outcomes	Action	Indicative Responsible MDA and Other Stakeholders
	<p>Statistical Digests include data on outcomes for learners with SEND.</p> <p>Data is used by the Inter-Ministerial Committee to guide the implementation of the policy and strategy and operations of the SEN, in addition the programmatic sections of the corporate plans of the relevant ministries, departments and agencies are aligned with the education sector strategic plan.</p>	<p>services. The analyses should include children not identified but in need of services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Additional data collection should include out-of-school children requiring special education services.</li> </ul> <p>Track the assessment (national and regional examinations) outcomes for <i>all</i> learners. Statistical Units should be required to report on the outcomes for learners provided with IEPs and or given examination accommodations.</p> <p>See the following for further guidance:</p> <p><a href="https://data.unicef.org/resources/collecting-data-child-disability-companion-technical-booklet/">https://data.unicef.org/resources/collecting-data-child-disability-companion-technical-booklet/</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/question-sets/wg-unicef-child-functioning-module-cfm/">https://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/question-sets/wg-unicef-child-functioning-module-cfm/</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lead SEND Officer or Head of Department</li> <li>- MDAs Corporate Planner</li> <li>- Statistics Unit</li> <li>- Assessment Unit</li> <li>- Ministry of Finance</li> </ul>

Table 11: Illustration of 5-year Incremental Increase in the Current SEN Estimates of Expenditure

Fiscal Year	Total Operational Budget for SEN	Salaries & Wages inclusive of Allowances (80% of operation budget)	Grants, Contributions & Subventions (15% of operations budget)	Other Operations Cost (5% of operations budget)	Difference
2023/2024	\$4,716,817	\$3,755,007	\$767,801	\$194,009.00	
2023/2025	\$4,952,658	\$3,962,126	\$742,899	\$247,632.89	\$235,840.85
2023/2026	\$5,200,291	\$4,160,233	\$780,044	\$260,014.54	\$247,632.89
2023/2027	\$5,460,305	\$4,368,244	\$819,046	\$273,015.26	\$260,014.54
2023/2028	\$5,733,321	\$4,586,656	\$859,998	\$286,666.03	\$273,015.26
2023/2029	\$6,019,987	\$4,815,989	\$902,998	\$300,999.33	\$286,666.03



**0.5% increase over 5 % to establish the MDT posts.**

Table 12: Illustrative Key Performance Indicators

<b>Category of Indicator</b>	<b>Suggested Key Performance Indicator</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Likely Source of Information</b>
<b>Learning Environment</b>	Percentage of students identified with special needs in each district with an IEP. Attendance rate for students with an IEP	Term	Student files School attendance registers
<b>Operations</b>	Rate of backlog for initial assessment? Number of assessments started and completed within a term. Number of accommodations recommended: - Primary - Secondary	Annual Term	Referral forms in the SEU
<b>Referrals</b>	Number of students referred for special education services Percentage of students referred receiving intervention	Annual Term	SEU records on referral and placement decisions made by the MDT
<b>Service Delivery</b>	Number of students per term receiving services from the: - Occupational therapist - Physiotherapist - Speech and Language Pathologist - Behavioural; Specialist -	Annual Term	SEU records
<b>Monitoring Academic Progress</b>	Percentage of students with an IEP obtaining passing grades in - MST 2, 4 and the CPEA - Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate	Annual	DOE Assessment Unit



<b>Category of Indicator</b>	<b>Suggested Key Performance Indicator</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Likely Source of Information</b>
	- Percentage of students provided with accommodations		
<b>Capacity Development</b>	Number of training seminars conducted annually for teachers Number of trained staff in schools (by district) Number of training workshops held annually for parents	Term	SEU records

## Strategies for Developing Infrastructural Provisions and Support Mechanisms

### The Overall Goal

The Government of St Lucia through the Department of Education will establish structures and systems to provide reasonable accommodations in the form of adaptations, resources, and support to optimise learning opportunities and outcomes for learners with SEND in an inclusive environment.

**Policy Goal 3.1:** The Department of Education will provide reasonable accommodation of The individual’s requirements to maximise potential.

### Strategies to Achieve Policy Goal 3.1

Targets	Outcomes	Action	Responsible MDA and Other Stakeholders
Within 5 years infrastructural provisions and systems of support for SEND will be documented in policy, and enforced to guarantee physical accessibility, and accessible systems of support consistent with the needs of all learners.	Schools are provided with and use appropriate learning materials, assistive devices, and other resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create a list of resources and materials (free and costed) to enable principals and teachers to identify and select the most appropriate based on students’ needs. The list should be updated each term. An illustrative list of technology resources for text-to-speech, note-taking and writing are available at appendix 2.</li> <li>▪ Provide professional development workshops to demonstrate the use of</li> </ul>	Department of Education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chief Education Officer.</li> <li>- Special Education Unit</li> <li>- Corporate Planning Unit</li> <li>- Legal officer</li> </ul>

Targets	Outcomes	Action	Responsible MDA and Other Stakeholders
	<p>The infrastructure in educational institutions is improved to allow accessibility for learners with SEND.</p>	<p>technological materials and resources for SEND in instructional practice. This should include how to make reasonable adjustments to teaching practice for SEND and how to raise attainment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Seek amendment the Education Act (2005, 2020) to define accessibility for persons with disabilities in school and other educational institutions.</li> <li>▪ Specify in the Education Act which aspects of the 'buildings and premises' the Department of Education will be responsible for improving and which the Boards of management will have responsibility for. To the extent the Boards of Management are responsible for the conditions of buildings and premises, each Board should prepare and provide an accessibility plan to the Chief Education Officer for approval.</li> <li>▪ Use the list of adaptations and modifications set out in Chahine and Gradolink's (May 2021) Final Report on <i>the Consultancy Services for Assessment of Current Special Needs Education Provision</i>.</li> <li>▪ Examples of adaptations for children with physical impairments may include the installation ramps, handrails, automated door openers, widening</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Building Department</li> <li>- School Operations Department</li> <li>- Related cross-sector agencies and stakeholders</li> <li>- Advocacy groups</li> <li>- Unions</li> <li>- Persons with disabilities</li> </ul>

Targets	Outcomes	Action	Responsible MDA and Other Stakeholders
		<p>doorways, accessible toilet and changing facilities (especially required in special schools). Adjustments are also needed for timetabling and room allocation to ensure that accessible classrooms are available across the range of curriculum subjects (especially required in the secondary schools)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Include estimates for modifying, adapting and constructing suitable infrastructure as a line-item in the capital budget of the estimates of expenditure for education. A strategic approach is to annually identify and cost the improvements that one secondary school and three primary schools need. A starting point and quick win are those schools with minimal requirements for upgrades.</li> <li>▪ For long-term development and construction of schools based on UDL develop a strategic approach to funding improvements to mainstream and special schools on a sustained basis.</li> <li>▪ Each school should be required to undertake a risk assessment of health and safety risks in classrooms and outdoor spaces and identify low-cost/no-cost approaches to addressing</li> </ul>	

Targets	Outcomes	Action	Responsible MDA and Other Stakeholders
		<p>these. The risk assessment should be submitted to the SEU for review. Risk assessments should be conducted annually based on the needs of the student population.</p>	
	<p>The Department of Education and its SEU provides and funds the provision of resources, services, and support to facilitate positive learning outcomes for all learners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop a comprehensive costing of SEND resources, services and support required to facilitate positive learning outcomes.</li> <li>▪ Include these SEND resources, services and supports in the estimates of special education programme of the Department of Education’s annual budget. This will demonstrate concrete commitment to improve the existing infrastructure for universal and inclusive access.</li> </ul>	
	<p>Policy provides for alternative and augmentative modes and formats of communication (e.g., sign language; indigenous language needs), the use of alternative script; orientation and mobility skills.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve the acoustic environment for children with hearing impairment in classrooms and learning labs. For example, in selected schools where a large number of children with hearing impairment attend install a sound-field system or provide a FM/digital wireless and audio distribution systems. Schools with children with visual impairment should make appropriate adaptations, including: the addition of handrails, Braille signage, painting of yellow lines, and changes to internal lighting. The</li> </ul>	

Targets	Outcomes	Action	Responsible MDA and Other Stakeholders
		<p>request for recommendations for adaptations should be made to St Lucia Blind Welfare.</p>	
	<p>Policy provision of services and support are consistent with recommendations of the formal evaluation process and SEND eligibility criteria and conditions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Based on the list of impairments specified in the Education Act, list the range of services to be provided, describe the referral and evaluation process for each, and the eligibility criteria based on the evaluation to receive services.</li> <li>▪ Ensure that this information is widely available to parents and guardians in written (large print and easy to read) , audio, digital and Braille formats.</li> </ul>	
<p>Within 3-5 years policies establish that the built environment be designed for inclusive and unencumbered access, to aid ease of access and mobility, and to promote safety, and convenience in accessing amenities.</p>	<p>Public planning policy for school construction includes universally designed features and facilities to support inclusion and inclusive educational needs.</p> <p>Policies contain specific directives to ensure that the built environment is designed for inclusive access, is unencumbered, and equipped with accessibility features (ramps, rails, textured surfaces, entry and exit points</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Seek amendment to the Education Act to specify the requirements of UDL design standards for constructing new and refurbishing educational facilities. This is detailed in Chahine and Gradolink’s (May 2021) Final Report on <i>the Consultancy Services for Assessment of Current Special Needs Education Provision</i>.</li> <li>▪ Emphasis should be placed on the following accessibility features for toilets, sanitation and hygiene considerations; lowered water fountains and laboratory tables; wayfinding and obstacle avoidance, proper fencing and signage for recreational spaces,</li> </ul>	<p>Department of Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Senior Executives including the Permanent Secretary and the Chief Education Officer.</li> <li>- School Operations; and Learner Support Services Department</li> <li>- Building Department</li> <li>- Related cross-sector agencies and stakeholders</li> </ul>

Targets	Outcomes	Action	Responsible MDA and Other Stakeholders
	etc.) to aid ease of access and mobility, and promote safety.	cafeterias, playgrounds and common areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Advocacy groups</li> </ul>

### Policy Goal 3.2

The capacity of *all* schools will be increased to meet a greater diversity of educational needs so that learners may be supported within their local communities.

### Strategies to Achieve Policy Goal 3.2

Targets	Outcomes	Action	Responsible MDA and other Stakeholders
Within 3 - 5 years general education schools are able to accommodate a diverse learner population to include learners with SEND.	Modifications and accommodations are provided to facilitate ease of mobility in the physical environment and ensure instructional resources to address cultural and learning diversity.	Provide improved specifications of adaptations in the learning context (material accommodations and modifications in learning material, braille or enlarged text, note taker, language interpreter or cultural facilitator; or non-material accommodation (e.g., extended time, alternative modes of assessment, alternative environmental arrangements for assessment)	Ministry of Education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the Chief Education Officer.</li> <li>- The Special Education Unit</li> <li>- School operations department,</li> <li>- Learner support services department set up</li> </ul>

Targets	Outcomes	Action	Responsible MDA and other Stakeholders
	Support structures for learning enhancement and educational development are established	Institute provision for the learner to be immersed in the target language and to be tested in his/her own language to determine educational needs.	<p>nationally or at the district level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-</li> </ul>
	The Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) routinely provides support in general and special education settings.	Adopt full-scale use of individualized intervention plans specific to diagnosed needs and recommendations, inclusive of transition plans (across grade levels and school types and school-to-work).	
Within 2-3 years, the Department of Education institute the provision of diagnostic and assessment services accessible to all.	In-house diagnostic services provided in Special Education Departments, with free and accessible services to parents and guardians for their child/ward with SEND.	<p>Develop framework and procedures for the implementation and monitoring of in-house diagnostic services to manage the timely delivery of these services.</p> <p>Include periodic reviews of the learner's support profile to ensure decisions for placement, accommodations, modifications, intervention, evaluation, re-evaluation, therapeutic, or diagnostic services are aligned to current levels of progress.</p>	<p>Ministry of Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Senior Executives including the Permanent Secretary and the Chief Education Officer.</li> <li>- School operations department</li> <li>- Learner support services department</li> <li>- Special Education Unit</li> </ul>
Within 2-3 years, policy provides means for learners to seek redress or recourse where	The steps to be taken to address no-action, inappropriate action, failure to implement agreed commitments in educational	Develop user-friendly procedures and processes to handle grievances and other queries of parents and caregivers regarding the learner's educational welfare. This information should be	<p>Department of Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Chief Education Officer</li> <li>- Special Education Unit</li> </ul>



Targets	Outcomes	Action	Responsible MDA and other Stakeholders
services or support are not provided or are not appropriate or consistent with recommended need.	learning plans, or other recommendations for the learner's benefit are established and operationalised	<p>available in written (large print and easy to read, audio, digital and Braille formats.</p> <p>Create and maintain parent and caregiver support networks to inform and support parents and families to increase their understanding of diagnoses and related life-long implications for quality of life of the learner and family.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learner Support Departments</li> <li>- School Operations Department</li> </ul>

## Strategies for Human Resource Provisions

### The Overall Goal

The Department of Education will undertake appropriate measures to improve the quantity and quality of teachers, teacher educators, and specialists who support school communities in implementing inclusive education.

### Cross-cutting Policy Goals: Human Resource Provisions - 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.4

- Policy Goal 3.1** The Department of Education will provide appropriately trained teachers who are qualified to teach learners with SEND in inclusive classrooms.
- Policy Goal 3.2** The Department of Education will recruit teaching staff from diverse backgrounds, including teachers with disabilities.
- Policy Goal 3.3** Principals and teaching staff will be trained to meet the diverse educational needs of learners.
- Policy Goal 3.4** Training pathways will be outlined to prepare specialists who support school communities to implement inclusive education, thereby ensuring that members of the Multi-Disciplinary/Inter-disciplinary Teams are qualified.

## Strategies to Achieve Policy Goal 3.1 - 3.4

Targets	Outcomes	Action	Responsible MDA and Other Stakeholders
<p>Within 3 years the minimum standards for special educators, including qualifications established in legislation/policy.</p>	<p>Minimum qualifications for special educators established.</p>	<p>Establish minimum qualifications to be certified and practice as a special education teacher, which should be consistent with international standards of a Bachelor's degree.</p> <p>Establish a grandfathering clause for experienced special educators without minimum qualifications to be allowed to continue working in the field and provide in-service training to upgrade their knowledge and skills.</p>	<p>Department of Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Senior Executives including the Permanent Secretary, and the Chief Education Officer.</li> <li>- Lead SEND Officer or Head of Department</li> <li>- Corporate Planner</li> <li>- Human Resources Division</li> <li>- Department of Teacher Education and Educational Leadership (SALCC)</li> <li>- Persons with disabilities</li> <li>- Advocacy groups</li> </ul>
<p>Within 5 years an increased number of special educators recruited to meet the needs of the population of learners with SEND.</p>	<p>Increase in the number of qualified special educators recruited.</p>	<p>Conduct an audit of the number of qualified special educators within the system to identify needs.</p> <p>Recruit to increase the number of special educators needed to rectify the underrepresentation of special educators in the education system to support a high-quality SEND/inclusive education system.</p> <p>Recruit a core of full-time gender focal points to mainstream gender in the Department and in all schools and to train other focal points.</p>	<p>Department of Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Senior Executives including the Permanent Secretary, the Chief Education Officer.</li> <li>- Lead SEND Officer or Head of Department</li> <li>- Corporate Planner</li> <li>- Human Resources Division</li> <li>- Department of Finance</li> </ul>

Targets	Outcomes	Action	Responsible MDA and Other Stakeholders
Within 3 years, training for special educators is a line item in the national education budget.	Training for special educators (pre-service and in-service) is a line item in the education budget and the education sector plan.	Prepare strategic plan and education budget to include special education teacher training as a line item for both pre- and in-service teachers.	Department of Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Senior Executives including the Permanent Secretary and the Chief Education Officer.</li> <li>- Lead SEND Officer or Head of Department</li> <li>- Corporate Planner</li> <li>- Department of Teacher Education and Educational Leadership (SALCC)</li> <li>- Human Resources Division</li> <li>- Department of Finance</li> </ul>
Within 2 years, a recruitment and training plan is part of the education sector strategic plan.	A National SEND Recruitment and Capacity Development Plan is established as part of the education sector strategic plan.	Develop a comprehensive recruitment and training plan to ensure that qualified teachers are available to undergird the SEND teaching and learning in schools as per the SEND strategies and services set out in the education sector plan.	Department of Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Senior Executives including the Permanent Secretary, the Chief Education Officer.</li> <li>- Lead SEND Officer or Head of Department</li> <li>- Corporate Planner</li> <li>- Human Resources Division</li> </ul>
Within 2 years, guidelines for continuous professional development are part of the education strategy sector plan.	Guidelines for continuous professional development plan are included in the SEND Recruitment and Capacity Development Plan	Establish guidelines for continuous professional development for general education teachers to sensitise them about the nature and needs of children with disabilities and equip them with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and strategies to teach all learners in an inclusive classroom.	Department of Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Senior Executives including the Permanent Secretary, the Chief Education Officer.</li> <li>- Lead SEND Officer or Head of Department</li> <li>- Corporate Planner</li> <li>- Human Resources Division</li> </ul>

Targets	Outcomes	Action	Responsible MDA and Other Stakeholders
<p>Within 2 - 3 years, the pool of special educators reflects various ethnic, gender, geographical and disability backgrounds.</p>	<p>The Recruitment and Capacity Development Plan includes strategies to attract and retain special educators from diverse backgrounds including indigenous peoples, gender, locale, disabilities and other.</p>	<p>Recruit teaching staff from diverse backgrounds, including teachers with disabilities.</p> <p>Recruit persons from different backgrounds, including teachers with disabilities and provide incentives to attend college and major in SEND</p> <p>Recruit more male teachers to address the gender imbalance in the teaching profession including male teachers with gender and SEND skills</p>	<p>Department of Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Senior Executives including the Permanent Secretary, the Chief Education Officer.</li> <li>- Lead SEND Officer or Head of Department</li> <li>- Corporate Planner</li> <li>- Human Resources Division</li> <li>- Department of Teacher Education and Educational Leadership (SALCC)</li> </ul>
<p>Within 2 years the training pathways for all personnel are established as part of the Recruitment and Capacity Development Plan.</p>	<p>The Recruitment and Capacity Development provide detail training pathways for all personnel working withing the SEND subsector.</p>	<p>Outline the recruitment of and training pathways for specialists who support school communities to implement inclusive education, including, members of a Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT)/Inter-Disciplinary Team (IDT) to provide assessment, plan interventions, and assist in the delivery and supervision of the execution of such plans at the home and school levels.</p> <p>Clinical/School Psychologist  Special Educator  Occupational Therapist  Physical Therapist  Behaviour Therapist  Speech and Language Pathologist  Nurse/Medical Doctor  Social Worker</p>	<p>Department of Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Senior Executives including the Permanent Secretary, the Chief Education Officer.</li> <li>- Lead SEND Officer or Head of Department</li> <li>- Corporate Planner</li> <li>- Human Resources Division</li> <li>- Department of Finance</li> <li>- Department of Teacher Education and Educational Leadership (SALCC)</li> </ul>

Targets	Outcomes	Action	Responsible MDA and Other Stakeholders
		<p>Gender Specialist</p> <p>Develop and implement a training programme for learning support assistants/aides who provide support service for learners with SEND.</p> <p>Recruit and train Career Counsellors to provide support for school to work transition and to liaise with employers.</p>	
<p>Within 2 years continuous professional development is an established part of national SEND recruitment and capacity development plan and is operationalised.</p>	<p>A Continuous Professional Development Plan for all personnel working in the SEND sub sector is part of the National Recruitment and Capacity Development Plan for the SEND sub-sector.</p>	<p>Provide opportunities for continuous professional development, training, and capacity building for supervisory teams (e.g., education officers), principals and other school leaders and support staff in the management of special and inclusive education systems.</p>	<p>Department of Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Senior Executives including the Permanent Secretary, the Chief Education Officer.</li> <li>- Lead SEND Officer or Head of Department</li> <li>- Corporate Planner</li> <li>- Human Resources Division</li> <li>- Department of Teacher Education and Educational Leadership (SALCC)</li> </ul>
<p>Within 2 years the training for principals and Senior school leaders is conducted according to schedule</p>	<p>Training for principals and other Senior school leaders included in the Recruitment and capacity Development and scheduled.</p>	<p>Make provisions for principals and other school leaders to receive training in the management of special and inclusive schools.</p>	<p>Department of Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Senior Executives including the Permanent Secretary, the Chief Education Officer.</li> <li>- Lead SEND Officer or Head of Department</li> <li>- Lead/Head of School Operations</li> </ul>

Targets	Outcomes	Action	Responsible MDA and Other Stakeholders
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Department of Teacher Education and Educational Leadership (SALCC)</li> </ul>

A multidisciplinary team in special education, typically involves professionals from various disciplines who collaborate to assess, plan, and support the needs of students. The composition of the team may vary depending on the specific needs of the student.

### Proposed Members and Roles of the Multi-Disciplinary Team

1. **Special Educator:**
  - Conducts assessments and helps identify learning difficulties or disabilities.
  - Provides expertise in adapting curriculum and teaching strategies for students with special needs.
2. **General Education Teacher:**
  - Contributes knowledge of the general curriculum and classroom dynamics.
3. **Clinical/School Psychologist:**
  - Conducts psychological assessments, interprets results, and provides insights into a student's cognitive and emotional functioning.
4. **Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP):**
  - Assesses and supports students with communication disorders or language difficulties.
5. **Occupational Therapist (OT):**
  - Assists in evaluating and addressing students' fine and gross motor skills, sensory processing, and other occupational challenges.
6. **Physical Therapist (PT):**
  - Focuses on assessing and addressing students' physical development and motor skills.
7. **School Counsellor:**

- Provides social and emotional support, guidance, and counselling services.

**8. Parents/Guardians:**

- Actively participate in the decision-making process and contribute insights into the student's strengths and challenges.

**9. Special Education Coordinator/Case Manager:**

- Coordinates services, manages paperwork, and ensures that the IEP (Individualized Education Program) is implemented effectively.

**10. Behaviour Specialist:**

- Assesses and supports students with behavioural challenges, providing strategies for positive behaviour management.

**11. School Nurse:**

- Provides information on health-related concerns and ensures that medical needs are considered in the educational plan.

**12. Social Worker:**

- Conducts social and emotional assessments to understand the needs, strengths, and challenges of students with disabilities
- Collaborates with families to address social and emotional challenges that may impact a student's academic performance
- Develops and implements intervention plans to address social, emotional, and behavioural concerns.



### Cross-cutting Policy Goals 3.5 - 3.6

**Policy Goal 3.5** Department of Teacher Education and Educational Leadership (DTEEL) (SALCC) will offer compulsory SEND courses for all pre-service teachers to prepare them to teach all learners.

**Policy Goal 3.6** The SEND Unit in the Department of Education will be staffed with Education Officers qualified in SEND.

### Strategies to Achieve Policy Goal 3.5 - 3.6

Targets	Outcomes	Action	Responsible MDA and Other Stakeholders
Within 3 years, DTEEL will be geared towards providing core courses in special education and /or whole degree programmes in SEND.	<p>DTEEL allows pre-service teachers to do at least 3 courses in special education or, pre-service teachers have the option to major in special education.</p> <p>DTEEL provides supervision and mentorship in schools to assist with in-service training.</p>	<p>Develop standards for teachers to include guidelines DTEEL to offer compulsory SEND courses for all pre-service teachers to prepare them to teach all learners in an inclusive classroom and provide the option for pre-service teachers to major in Inclusive and Special Education.</p> <p>Develop standards and courses for in-service teacher training in SEND.</p> <p>Establish a Trainer of Trainers (TOT) programme and develop a curriculum in Y1-</p>	<p>Department of Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Senior Executives including the Permanent Secretary, the Chief Education Officer.</li> <li>- Lead SEND Officer or Head of Department</li> <li>- Corporate Planner</li> <li>- Human Resources Division.</li> <li>- Department of Teacher Education and Educational Leadership (SALCC)</li> </ul>

Targets	Outcomes	Action	Responsible MDA and Other Stakeholders
		that includes a gender and disability and SEND module in the curriculum.	
Within 2 years the training for Education Officers is conducted according to schedule.	Training for Education Officers at the national, regional and district levels included in the Recruitment and Capacity Development Plan and an implementation plan is in place.	Provide training opportunities for Education Officers who supervise and monitor special and inclusive education provisions, to be adequately trained in the area. Recruit education officers with qualification in SEND.	Department of Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Senior Executives including the Permanent Secretary, the Chief Education Officer.</li> <li>- Lead SEND Officer or Head of Department</li> <li>- Department of Teacher Education and Educational Leadership (SALCC)</li> </ul>

## Strategies for Programmes

### The Overall Goal

The Chief Education Officer will institute programmes promoting equity and quality inclusive education that will ensure that the varying needs of learners will be facilitated through curricular accommodations, modifications and adaptations, and adaptive and assistive technology which will allow all children to optimise their potential.

### Cross-cutting Policy Goals 5.1, 5.2, 5.3

- Policy Goal 5.1** The learning of braille, alternative script, augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication (sign language) and orientation and mobility skills, and facilitating peer support and mentoring will be facilitated in schools.
- Policy Goal 5.2** The Department of Education will provide curricula that are adapted and modified for use with learners with SEND who are in inclusive and special education classrooms.
- Policy Goal 5.3** A range of placement options will be provided in the Least Restrictive environment/Most suitable educational arrangement.

## Strategies to Achieve Policy Goals 5.1 - 5.3

Targets	Outcomes	Action	Responsible MDA And Other Stakeholders
<p>Within 1-2 years, policy documents the augmentation of Braille, Sign Language, Assistive Technological Devices (ATDs), alternative scripts, modes, and formats of communication; as well as orientation and mobility skills, and facilitating peer support and mentoring.</p>	<p>Policies define the procedures to ensure teaching and learning of braille and sign language and the related culture.</p> <p>Policies promote recognition, acceptance, and respect of the mode of communication of the learner as a mode of instruction.</p> <p>Policies define the type and range of programmes to be provided by the local educational authority and relevant sector partners to provide language and communication services and support.</p> <p>Policy-enforced practice:                      (a) developing and using an Individualised Education Programme (IEP) for all learners diagnosed with SEND, and                      (b) educational services delivered in the Least Restrictive Environment (See continuum of types of</p>	<p>Create policies to promote age and developmentally appropriate programmes.</p> <p>Provide formal and informal courses in braille and sign language systems, as well as assistive and adaptive technology in training activities for pre-service and in-service teachers.</p> <p>Adopt approaches to foster and engage in gender-sensitive, gender-responsive, and gender-transformative teaching.</p> <p>Provide services and support consistent with the recommendations from formal evaluation and SEND eligibility criteria for services.</p> <p>Include in the budget for SEND, the purchase and maintenance of ATDs and other devices to support learners who require alternative forms of communication.</p>	<p>Department of Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CAMDU</li> <li>- Special Education Unit</li> <li>- Relevant sector partners or agencies</li> <li>- Ministry of Finance</li> <li>- Ministries responsible for health, social security, and gender affairs</li> <li>- Advocacy Groups</li> <li>- Persons with disabilities</li> </ul>

Targets	Outcomes	Action	Responsible MDA And Other Stakeholders
	<p>environments on page (table 13).</p> <p>Policy provision includes a budgetary commitment to support the purchase and maintenance of ATD and other resources for SEND.</p>		
<p>Within 2-3 years establish mandatory curriculum adaptations and modifications for learners with disabilities and diverse learning needs.</p>	<p>Policy reinforces the need to ensure curricula are modified to meet the diverse needs of learners and are supplemented by developmentally appropriate and engaging resources and materials to reinforce authentic learning experiences and assessment.</p>	<p>Develop or modify curricula to be differentiated, challenging, and relevant to developmental needs, thereby cultivating engaged, resourceful, goal-directed and independent learners.</p> <p>Curricula modification to facilitate Universal Design for Learning and Differentiated Instruction must be completed for all levels of schooling (ECE, Primary, Secondary)</p> <p>Recommend appropriate teaching and learning resources to support Universal Design for Learning and Differentiated Instruction.</p> <p>Modify the ways in which learner outcomes are assessed to include a variety of methodologies.</p> <p><a href="https://www.smore.com/bs0cw-assessment-modifications">https://www.smore.com/bs0cw-assessment-modifications</a></p>	<p>Department of Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Officers responsible for SEND</li> <li>- CAMDU</li> <li>- Multidisciplinary Team</li> <li>- Relevant sector partners or agencies</li> <li>- Advocacy groups</li> <li>- Persons with disability</li> </ul>
<p>Within 3-5 years appropriate placement options to guarantee a range of</p>	<p>Policy reflects practical considerations for appropriate placement along a continuum from least to most restrictive.</p>	<p>Implement processes to facilitate appropriate placement according to programme, geographic location and access, where possible, and best suited to</p>	<p>Department of Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CAMDU</li> </ul>

Targets	Outcomes	Action	Responsible MDA And Other Stakeholders
<p>placement options in the Least Restrictive / Most Enabling Environment are reflected in policy.</p>	<p>Policies reflect description of placement procedures to ensure appropriate placement according to diagnosed and documented educational, social-emotional and/or behavioural needs.</p>	<p>the learner’s needs. (See table 12)</p> <p>Provide options based on the right to receive education among age and grade peers, in environments that promote cognitive, social, and emotional development, without limitation or restrictions.</p> <p>Engage parents, the learner (where appropriate), the School-Based Team and Multi-Disciplinary /Inter-Disciplinary Teams in decisions for eligibility for placement type and additional support.</p> <p>Develop or modify curriculum to ensure culturally sensitive engagements in instruction and assessment, with explicit instructions to teaching staff on strategies and approaches for differentiation and teaching to learner-diversity.</p> <p>Design curricula that include developmentally appropriate programmes and activities to support social integration and independence in peer-to-peer interactions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Officers with specialized skills in related areas</li> <li>- Special Education Unit</li> <li>- Parents of learners with disability</li> <li>- Persons with disability</li> <li>- Advocacy groups</li> </ul>

## Cross-cutting Policy Goals 5.4 - 5.6

- Policy Goal 5.4** A mechanism will be developed to guide transition across phases and levels of education.
- Policy Goal 5.5** Career counsellors and transition officers will be provided alongside school personnel to support learners and employers regarding school-to-work transition, training, and employment possibilities.
- Policy Goal 5.6** Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approaches will be outlined in School Strategic Plans to show how UDL will be used to provide a variety of teaching methods that give all learners equal opportunities to succeed.

## Strategies to Achieve Policy Goals 5.4 - 5.6


Targets	Outcomes	Action	Responsible MDA and Other Stakeholders
Within 2-3 years policy includes protocols to guide transition needs across educational levels and protocols include system of coordination and collaboration between teachers and programme coordinators to ensure guidance and	<p>Policies outline the mechanisms that ensure effective transition across educational sectors and phases.</p> <p>Curriculum planning and provision continue to promote equitable considerations for preparing all learners for post-secondary pursuits, including education or employment.</p>	<p>Develop or modify curricula with focus at each level of education to encourage career preparation through specific goal-oriented and outcomes-based instruction.</p> <p>Ensure equitable and quality schooling for learners with SEND by allowing access to educational programmes on the same basis as their peers, from early years through to post-secondary years.</p>	<p>Department of Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Policy Management Teams</li> <li>- CAMDU</li> <li>- Guidance Counsellors</li> <li>- Special Education Unit</li> <li>- Ministries responsible for health, social security, gender</li> </ul>

Targets	Outcomes	Action	Responsible MDA and Other Stakeholders
preparation for the learner at the exit and transfer points of the transition process.		Ensure educational plans consider the learner's progress through the primary to secondary level, and transition into post-secondary pursuits.	affairs and human development - Persons with disability - Advocacy groups
Policy outlines how career counsellors / officers support learners and employers regarding employment possibilities.	<p>Policy priorities include multi-agency and cross-sectoral collaboration for resource sharing to support the developmental and educational needs of the learner.</p> <p>Policy priorities include public education and awareness-building among the labour force and employment sector, as an important factor in maximizing equity and inclusion and actualizing fair and equal access to the formal and informal labour force.</p>	<p>Implement Multi-Disciplinary/Inter-Disciplinary teams inclusive of Guidance Counsellors to serve school populations as a major provision for SEND support.</p> <p>Decentralise services of the MDT. Consider nearby Districts sharing a team for easier access and reduction of the waitlist .</p> <p>Work with schools, MDAs, and professional organisations through relevant organisational structures, towards combining activities and initiatives to create an effective and efficient response to the education, health, social, welfare, diagnostic, and therapeutic service needs of the population of learners with SEND, and all learners in vulnerable situations.</p>	Department of Education: - Special Education Unit - Guidance Counsellors - Relevant sector partners - Ministries responsible for health, social security, gender affairs, labour, public service and human development
School strategic plans describe how Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approaches are used to provide	Inclusive practices incorporate the principles of Universal Design for Learning and Differentiated Instruction, or similar instructional strategies which cater to learner diversity	The Ministry of Education team provides training in UDL for school management teams and teachers to equip them to prepare school strategic plans which include resources needed to successfully put plans into effect.	Department of Education: - CAMDU - Special Education Unit - MDT



Targets	Outcomes	Action	Responsible MDA and Other Stakeholders
individualised learning tools and opportunities.	<p>and build a sense of community and belonging in learning experiences.</p> <p>Policies promote the need for quality supervision and technical guidance in the implementation of inclusive and special educational practices and provision.</p> <p>Policies promote self-advocacy, social interaction, independence, and inclusion.</p>	<p>Adopt policy considerations for inclusive practices to ensure the provision of curricula which facilitate academic and social development in integrated and multicultural arrangements.</p> <p>Evaluate the relationship between curriculum offerings and training programmes to determine the alignment of instructional goals, objectives, and modalities with the diagnosed need of learners with sensory or communication development challenges.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Officers with related expertise</li> </ul>
<p>Within 2 years, policy outlines how school strategic plans describe the application of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Differentiated Instruction (DI) approaches are to be used to provide individualised opportunities to maximise each child's potential.</p>	<p>Policy-protected provision of, and access to UDL and DI, and the necessary resources to enhance educational development and to maximize learning potential.</p>	<p>Provide access to support and services across all levels of education to facilitate UDL and DI.</p> <p>Provide adaptations to facilitate optimal functioning, accessibility equipment and features in educational and training facilities, assistive technological devices, and other means of support to successfully apply UDL and DI in the general education classroom.</p>	<p>Department of Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- School operations</li> <li>- Special Education Unit</li> <li>- CAMDU</li> </ul>

Table 13: Placement Options for Learners with SEND in the Caribbean

Placement	Description	Level of Intensity
<b>Residential/Hospital</b>	The learner lives in a special setting such as a residential home due to the severity of the disability or in a hospital due to the nature or severity of their medical condition.	<div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>Most Restrictive</b></p>  <p><b>Least Restrictive</b></p> </div>
<b>Homebound</b>	Due to the nature or severity of their disability or medical condition, they are placed in a home setting, or parents may choose to provide services for them at home.	
<b>Full time special education school</b>	Due to the severity of the disability, some learners are placed in a full-time special education school.	
<b>Self-contained classroom in a general education school</b>	Learners may be placed with a special education teacher in a self-contained classroom within a general education school.	
<b>Resource Room in general education school (pull-out programme)</b>	The resource room model is a pull-out programme where learners with disabilities are placed in a general education classroom but are scheduled at specific times for instruction in specific areas where they need additional support and remediation.	
<b>Inclusive classroom in general education school</b>	Learners with disabilities are placed in a full-time general education school where they receive instruction by general education teachers and may receive additional support by special educators within the classroom.	

## Strategies for Stakeholder Involvement

### The Overall Goal

The Chief Education Officer will establish a framework which will identify stakeholders and the role they will play, and outline strategies to engage them to support the implementation of special and inclusive education.

**Policy Goal 6.1** Outline the full involvement of families in all educational processes and actions for inclusive education.

Targets	Outcomes	Action	Responsible MDA and Other Stakeholders
<p>Within 2 - 3 years, policy clearly documents the ways in which parents/guardians can be fully involved in the process of identification, assessment, intervention programme development, placement, programme evaluation, and all actions related to their child with Special Education Needs and Disabilities.</p>	<p>Policy document completed outlining the role of parents/guardians and provisions made for their full participation in the education of their child with SEND.</p>	<p>Clearly outline the full involvement of parents/guardians and state how they will be involved in the process of referral, assessment, intervention programme planning and evaluation, placement, and all decisions made about their child/ward.</p> <p>Establish guidelines for supporting parental interaction and communication with professionals.</p> <p>Outline how to involve families in the process of evaluating the quality of services provided.</p> <p>Outline the types of support available for families to recognise and understand the needs of their child with SEND.</p> <p>Introduce initiatives to promote parent education and support; and home/ school partnerships.</p>	<p>Department of Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Senior Executives, including the Permanent Secretary, the Chief Education Officer</li> <li>- Officer(s) responsible for SEND in the Ministry of Education</li> <li>- Legal Officers</li> </ul>

**Policy Goal 6.2** Outline the strategies for awareness-raising with all stakeholders in inclusive education.

**Strategies to Achieve Policy Goal 6.2**

Targets	Output	Action	Responsible MDA and Other Stakeholders
<p>Within 2-3 years policy is developed that outlines the strategies for awareness-raising with all stakeholders.</p>	<p>A policy document that clearly outlines awareness-raising strategies to engage stakeholders in inclusive education.</p>	<p>Document strategies for awareness-raising with all stakeholders on inclusive education.</p> <p>Outline clear goals, objectives, and policy-related concerns for effective and efficient systems of awareness-raising to sensitise stakeholders on inclusive and special education services.</p> <p>Define the purpose of stakeholder relationships and partnerships and the intended monitoring agenda to promote and facilitate high-quality inclusive and special education.</p>	<p>Department of Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Senior Executives, including the Permanent Secretary, the Chief Education Officer</li> <li>- Officer(s) responsible for SEND in the Department of Education</li> <li>- Public relations</li> </ul>

Targets	Output	Action	Responsible MDA and Other Stakeholders
		Provide guidelines for stakeholder contribution of time, expertise, technical skills, cash, kind, or other forms of support.	
	Policy aligned with the national agenda for the implementation of inclusive education and a balanced wide cross-section of stakeholders included.	<p>Create and implement policies that are supported by and enforce the national agenda of the focal standards-oversight body with responsibility for implementing inclusive education.</p> <p>Create fair and balanced representation of a cross-section of stakeholders to ensure compliance with national legislative commitment of inclusion, and a collaborative approach for quality monitoring activities.</p>	<p>Department of Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Senior Executives, including the Permanent Secretary, the Chief Education Officer</li> <li>- Officer(s) responsible for SEND in the Ministry of Education</li> </ul>

**Policy 6.3** The strategies for the involvement of the third sector and international organisations are outlined.

**Strategies to Achieve Policy Goal 6.3**

Targets	Output	Action	Responsible MDA and Other Stakeholders
<p>Policy outlining strategies for the involvement of the third sector and international organisations is developed within 2 years.</p>	<p>Policy with clear guidelines for the involvement of the third sector and international organisations in inclusive education completed.</p>	<p>Document the involvement of the third sector and international organisations.</p> <p>Clearly state the terms and expectations for stakeholders and the period of their involvement.</p> <p>Outline processes for gathering, interpreting, analysing, and disseminating reports to ensure the trustworthiness of information to be disseminated, including the execution of pledges, educational and policy commitments.</p> <p>Develop programmes to Sensitise and to incentivise stakeholders to encourage support for education, training and employment.</p>	<p>Department of Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Senior Executives, including the Permanent Secretary, the Chief Education Officer</li> <li>- Officer(s) responsible for SEND in the Ministry of Education</li> </ul>

Targets	Output	Action	Responsible MDA and Other Stakeholders
		<p>Institute policy-guided means to engage and sustain stakeholder support.</p> <p>Create a framework to incorporate and align third sector social responsibility agenda, and donor-interest around mutual initiatives and projects.</p> <p>Collaborate with national, regional, and international agencies to provide up-to-date data to determine the incidence and prevalence of types of disabilities and other vulnerable groups.</p>	



## APPENDIX I: POLICY ANALYSIS

Policy Analysis: Access to Quality Inclusive Education: *Gaps and Policy Requirements*

Table 1 presents a summary of the major gaps and policy requirements for improved access to quality inclusive education for learners with SEND and all vulnerable groups of learners.

Table 14: *Gaps and Policy Requirements for Access to Quality Education*

Theme	Major Gaps Identified	Policy Requirements
Access to Quality Inclusive Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No official definition of Inclusive education has been identified in the Education Act of 1999 or the amended Act of 2005.</li> <li>Additionally, no policy on inclusive education has been identified.</li> <li>The Medium-Term Development Strategy (2020 - 2023) identified a number of areas in the education sector to be reformed but there was no mention of a multi-level policy framework for inclusive education.</li> <li>No details have been identified regarding a framework for the support of schools to implement inclusive education.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National legislative framework that is consistent with the principles of the UNCRPD, UNCRC, SDG4, CARICOM, and the OECS</li> <li>Inclusion defined and documented in legislation and policy.</li> <li>Inclusion of vulnerable groups in legislation and policy such as persons in remote rural communities, persons from the lower SES strata, and persons whose first language is French creole.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outdated Education Acts which are not aligned with the various conventions signed.</li> <li>A draft policy for SEND has been in existence since 2007 and remains a draft with no legal backing to enforce policy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legislation and policy documents to be updated, and the process needs to be completed for those in draft.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Education Act has a caveat which stipulates that the entitlement for SEND services depends on <b>the extent that resources permit, and it is considered practicable by the Chief Education Officer.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Caveats need to be removed to facilitate provision of services for students with SEND.</li> </ul>

Theme	Major Gaps Identified	Policy Requirements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The scope of SEND is often restricted to students with disabilities and does not include students who are gifted and talented.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Widen the scope of SEND to include the gifted and talented.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Limited placement options so learners with SEND, once identified are still largely segregated in special schools or special classes and subject to discrimination with substandard education provisions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Placement options to be documented in policy and appropriately aligned with the needs of the child in the Least Restrictive Environment.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Most legislation and/or policy documents did not outline a clear policy on early identification systems or assessment mechanisms at an early stage.</li> <li>▪ The referral system, assessment and intervention programme development need to begin at the earliest point in time that the child is suspected to have a special education need.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Early identification systems (EIS) to be clearly outlined in policy along with assessment mechanisms to be put in place to facilitate EIS.</li> <li>▪ A clearly defined referral system must be in place.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Most assessment instruments are not normed in the Caribbean. Results may be unreliable and may incorrectly label children and place them in categories of disability to which they do not belong.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use of standardised assessment instruments, appropriate for use in the Caribbean, to be mandated.</li> <li>▪ Embark on the standardisation of instruments.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Inadequate in-service training for both general education teachers and special educators.</li> <li>▪ Content of training programme not adequate to prepare teachers to deal with students with SEND.</li> <li>▪ Teachers graduating from teachers' college not adequately prepared to teach students with SEND.</li> <li>▪ Sensitisation of teachers to receive students with SEND in general education classes (inclusion) is limited.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase the number of in-service training sessions for general education teachers and special educators.</li> <li>▪ Improve the content of both pre and in-service training programmes to reflect sound pedagogical practices for teaching in an inclusive education classroom.</li> <li>▪ Teachers must be adequately sensitized to receive students with SEND and be able to meet their needs in the general education classroom.</li> </ul>

Theme	Major Gaps Identified	Policy Requirements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many special educators assigned to the schools are not trained in SEND.</li> <li>Teachers offering SEND are often floating teachers who may be called upon to provide other services in the school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mandate SEND courses for pre-service teachers to prepare them for the inclusive classroom.</li> <li>Special educators who are assigned to schools must be qualified in the area.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very little support from parents and once they do not agree or they are not supportive, there is no policy in place to ensure or to see to it that the parents should follow through.</li> <li>Parent training is inadequate.</li> <li>Policy must be in place to guarantee parental support and compliance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parent training programmes to sensitise parents about the needs of their children with SEND.</li> <li>Policy needs to be in place to guarantee the right of the child to an appropriate education based on his/her needs.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transition across the grades and school types is problematic and hinders students' progress.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy on transition required to assist learners with SEND to move seamlessly across grades and school types.</li> </ul>

### Policy Analysis: Organisational Structures

Table 2 presents a summary of the major gaps and policy requirements for improved organisational structures within the public education system and the special education sub-sector to facilitate an inclusive education system for learners with SEND and all vulnerable groups of learners.

*Table 15: Gaps in and Policy Requirements for Organisational Structures*

Themes	Major Gaps Identified	Policy Requirements
<b>Organisational Structures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Special Education Unit in the Department of Education structure and staff under the auspices of the CEO with a specified, it is not presented in the law.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define the operational remit, role and functions of the SEU in the Education Act. This should include definition of the linkages with other Units in the MOE.</li> </ul>

Themes	Major Gaps Identified	Policy Requirements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The organisational structure of the SEU, including the MDT and the referral process is not specified as part of the MOE establishment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Define and establish the organisational structure to include all the standard required specialist areas, special schools, NGOs, sub-sector coordinators (ECE, primary, secondary) and the diagnostic/assessment team at each level of the school system. The referral process should be clearly defined.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The current structure is missing an intersectoral framework to coordinate the delivery of services and share data across the Ministries of Education, Youth and Sports, Health, Social Welfare, Social Transformation, Culture, and Local Government, Communication and Works Physical Planning Division and other local agencies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create a memorandum of agreement and cooperation with the Ministries of Education, Health, and Social Welfare, Social Transformation, Culture, and Local Government, Communication and Works Physical Planning Division</li> <li>▪ Create an inter-ministerial or cross-sectoral oversight committee with special responsibility advising the Minister. In addition the committee will have oversight for information sharing, use and management, and, monitoring and evaluation the delivery of special education services and the outcomes for children.</li> <li>▪ Define the role and functions of each Department in relation to special education.</li> <li>▪ Supervisory and administrative support across the system to be documented in policy.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Insufficient funding of Special Education needs programmes.</li> <li>▪ The absence of directing cost in the ESDP (2015-2020) for</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish a clear budget line for SEN programmes, infrastructure and support in reference to the number of</li> </ul>

Themes	Major Gaps Identified	Policy Requirements
	education initiatives, including special education. SEN programmes accounted for only 15% of the SEN budgeted estimates.	students requiring assessment and intervention annually.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No definition or mention of how schools should be managed as effective inclusive schools.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe the nature of inclusive schools, including the appropriate leadership and management of such schools.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The SEU does not have a monitoring and evaluation to guide and improve operations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The management of the SEU should be guided by an M&amp;E framework that tracks the inputs and outputs from the Unit.</li> </ul>

Policy Analysis: Infrastructural Provisions and Support Mechanisms

Table 3 presents a summary of the major gaps and policy requirements for improved infrastructural provisions to facilitate all groups of learners in an inclusive education system.

Table 16: Gaps in and Policy Requirements for Infrastructural Provisions and Support

Themes	Major Gaps Identified	Policy Requirements
<b>Infrastructural Provisions and Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inadequate provision of, and access to assistive and adaptive devices to support learning.</li> <li>Insufficient materials and resources to support inclusion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase access to assistive technology tools for students with SEND, including the use of the low-cost such as software programs (e.g., text to speech available in Microsoft Windows apps and other apps available for Android and Apple systems) or</li> </ul>

Themes	Major Gaps Identified	Policy Requirements
		<p>FM transmitters for those who may have hearing impairments<sup>6</sup>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish the use of these apps as a normalised part of teaching and learning and streamline the process to request these technologies for educators.</li> <li>▪ A monitoring structure should be established to ensure that this requirement is implemented.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Limited and unsuitable infrastructural provisions for access and ease of mobility in the physical environment of schools.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Implement system-wide design standards based on universal design principles for both SEN and mainstream schools. This includes all major construction or reconstruction projects to allow for inclusion of students and teachers of all abilities. The design standards should align with the Caribbean Safe School Initiative and consider the effects of pandemic and natural hazard events.</li> <li>▪ The following should be included to support students with SEN at mainstream schools: hygiene room (i.e., one unisex universal, accessible washroom with shower/bath and laundry facilities), SEN Resource Room(s) or meeting space, sensory room and sick bay<sup>7</sup>.</li> </ul>

<sup>6</sup> Recommendation 13: 11 from Chahine and Gradolink's (May 2021, p114-115) Final Report on the Consultancy Services for Assessment of Current Special Needs Education Provision

<sup>7</sup> Recommendations 10 and 11 from Chahine and Gradolink's (May 2021, p114-115) Final Report on the Consultancy Services for Assessment of Current Special Needs Education Provision

Themes	Major Gaps Identified	Policy Requirements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Inadequate educational support in the general education schools within their community to support learner diversity in an inclusive classroom.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Outline in policy, the requirements for general education schools to have so they can accommodate a diverse learner population to include learners with SEND.</li> <li>▪ “Increase access to age-appropriate instructional materials all schools would benefit from increased access to age-appropriate instructional materials for older students (e.g., levelled readers, upper-age reading and math programs, levelled for low skills). The selection and sourcing of materials should be conducted centrally with the support of the Special Education Unit and curriculum officers for reading and mathematics. This would assist school leaders who may not know which materials to purchase. It may also be useful to generate a list of materials for schools to consider purchasing as their budgets allow”<sup>8</sup></li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Insufficient and inappropriate materials and resources to support the varied physical, sensory, adaptive, and educational needs of learners with SEND.</li> <li>▪ Limited scope in curriculum to support and enhance inclusive practices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Relevant curriculum, or modification of the curriculum, for example implement the curriculum modification which</li> </ul>

<sup>8</sup> Recommendation 15: from Chahine and Gradolink’s (May 2021, p114-115) Final Report on the Consultancy Services for Assessment of Current Special Needs Education Provision

Themes	Major Gaps Identified	Policy Requirements
		integrated SEN into the national curriculum (K to grade 9) <sup>9</sup> . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ and instructional resources to address cultural and learning diversity.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ High cost of services from private providers, and the long waiting list to obtain services via the public sector.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All essential services should be provided within the structure of the Department of Education, and the Ministries of Health and Wellness.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Unreliable transport systems to get children to schools and services, especially in rural or remote rural communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The provision of a reliable and affordable transportation system for learners residing in rural or remote rural communities.</li> </ul>

Policy Analysis: Human Resource Provisions

Theme	Major Gaps Identified	Policy Requirements
<b>Human Resource Provisions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Current policies do not make provisions for measures to employ teachers, including teachers with disabilities, who are qualified in sign language and/or Braille, trained SEN teachers and to train professionals and staff who work at all levels of education.</li> <li>▪ Current policies and the national budget do not make provisions to increase the number of trained</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Recruitment and training strategy to appeal to persons with disabilities as teachers/ role-models.</li> <li>▪ Increase capacity-building to include SEND in pre-service and in-service training at all levels of the education system.</li> <li>▪ Include specialists with skills in gender mainstreaming and gender analysis as SEND Professionals</li> </ul>

<sup>9</sup> Curriculum Review and Revision to Incorporate a Focus on Special Needs Education, Spencer-Ernandez, J. et.al., (2021)



Theme	Major Gaps Identified	Policy Requirements
	<p>teachers of SEN, and to provide in-service training for all teachers to support children with SEN.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Teachers who are trained in SEN are in some instances, not deployed as necessary to assist learners who require their services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Make provisions for recruitment and training of SEN teachers and other staff at all levels of education, in the national budget.</li> <li>▪ Survey of trained SEN teachers to include measures for appropriate deployment and determination of gaps and training areas required.</li> <li>▪ The SEN policy should articulate a recommended ratio for the number of trained SEN teachers to be deployed to schools based on the students' needs and, or school populations.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Policy documents do not specify the need for Leaders and Administrators to receive training on managing inclusive schools.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Principals and other school leaders to receive training in the management of inclusive schools.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ While there are specialists working on a multi-disciplinary team, there is no specific plan outlined to provide training pathways for additional staff needed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Recruit and train multi-disciplinary/inter-disciplinary assessment teams to serve the system.</li> <li>▪ Outline in policy who constitutes a multi-disciplinary/inter-disciplinary team and outline their roles.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Neither legislation nor policy documents outline requirements of Education Officers being qualified in SEN. In fact, the SEN Unit has been repeatedly described as being woefully understaffed. This was confirmed several times by various groups of stakeholders consulted in the 2023 study.</li> <li>▪ There exist gaps in commitments to Gender equality and inclusive education in the teaching profession and in Special Education. In fact, data show an</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Survey of human resource needs for SEN unit, SEN schools, and mainstream schools.</li> <li>▪ Recruitment and training policy required. This policy should clearly articulate how gender equality and inclusivity of SEN teachers will be achieved particularly for implementation in SEN and mainstream schools. E.g. implementation in the teacher training; academic curriculum; non-academic skills; instructional support training; responsive behaviour management (discipline).</li> </ul>

Theme	Major Gaps Identified	Policy Requirements
	<p>imbalance in the number of male and female teachers at primary and secondary levels.<sup>10</sup> Data in the 2023 study suggest that this negatively impacts boys generally and especially those with SEN.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There are gaps between stated policy commitments to gender mainstreaming and gender equality (CEDAW) and education policy and practice. e.g., implementation in the teacher training; academic curriculum; non-academic skills; instructional support training; responsive behaviour management (discipline).</li> <li>▪ Gaps in the Special Education Policy (2007) and principle of inclusive education in primary and secondary schools since 2006 (e.g., in terms of provisioning for inclusive education in teaching skills; inadequate number of SEN teachers; inadequate space for accommodation of SEN students; inadequate access to technology).</li> <li>▪ Recruitment of teaching staff from diverse backgrounds is not identified in legislation or policy.</li> <li>▪ Policy does not mandate adequate budget allocations to provide quality inclusive gender sensitive education to students with special education needs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ SEND Units/Departments appropriately staffed, reflecting needs identified by survey.</li> <li>▪ Decentralise/replicate services to ensure access countrywide.</li> </ul>

<sup>10</sup> From 2019 to 2020, at the Primary level there were 99 trained male teachers, vs 770 trained female teachers, and 43 untrained male teachers, vs 98 untrained females. For the same period, 184 trained male teachers, vs 537 trained females and 104 untrained male teachers and 190 untrained females, were recorded at the Secondary level (p.206, *The Central Statistics Office of St Lucia: Annual Statistical Digest 2020*).

Theme	Major Gaps Identified	Policy Requirements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Inclusive education should include training for gender sensitization and gender mainstreaming in SEN. The <i>Proposal for Special Education Unit Staffing</i> references the then recent establishment of the Multidisciplinary Team (MDT), which comprises individuals from “education, health, social support and counselling sectors, charged with the responsibility of student assessment and recommendations for school placement, and other relevant support services (St. Juste, 2019, p.1)”. However, it is unclear whether the MDT includes a gender specialist or a gender focal point from the Department of Gender Affairs.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A mandate to the teacher training institution to offer degrees with a major in SEN is not identified in legislation or policy documents. However, the Programme Information Summary Sheet for the SALCC Bachelor’s Degree in Education (Primary), identifies the following as core/compulsory courses of the programme: <i>Creating the Inclusive School/Classroom</i> and <i>The Nature and Needs of the Exceptional Child</i>.</li> <li>▪ Teacher training curriculum does not include modules on gender issues in education and gender, disability education and SEN.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Offer SEND as a major in teacher training college (focus on gender issues in education and gender, disability education and SEN.)</li> </ul>

## Policy Analysis: Programmes

Table 16 presents a summary of the major gaps and policy requirements for improved programmes to facilitate all groups of learners in an inclusive education system.

*Table 17: Gaps in and Policy Requirements for Programmes*

Theme	Major Gaps Identified	Policy Requirements
<b>Programmes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Draft Special Education Policy of 2007 outlined the facilitation of the learning of Braille, the use of alternative script, augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication (sign language) and orientation and mobility skills. There is no mention of this type of facilitation in the Education Act, and therefore not supported by policy.</li> <li>▪ Whereas the MDT is in place to provide assessment, the development of IEPs, and to provide other support services, with the limited staff in place, there is inadequate coverage island-wide based on the growing demands.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Include details related to the provision of programmes and materials primarily for learners who are blind or deaf.</li> <li>▪ Expand the function of the MDT to assist with the development of IEPs and to provide other support services.</li> <li>▪ Increase the number of professionals available on the MDT so teams can be deployed to achieve island-wide coverage.</li> <li>▪ Decentralise the services so that each District has access to a team,</li> </ul>

Theme	Major Gaps Identified	Policy Requirements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A programme for the successful transition of students from one grade to the next or across school types (ECE to primary and then to secondary) is reportedly not in place and impacts the continuity of services for the child with SEN. This is especially so as they transition from primary to secondary school.</li> <li>▪ Limited scope in post-secondary provisions for the learner with SEND.</li> </ul>	<p>or depending on the size of the District, two districts may share a team.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Document how transition from one level of the education system to the next is to be addressed.</li> <li>▪ Curriculum modifications and revisions to reflect school-to-work transition and post-secondary pursuits.</li> <li>▪ Introduce programmes with broader scope, intent, goals, for holistic development of the learner with SEND.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The concept of the Least Restrictive Environment is articulated in policy as outlined in the Education Act. In practice, however, stakeholders reported that this is not always adhered to as too often, students who should be in general education classes are placed in full-time special education schools, which is among the most restrictive placement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Define in policy, the Least Restrictive Environment and indicate the criteria for placement in each.</li> <li>▪ Ensure that systems are in place for parents, and schools to appeal placement decisions.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Universal Design for Learning (UDL) was not mentioned in any legislation or policy document.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ UDL to be incorporated</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Education Sector Development Plan (2009 - 2014) spoke to the matter of curriculum modification to facilitate the varied needs of learners in inclusive classrooms. Most stakeholders reported, however,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Curriculum modification to be documented in policy and provisions made for both pre-service and in-service teachers to be trained in the use of a modified</li> </ul>

Theme	Major Gaps Identified	Policy Requirements
	<p>that this was rarely being done for students with disabilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Teachers reported that they don't have adequate training in Differentiated Instruction (DI) to successfully implement DI to meet the diverse needs of learners.</li> </ul>	<p>curriculum to meet the needs of learners with SEND.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Teachers reported that to implement programmes effectively, they need resources that are not readily available such as assistive devices, computers, braille writers, alternative scripts, and the like.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Resources for the implementation of programmes for learners with SEND should be a budgeted line item in the Education budget.</li> <li>▪ Conduct survey of needs by school and district, and use the data to determine the overall cost and begin to roll out the necessary assistive devices, braille writers and other resources needed for programme implementation and success.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Parents reported that there is limited coverage of social safety-net programmes to support socio-economic needs, and this poses a challenge for some parents to access services for which they have to pay.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish Inter-ministerial/sectorial partnerships to meet the socio-economic needs of learners with SEND.</li> <li>▪ Collaborate with ministries responsible for social welfare, health, and gender affairs to develop a comprehensive intervention plan.</li> <li>▪ Eliminate user fees for services and include all required assessments to be provided under the umbrella of the MDT.</li> </ul>

## Policy Analysis: Stakeholder Involvement

Table 17 presents a summary of the major gaps and policy requirements for improved stakeholder involvement to facilitate all groups of learners in an inclusive education system.

*Table 18: Gaps in, and Policy Requirements for Stakeholder Involvement*

Theme	Major Gaps Identified	Policy Requirements
<b>Stakeholder Involvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Collaboration among the various Ministries, especially health and social welfare, is not outlined in policy or legislation. Parents, teachers, SEN professionals, NGOs, national, regional, and international agencies, and the private sector are mentioned in several documents, but their roles are usually not identified or clearly defined.</li> <li>▪ The Education Act (Amendment of 2005) outlines in detail the involvement of parents in the referral, assessment, and programme planning process. There is no policy or legislation, however, that requires compliance.</li> <li>▪ As a result, there is a general outcry from school and Ministry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Stakeholders' roles are to be clearly defined in policy and the nature of the collaboration is outlined.</li> <li>▪ Outline in detail, the roles of the different ministries involved in inter-ministerial collaboration so that information can be shared and the expertise from all ministries is available to assist in the identification and treatment of children with SEND in particular, and the population of vulnerable children in general.</li> <li>▪ Include in policy, the consequences for non-compliance by parents before and after the appeals process is completed.</li> <li>▪ Inclusion of parents in all aspects of the identification, assessment, IEP, and placement processes and decisions.</li> </ul>

Theme	Major Gaps Identified	Policy Requirements
	<p>personnel that the compliance rate is low. Once parents are notified that their child needs to be assessed for possible placement in a SEND programme, school personnel have consistently reported that many parents either do not respond or they abort the process at one or more of the stages.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Introduce initiatives to promote parent education and support; and home/school partnerships.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ As noted in The Education Sector Development Plan (2015 - 2020), the promotion of dialogue and feedback among different stakeholders is highlighted. There is no elaboration, however, on strategies to be pursued to enable awareness-raising among all stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Elaborate on the strategies to be employed to facilitate awareness-raising among all stakeholders.</li> <li>▪ Include programmes to sensitise and to incentivise stakeholders to encourage support for education, training and employment.</li> <li>▪ Institute policy-guided means to engage and sustain stakeholder support.</li> <li>▪ Create framework to incorporate and align third sector social responsibility agenda, and donor-interest around mutual initiatives and projects.</li> </ul>

**APPENDIX 2: List of Technology Resources for Visual and Hearing Impairment**



## **Text-to-Speech (TTS) Software:**

- NVDA (Non-Visual Desktop Access): A free, open-source screen reader for Windows.
- JAWS (Job Access With Speech): A popular screen reader for Windows.
- Voice-Over: Built-in screen reader for macOS and iOS devices.
- TalkBack: Built-in screen reader for Android devices.
- ChromeVox: A screen reader extension for Google Chrome.

## **2. Note-taking Apps:**

- Microsoft OneNote: Offers features for note-taking, organization, and collaboration.
- Evernote: A versatile note-taking app with accessibility features.
- Notion: A collaborative workspace for note-taking, project management, and more.
- Google Keep: Simple note-taking app with collaboration features.

## **3. Writing Assistance:**

- Grammarly: A writing assistant tool that helps with grammar and spelling.
- Hemingway Editor: A tool to improve writing style and readability.
- Google Docs: Provides collaborative writing and editing features.
- Scrivener: A powerful writing tool with organizational features.

## **4. Braille Display and Braille Input:**

- JAWS and NVDA compatibility with Braille displays: Many Braille displays work seamlessly with popular screen readers.
- iOS Braille Input: Allows users to input Braille directly on iOS devices.

## **5. Speech-to-Text (STT) Software:**

- Dragon NaturallySpeaking: Speech recognition software for Windows.
- Google's Speech-to-Text API: For integrating speech-to-text capabilities into applications.
- Otter.ai: Offers real-time transcription and collaboration features.

## **6. Closed Captioning and Subtitle Tools:**

- Amara: A platform for creating and editing subtitles for videos.
- YouTube Automatic Captions: YouTube provides automatic captioning for uploaded videos.
- Subtitle Edit: A free and open-source tool for creating and editing subtitles.

## **7. Communication Apps for the Hearing Impaired:**

- Video Relay Services (VRS): Services like ZVRS and Sorenson Relay facilitate communication through sign language interpreters.
- Text Relay Services: Services like CapTel provide real-time text relay over the phone.

## **8. Audiobooks and Podcasts:**

- Audible: Offers a vast collection of audiobooks.
- Librivox: Provides free audiobooks of public domain works.
- Pocket Casts: A podcast player with accessibility features.
- These resources cover a range of needs for individuals with visual and hearing impairments, from accessing and creating written content to communication and multimedia consumption. Always check for the latest accessibility features and updates for each tool.